

SPSO decision report

Case: 202007046, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their late parent (A) about the care and treatment provided by their GP at the practice. A had been attending the practice with shortness of breath and a persistent cough. An urgent referral for suspected cancer was made, however C considered that the practice should have made the referral sooner.

We reviewed the relevant medical records and sought independent advice from a GP. We found that as A was high-risk patient who was failing to respond to antibiotics, an urgent referral to the chest clinic should have been made eleven months earlier and as such, we concluded that the practice failed to correctly follow the Scottish Suspected Cancer Referral guidelines. We upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failings identified. 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:

- Clinical staff should be familiar with the Scottish Suspected Cancer Referral Guidelines and refer patients for specialist assessment in accordance with the guidelines.

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.