

SPSO decision report

Case: 201304811, A Medical Practice in the Forth Valley NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C said that she first went to her medical practice about continuing dizziness in April 2011 and was diagnosed with labyrinthitis (an inner ear infection affecting hearing and balance). Worsening headaches led her to attend the emergency department in her local hospital and she then had a scan, which was normal. Miss C said her symptoms got worse and she was no longer able to work. The practice made an urgent referral for her to attend a hospital clinic, but after examination and tests everything was found to be normal and the clinic reassured her that her condition would improve over time. She continued to feel ill, however, left the practice, and complained that despite many visits there, they did little to help her. She said that they should have made more timely referrals for her to receive a specialist opinion.

We obtained independent advice from one of our medical advisers, who considered all Miss C's medical records. We also took into account all the complaints correspondence. Our investigation showed that over the period concerned, Miss C attended the practice regularly and doctors made a referral for her to be seen urgently at the hospital ear, nose and throat department. She had had a normal scan and further examination and tests confirmed labyrinthitis. She was referred to physiotherapy for therapy to retrain her brain to deal with the problems associated with dizziness. We decided that the GPs provided her with good care and support and tried alternative medication for her.