

SPSO decision report

Case: 201600097, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his constituent (Mrs B). Mrs B was concerned about the care her mother (Mrs A) received from her medical practice.

Mrs A was receiving palliative care in the home from Mrs B and the district nursing service. Mrs B was concerned that the GPs at the practice did not undertake home visits to provide medical and emotional palliative care support for her and her mother. In particular, Mrs B felt that a GP should have visited in the days prior to her mother's death. We took independent advice from a GP adviser. The adviser was satisfied that the GPs visited Mrs A on a reasonable number of occasions. Similarly, they did not find evidence that the GPs unreasonably failed to visit in the days before Mrs A's death and noted that the medical records did not indicate that an urgent home visit was clinically required at this time. Furthermore, the adviser did not consider that the practice had unreasonably failed to provide a reasonable level of support and guidance to Mrs B. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Mrs B also expressed concern that the practice had not responded to her complaint in a compassionate manner. We found that the practice had not followed their own complaints procedure in this instance in that they had not adopted as conciliatory and sympathetic a tone as possible when responding to the complaint. We further considered that the practice had failed to respond to the complaint in a person-centred way as required by the Scottish Government's 'Can I help you?' guidance for handling healthcare complaints. For these reasons, we upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise for failing to respond reasonably to Mrs B's complaint; and
- feed back the findings of this investigation to staff in the practice responsible for responding to complaints.