

**Case:** 201000844, Fife NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** policy/administration, child protection  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained that the board failed to inform her of a meeting which took place to discuss her and her children. The evidence showed that the meeting was arranged to discuss suspected child protection matters. It also involved people outside the children's core care team. The Scottish Government's guidance on child protection makes it clear that all service providers have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. If a child is considered to be at risk of harm, relevant information must always be shared which may prevent problems from escalating. However, the guidance also says that when involved in child protection work, authorities should ensure that, wherever possible, parents are given full information about the nature of the concerns, and the child and family are consulted on and given explanations for any actions/decisions taken. The board's own child protection guidelines are clear that if children are suspected to be at risk, these concerns should be raised without delay. When such concerns are formally raised, the parents should be informed. Only in situations where there are clear and present reasons that make informing the parents inadvisable or unsafe can it be justified not to do so. We found that the board should have told Mrs C about the meeting, and about the support services that exist to help families in these situations.

### Recommendations

We recommend that Fife NHS Board:

- issue a written apology to Mrs C for failing to inform her that the meeting had been arranged to discuss her and her children; and
- take steps to ensure that relevant staff are aware that consideration must be given to informing the parent(s) when concerns about child protection matters are formally raised.