

SPSO decision report

Case: 201105352, A Medical Practice in the Borders NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: appointments/admissions (delay, cancellation, waiting lists)
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the medical practice had acted unreasonably in refusing him a repeat prescription for an inhaler. He had made a repeat prescription request, but this was refused and he was told to attend an asthma review clinic two weeks later. He was unhappy that he had not been given his medication at the time he needed it, which he felt was a risk to his health.

The practice's response to Mr C indicated that before he made the prescription request he had been sent four letters inviting him to attend the asthma clinic but he had not gone. The prescription record also showed that Mr C was not using his inhaler regularly. They had, therefore, felt unable to issue the prescription until he had complied with their requests for an asthma review. They said they had a clinical, ethical and legal responsibility to review his medication and clinical condition before issuing a prescription. They offered him the opportunity to have the review undertaken in a manner and at a time which suited him, and to refer him to a respiratory specialist.

We took advice from our medical adviser, who considered Mr C's medical records. He said that treatment cannot be given without reasonable and correct supervision, and that the practice had given Mr C various opportunities to attend for the review. Given the pattern of inhaler use, he also considered that such a review would be good clinical practice. We concluded that the practice did not act unreasonably, and did not uphold the complaint.