

Case: 201100241, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr and Ms C complained about the care and treatment provided to Ms C's mother (Mrs A) by her medical practice.

They complained that the practice failed to adequately investigate the decline in Mrs A's mental health; properly monitor her repeat prescription medication; fully investigate her incontinence problems; or arrange for Mrs A to have an influenza vaccination without being prompted by the family. They also complained that the practice failed to provide treatment in line with the Adults with Incapacity legislation and that there were unreasonable delays in responding to their complaints.

Turning first to the complaint that the practice failed to provide treatment in line with the Adults with Incapacity legislation, we found that they acted within their procedures, but that there were communication failures. These were contrary to the principles underpinning the legislation and also contributed to the delay in arranging the influenza vaccination. We found that there were shortcomings by the practice in the way they handled the complaint in that there were delays and that the practice failed to tell Mr and Ms C of their right to approach the SPSO at the beginning of the complaints process. We also found that the practice did not closely monitor Mrs A's repeat prescription. We made recommendations to address the failings that we found. However, we did not find any failures by the practice in the provision of care and treatment in relation to Mrs A's mental health and incontinence problems.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- review their systems to monitor repeat prescriptions;
- ensure effective communication takes place between practitioners and all the key people involved in a patient's care;

- review their complaints handling to ensure it complies with the NHS complaints procedure, with particular reference to timescales; and
- apologise for the failures identified.