

SPSO decision report



Case: 202206618, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the partnership had not provided the correct care and treatment for their ear infection in their right ear. C did not consider that the ongoing ear infection had been correctly diagnosed or treated, noting that the antibiotics which were prescribed had not been effective. C was concerned that although a referral to ENT had been made, the referral was not correctly prioritised, which had caused a significant delay. It was only when C saw a doctor, who phoned ENT, did C receive specialist input.

We took independent advice from a GP adviser. We found that C had not been seen face to face for a six month period, the first was a routine referral and the second expedited referral did not reflect the clinical situation because C had not been examined. We also found that the overuse of antibiotics had likely aggravated the situation. Overall we considered that more could have been done to clinically assess and seek specialist input for C's ear infection. We therefore upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C that they did not receive a face to face consultation for a six month period. Apologise to C that specialist input was not sought from ENT, on an urgent/high priority basis, at an earlier stage. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsos.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Ensure that Advanced Nurse Practitioners know when to request support and input from a GP.
- That written referrals to ENT have sufficient information and are prioritised at the appropriate time. Also that specialist ENT advice is sought via the on-call service when appropriate.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.