

SPSO decision report

Case: 201102803, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C attended his medical practice and requested a prostate examination. He said that the GP refused to carry out this procedure and was rude and aggressive towards him. The GP asked Mr C to complete a symptom score sheet and discussed the possible negative side effects of checking for prostate cancer. Mr C considered that these were steps that the GP need not have taken.

He raised a complaint about the matter but the practice maintained that the GP had acted reasonably, and within guidance. Mr C then told the practice that he would no longer see the GP, even in an emergency. The practice replied explaining that they considered his behaviour towards the GP to have been unacceptable. They said they would be unable to continue to provide services if he was unable to accept treatment from the GP in an emergency. As Mr C did not wish to comply with the practice's request, they wrote telling him that they intended to remove him from their list of patients.

We took advice from our medical adviser, and found that the steps that the GP had taken during the consultation were in accordance with best practice. We were unable to establish Mr C's allegations of rudeness and aggressiveness without some independent evidence. We found that the evidence of the communications between Mr C and the practice indicated that the doctor/patient relationship had broken down. This gave the practice reasonable grounds to issue a warning, and eventually ask Mr C to leave the practice.