

Dear Practice Manager,

Re Mrs Jane Roberts

I'm sorry to be writing this letter but you will be aware about the extremely difficult year my wife and my family have endured since finding out she has breast cancer. Thinking about everything that has happened to her, we have serious concerns about the care provided by her GP. A referral should have taken place when Jane first had breast pain 2 years ago. We have been advised that patients with possible breast cancer must be referred immediately and all doctors should know this.

I want to know why this was allowed to happen in your practice, as all of the symptoms she had are typical of breast cancer and she attended at least 5 or 6 times over a 12 month period.

We also feel that Jane's concerns were never taken seriously and she was made to feel she was wasting the doctors' time – no patient should be made to feel this way.

Jane has also told me that she was not properly examined and on some occasions was not examined at all. If Jane had had a proper examination, by a doctor paying attention, she could have been referred much sooner. We would have still had this devastating diagnosis to deal with but we would know that the cancer had been caught quickly and there would be no delays in treating her. I'm afraid this has completely destroyed the trust we had in her doctors.

My wife had to demand a referral – how do the doctors explain their reluctance to refer her? It is surely not for patients to know when and how they need to be seen at the hospital - it is for the doctors, so why did the GPs not do this for my wife?

Our lives have been turned upside down by this diagnosis and made all the worse knowing that any delays may allow the cancer to spread through her body.

Over the past months Jane has had to endure chemotherapy, major surgery and radiotherapy. She is physically and mentally exhausted. She and our family have had the year from hell. My wife remains depressed and unable to work; she is likely to lose her job. We cannot believe that the GPs did their job properly, how could it take over a year from her first appointment with breast pain for her to be referred and diagnosed?

We want a thorough investigation into what happened with my wife and are looking for a full explanation of what happened and why there was such a long delay. We would also like to know what the doctors propose to do to make sure nothing like this happens to any other patient.

Yours,



Mr J Roberts



Mrs Jane Roberts