

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203679, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality

Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C was unhappy with care and treatment she had received from a doctor at the medical practice, and had tried to avoid consulting him. However, she had to see him for a medication review. She was unhappy about this and raised concerns about the treatment she received from him when she attended the review. In particular, she complained that he changed her medication. To investigate the complaint, we took independent advice from a medical adviser. Their advice was that it was entirely appropriate for the practice to have made arrangements to review Mrs C's medication, and that the decision to change her medication was reasonable. We, therefore, did not uphold this complaint. We noted that the practice said that they had asked Mrs C to attend for review several times before an appointment was eventually arranged, but Mrs C said she did not receive such requests. As the practice had not kept records of the requests, we made a recommendation about this.

Mrs C also complained about a further consultation with the doctor when she was taken ill and had to arrange an urgent appointment. She said the doctor failed to examine her, instead passing her on to the practice nurse, and that he had panicked her by discussing the possibility of norovirus (winter vomiting virus). The doctor said that he did examine Mrs C, with the assistance of the practice nurse, and that he diagnosed a chest infection and made arrangements to have her admitted to hospital. Mrs C disputed this, maintaining that she was not examined and that a chest infection was not mentioned. The advice we received was that the records suggested an appropriately managed chest infection. This did not accord with Mrs C's account of events but we were unable to reconcile this account with the documentary evidence and we did not uphold her complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- remind staff to ensure that all attempts to contact patients are appropriately recorded.