

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202110511, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

**Sector:** Health

**Subject:** Appointments / Admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)

**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

C suffers from chronic pain and had been receiving pain management and musculoskeletal physiotherapy treatment from the board for many years. Changes were made in the board's approach to pain management which coincided with some experienced consultants retiring. C's care and treatment was reassessed and a number of treatments previously provided to C were said to no longer be available and an emphasis was placed on self-management. C complained that withdrawing treatments harmed their health and wellbeing, the local pain management service was now limited requiring patients to travel for certain treatments, effective interventions were removed, the board prioritised cost over patient needs, and the transition to self-management relied too heavily on online resources.

The board stated that the changes were evidence based and in line with clinical guidelines.

We took independent advice from an experienced pain management consultant. We found that the board were correct in stating that the current guidance for the management of chronic pain does not support the long-term use of massage, acupuncture or trigger point injections. We noted that the transition away from this approach towards self-management can be very challenging for patients. We considered that C had been offered a person-centred management plan. We also found that it was reasonable for the board to have explained to C that previous therapies offered in an ongoing sense were likely provided because of discretion and goodwill on the part of a now retired physiotherapist. We noted that this is not uncommon for practitioners, however, approaches to treatment change over time. We did not uphold C's complaint. However we provided feedback about the need to reflect on cases such as this to inform how best to manage similar situations in the future.