

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201501996, A Medical Practice in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the way the medical practice handled two phone calls when she became ill while on holiday. During the first call, which was made by her son, Mrs C felt that the receptionist concentrated too much on the fact that she was currently outside the practice area and that she should seek an appointment with a local GP practice. Mrs C did so and the GP diagnosed quinsy on her tonsil (a complication of tonsillitis where an abscess forms between a tonsil and the throat). Mrs C phoned the practice the following day to arrange an appointment for when she returned home. She was informed that there were no pre-bookable appointments available for the next two days. Mrs C felt that the reception staff should have sought advice from a doctor rather than make decisions about whether her medical condition could wait until an appointment was available.

We sought independent clinical advice from a GP adviser who felt that the practice had handled both calls appropriately. During the first call, her son was advised that Mrs C should seek a medical opinion from a local GP in order that her condition could be assessed. During the second call we found that the receptionist had accurately explained the process for making appointments. We did not uphold the complaint.