

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201304600, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C, an advocacy worker, complained on behalf of her client (Mr A). She said that Mr A's medical practice had not passed on information to him that the hospital had given to them about a change in his treatment plan. We sought independent advice on this from one of our medical advisers, who said that it was the hospital's responsibility to pass this on, unless the hospital or patient asked the practice for information. We also noted from Mr A's medical records that a particular letter from the hospital to the practice would have led the practice to believe that the hospital had made Mr A aware of the change.

The practice had also written in Mr A's medical records that they were having difficulties dealing with his family, and that they were trying to resolve the situation but so far this had not been successful. In the meantime, a locum doctor would normally see Mr A and his family at the practice or at the hospital, although the GPs at the practice would see them if there was an emergency. Mrs C complained that the practice had not told the family that they considered there were difficulties and that, if the family had known earlier, they would have changed to another medical practice. The evidence in Mr A's medical records, however, showed that the practice were proactively and constructively trying to address and repair the relationship problem, and our adviser saw no reason why they should have passed on the information in the records. We also noted that, although it would have been open to the practice to warn the family that if the situation did not improve they would be removed from the list of patients, the practice did not do this but were appropriately trying to resolve matters, which was good practice.

Mrs C also complained about a point in relation to the practice's handling of her complaint, but we could not establish the facts about this. We did not uphold any of Mrs C's complaints.