

SPSO decision report

Case: 201900160, Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership
Sector: Health and Social Care
Subject: Communication / staff attitude
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C's relative (A) required residential care in a care home. A's care was arranged and monitored by the partnership. C and their two siblings held joint power of attorney (POA) for A's financial affairs and welfare. Relations between the siblings broke down and C ultimately relinquished their POA status. C complained that the partnership subsequently failed to communicate with them reasonably, including failing to tell them when A was relocated to a new care home.

C also raised a number of concerns regarding A's care home placement and the way that this was managed by the partnership. C contended that the new care home was not suitable for A's needs and complained that the partnership failed to ensure that A was not at risk.

C submitted a complaint to the partnership regarding their experiences. C complained that there was an unreasonable delay to the complaint being confirmed and that there was also a delay to the partnership's final response.

We found that, having been made aware of allegations from C of potential financial abuse and welfare issues affecting A, the partnership conducted full and thorough investigations and reached reasonable conclusions based on the evidence available to them. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

C officially remained as a POA for two months after verbally advising that they had relinquished their POA status. The partnership failed to communicate with C as a POA regarding A's transfer to a new care home. However, we were satisfied that the partnership had already acknowledged and apologised to C for this. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

We found that there was an initial delay assigning an investigating officer to deal with C's complaint and that this contributed to an overall unreasonable delay to confirming the complaint and issuing a decision. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise for the initial delay in progressing the complaint. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- Feedback to staff to ensure complaints are progressed in line with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

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.