

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201401445, Forth Valley NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C had a history of longstanding abdominal (stomach) pain. She complained that, despite an operation, she had never been given an explanation for her pain or for the procedures she had subsequently undergone and she had not been given a definitive diagnosis. Mrs C said that she remains in pain and suffers panic attacks and depression. She complained to the board who said that there was no surgically treatable cause for her ongoing pain and symptoms, and that she had been referred to a pain clinic to try to help her. They did, however, acknowledge some problems with communication and said procedures had been put in place to avoid this happening again.

We took independent advice from a surgeon about this case. Our adviser said that since her operation all Mrs C's treatment had been reasonable and appropriate. Despite many investigations, however, it had not been possible to determine the exact cause of her pain, and our adviser confirmed that there was no surgically treatable cause. However, there was evidence that communication between the board and Mrs C was confused and that there had been a delay in informing her of the outcome of a scan, so we upheld this aspect of her complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- make a formal apology to Mrs C for their shortcomings; and
- confirm to us that they are satisfied that the new procedures put in place will prevent such a recurrence.