

SPSO decision report

Case: 201101443, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's husband (Mr C) was ill and she called NHS 24. However, she complained that the board failed to respond to her call and that the out-of-hours (OOH) doctor who came did not treat her husband appropriately. She also doubted that the doctor properly recalled the visit.

We considered all the relevant information and obtained advice from our medical adviser. We found the information about the telephone calls inconclusive. Mrs C said that the board had not called, however, the board's records said that attempts to call Mrs C were made, but were unsuccessful. We did not see any records of these specific calls, and in the absence of evidence, could not uphold this complaint.

We agreed that the OOH doctor had not properly treated Mr C in accordance with his symptoms and had kept poor records of the visit. This meant that the information that the board gave Mrs C when she complained was confusing. We made recommendations to address the failures identified.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr and Mrs C for their oversights in this matter; and
- emphasise to the OOH doctor the importance of taking a full record and, if it has not already occurred, the OOH doctor should prepare a significant event audit on this case and discuss it at their next appraisal.