

SPSO decision report

Case: 201202737, An Optician in the Highland NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment provided to her by an optometrist (a healthcare professional concerned with the health of the eyes). When Mrs C had problems with her right eye, she went to her GP, who prescribed eye drops and referred Mrs C to her local opticians. The opticians were members of the Grampian Eye Health Network, which provides assessments and treatment in the community for certain eye conditions. The network is supported by advice from a local hospital eye clinic via a phone helpline, which members can also use to make urgent referrals to hospital.

Mrs C was seen by the optometrist several times that month and was diagnosed with ulcers or marginal keratitis (inflammation of the outer layer of the eye). The optometrist advised her to continue with the drops prescribed by her GP, and added further treatments. They also took advice from the eye clinic via the helpline. Mrs C's condition seemed to improve, as the ulcers were reducing in size, but by the start of the next month she was still experiencing pain and inflammation. She phoned the optometrist saying that following research on the internet she had stopped all treatment and was requesting a referral to the hospital eye clinic. She was seen at the opticians the following day. The ulcers were found to have increased in size again and the optometrist made an urgent referral to hospital. Mrs C was seen in the eye clinic the next day, was admitted to hospital and received in-patient treatment for ten days.

After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers we found that the care and treatment provided to Mrs C was reasonable, appropriate and timely. The adviser considered that the optometrist had prescribed reasonable treatment, which followed the advice and guidance of the network and also complied with that issued by the Royal College of Optometrists.