

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303187, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

When Mrs C's young daughter (Miss A) became ill, she was taken to her medical practice, where she was treated for an upper respiratory tract infection. The next day Miss A attended an emergency appointment there, as her condition had deteriorated. As she was clearly unwell, the practice referred her urgently to hospital. She was treated for a viral infection and discharged home without follow-up. A few days later, she was again taken to a further emergency appointment at the practice, where, in view of the hospital's recent diagnosis, doctors advised Mrs C to continue with the treatment previously recommended. However, Miss A's condition continued to decline and she was admitted to hospital. She later spent a number of weeks in intensive care after being diagnosed with pneumonia.

Mrs C complained that the practice showed little concern or empathy for her daughter's declining condition. She said that they had failed to take appropriate action on her symptoms as a consequence of which Miss A suffered distress and unnecessary suffering. We took independent advice on this case from one of our medical advisers, and took all the relevant information (including the complaints correspondence and Miss A's clinical notes) into account. We did not uphold the complaint, as our adviser said that the records indicated that the treatment given to Miss A was reasonable and that doctors made a reasonable working diagnosis. The adviser also said that Miss A went on to develop a rare and unusual medical condition, and there was nothing in her notes to suggest that this was developing.