

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303371, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his father (Mr A) who lives in a care home. Mr C was unhappy that Mr A's GP did not visit his father there, but instead spoke to care home staff by phone. He was also unhappy with the GP's responses to his complaint about this. We looked at Mr A's medical records, as well as the GP's file on the complaint, and took independent advice on the complaint from one of our medical advisers, who is a GP.

We found that on two occasions the GP did not take sufficient time to fully assess and clarify the situation after Mr A had collapsed. Instead, the GP made an assumption about why he had collapsed. We also found that the GP did not take account of key aspects of Mr A's medical history when considering how to manage his situation. In addition, we found that it was inappropriate for the GP to use the fact that Mr A was being seen as a day patient at a local hospital as a reason not to visit him.

We upheld both of Mr C's complaints. We found that, in the main response to Mr C's complaint, the GP appeared to have given up responsibility for Mr A's primary care, as they had said there was little they could do because he was being supervised by various hospital departments. The GP also made general statements about the workload of modern medical practices, and said that other patients in residential care visited the surgery. We concluded that, while this may be contextual information, it did not explain why the GP failed to visit Mr A. We found these responses unreasonable and highlighted that the GP may not have recognised the serious nature of Mr A's situation.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- ensure that the GP apologises to Mr C for failing to assess and care for Mr A appropriately, and for not visiting Mr A in the care home;
- ensure that the GP apologises to Mr C for failing to provide reasonable responses to his complaint;
- ensure that the GP apologises to the care home manager and nursing staff for failing to respond appropriately to their requests for help; and
- ensure that the GP reflects on our adviser's comments and informs us of how they would deal with similar events in future.