

Case: 201100903, A Medical Practice, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: lists
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that her GP practice removed her and her husband from their list of patients without an appropriate explanation. Mrs C also complained that the practice failed to make sufficient adjustments for her disability in dealing with her complaints. In particular, she said that the practice declined to deal with the matter verbally.

The practice had asked Mr and Mrs C to register with another practice, and later removed them from the practice list. They told Mr and Mrs C that this was because of a breakdown in the doctor/patient relationship, but did not give a more specific reason. We found that in asking them to register elsewhere, the practice had, in effect, already taken the decision to remove Mr and Mrs C from the list, and did not leave any room for negotiation. They should have first warned Mr and Mrs C that they were at risk of removal, and explained the reasons for this. The practice did not keep a written record of the reason why they did not give a warning. Neither did they keep a written record of the grounds for a more specific reason not being appropriate. We concluded that the practice removed Mr and Mrs C from their list without providing them with an appropriate explanation, so we upheld this complaint.

Mrs C also asked the practice to deal with her complaints verbally, due to her disability. We found from looking at the practice's records that they did speak to her by telephone. However, Mrs C was not willing to discuss her complaints in any detail on the telephone. The practice were willing to meet with Mrs C, but before they or Mrs C could take this further, they decided to remove her from their list. After this, understandably, Mrs C did not pursue her complaints with the practice. We took advice from our professional medical adviser, whose view was that the practice acted reasonably in relation to Mrs C's disability while they were dealing with her complaints. We concluded that, from an administrative point of view, the practice did try to make sufficient adjustments

for Mrs C's disability, and did not decline to deal with the matter verbally. Therefore, we did not uphold this complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise to Mr and Mrs C for failing to deal with their removal from the practice list in line with the NHS Regulations; and
- review their procedure for removing patients from the list, to ensure that future actions are consistent with their obligations as set out in the NHS Regulations.