SPSO decision report

SPSO Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Case:	**201402368, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area**
Sector:	health
Subject:	lists (incl difficulty registering and removal from lists)
Outcome:	upheld, action taken by body to rememdy, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her daughter (Ms A) that a medical practice would not register Ms A because she did not attend a new patient medical consultation. Mrs C also complained that the practice manager did not return Ms A's phone calls when she was trying to explain why she missed the consultation.

We found that the practice's policy at the time was to refuse registration to people who failed to attend for a new patient medical consultation. However, two months later, the health board wrote to all practices in their area to clarify the regulations for registration. In their letter to us, the practice acknowledged that their policy and their actions were incorrect when they did not register Ms A. The regulations for registration, set out in The National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004, say that new patients shall be invited to a consultation, but do not say that attendance is mandatory. The regulations also say that registration could only be refused on reasonable grounds, which did not appear to include failure to attend a new patient medical consultation.

The practice also explained that the practice manager did not return Ms A's phone calls because there was a breakdown in communication. They said they would apologise to Ms A, and explained to us what they had done to address all these failures, including carrying out a significant event analysis to understand what had gone wrong and how they could improve.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise to Ms A in writing for their failure to register her as a patient;
- offer Ms A the opportunity to register, if she wishes to do so; and
- provide us with a copy of their significant event analysis and the review of their complaints handling processes.