

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201305181, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained about the care and treatment she received from her medical practice. She was unhappy they had not given her a clear diagnosis for her symptoms over an extended period of time, and felt they had delayed in telling her about the diagnoses they actually had made in this time.

As part of our investigation we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers, an experienced GP, who reviewed Ms C's medical records. He said the paperwork indicated that the practice had tried to address her concerns and their steps had been reasonable. Although he acknowledged they may not have explained Ms C's symptoms to her satisfaction, the evidence did not indicate they acted unreasonably. In addition, as most diagnoses were actually made by hospital doctors following referrals by the practice, our adviser explained that it would mainly have been for the hospital doctors to tell Ms C about her diagnoses. Our adviser said the records indicated that the practice had been reasonable in communicating any diagnoses they had actually made to Ms C.

Our role was to make a decision about the reasonableness of Ms C's care and treatment based on the available evidence. Some conditions are particularly difficult to diagnose and treat, and the absence of a clear diagnosis would not necessarily mean that the practice had acted unreasonably. Although we recognised how significant this matter was for Ms C, we did not uphold her complaints as we received clear advice that her care and treatment was of a reasonable standard.