

SPSO decision report



Case: 202306923, A Medical Practice in the Ayrshire & Arran Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the practice failed to act reasonably on the symptoms and information provided by C to the practice. The practice acknowledged difficulties in handling the complaint and failed to manage its interactions with a specialist laboratory. C has since transferred to a different practice, and has a diagnosis of Sjogren's syndrome (a disorder of the immune system where the glands that produce fluid, such as tears and saliva stop working properly). C stated that they had specifically raised these concerns with the original practice and believed that their symptoms and related concerns were unreasonably dismissed.

We took independent medical advice from a GP adviser. We found that C should have been offered a face-to-face appointment. This would have allowed appropriate assessment of C's symptoms and the possibility of an earlier diagnosis, although this could not be determined with certainty. Therefore, we found that the actions of the practice were unreasonable. As such, we upheld this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to offer a face-to-face apology. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/meaningful-apologies.

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

- Review their process for following up blood tests when a laboratory fails to analyse them.
- Wherever possible and where it is clinically appropriate, patients should receive face-to-face appointments, where a detailed clinical examination can be carried out, a detailed history taken, along with a full assessment of any symptoms.

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.