

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302758, A Medical Practice in the Forth Valley NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about a specific consultation with a GP in her local practice. She attended with a flare-up of her longstanding physical health problems, which included fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis (conditions that cause the muscles and joints to become painful and stiff).

She complained that the GP was dismissive of her problems and suggested that there was nothing wrong with her. In responding to the complaint, the practice said that the GP had felt that there was no physical reason why Mrs C could not get out and go about her normal business. Mrs C strongly objected to this and reported how she struggled on a daily basis and, on some days, was unable to even get out of bed.

We obtained independent advice from one of our medical advisers, and this indicated that the advice offered to Mrs C was appropriate for her conditions. We were informed that the management of fibromyalgia would include trying to keep the muscles strong by keeping as active as possible. The adviser noted that Mrs C's conditions were painful and debilitating and he accepted that she would be limited in her activities. However, he felt it was appropriate for the GP to have tried to encourage her to remain active.

Mrs C clearly disagreed with the advice she received, and she was unhappy with the GP's handling of the consultation, and the attitude he displayed. However, in the absence of evidence that the GP acted unreasonably, or offered inappropriate advice, we did not uphold the complaint.