

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303595, A Medical Practice in the Borders NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's mother (Mrs A) is 92 years old. Mrs C complained about the length of time that her mother had to wait for a flu vaccination. Mrs A had requested a home visit for the vaccination and initially the medical practice had refused, saying that their policy was that only housebound patients were entitled to this. However, they then changed their mind and passed the request to district nursing staff to arrange. After a few days, Mrs A had received no contact from either the practice or the district nurses. She contacted the practice and was given a surgery appointment, where the vaccination was administered.

The practice confirmed to us that their policy was that only housebound patients were given a home visit for this, but that they had made an exception in Mrs A's case. District nurses had to prioritise flu vaccinations, and gave clinical priority to housebound patients and those in residential homes or sheltered housing complexes. The practice explained that Mrs A would have received the flu vaccination at home by the end of the month in which she got it, in line with their guidelines. We took independent advice on this from one of our medical advisers, who confirmed that the practice's actions were appropriate. He had no concerns that the home visit was not carried out earlier or that the priority afforded to the request was unreasonable, and we found no evidence of any avoidable delays in dealing with Mrs A's request.