

SPSO decision report

Case: 201304812, Forth Valley NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C was diagnosed as having labyrinthitis (an inner ear infection affecting hearing and balance). She found this very debilitating and had to take time off work. She went to A&E at Stirling Royal Infirmary twice and after the second time she had a scan, which was reported as normal. Her problems continued and her GP made an urgent referral for her to attend the hospital's ear, nose and throat (ENT) department. Miss C said that the person she saw (who she described as a nurse) told her that everything was normal and that she could stop taking the medication she had been prescribed. She was discharged. Miss C said she had since learned that she should have been weaned off her medication slowly, and she questioned the care and treatment she had received. She complained that this was inadequate and contributed to her illness and the length of time she was ill.

We obtained independent advice from one of our medical advisers, who is a consultant ENT surgeon, who considered all Miss C's medical records. We also took into account all the complaints correspondence. Our investigation showed that, contrary to Miss C's belief, when she attended ENT she was seen by a specialist doctor who advised her to stop taking her medication and said that her condition would improve with time. Although Miss C said that she understood that she had to wean herself off this medication, this was not the case. We found that Miss C had been assessed and treated entirely appropriately, and we did not uphold her complaint.