

SPSO decision report

Case: 201403791, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to us that the medical practice had failed to provide appropriate care and treatment to his daughter (Miss A). He said that the practice had failed to act on Miss A's symptoms despite a history of abnormal smears and his view was that there was a delay in diagnosing cancer. Mr C also complained that during her treatment Miss A was asked to re-register with another practice as she had moved home and had therefore moved out of the practice catchment area. The practice had reasoned that Miss A may have needed access to district nurses which they would not have been able to provide if Miss A was outwith their area. Mr C felt this was insensitive.

The practice provided records that showed that they had issued an urgent referral and their view was that they had taken appropriate action. We took independent advice from an adviser in general practice medicine and concluded that the practice had provided a reasonable level of care. The complaint about treatment was not upheld. The adviser also said that although under the General Medical Services contract the practice had the right to ask Miss A to re-register with another GP as she had moved out of their catchment area, it was inappropriate to ask her to do so given that she was undergoing treatment and that she would be unlikely to need the services of district nurses. Therefore, we upheld the complaint about the timing of the practice's request to re-register.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- provide Miss A with a written apology for the timing of their request that she re-register with another practice; and
- review their policy to ensure that any administrative request takes account of the clinical care and any treatment that the patient is undergoing.