

SPSO decision report

Case: 201600975, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her clients (Mr and Ms B) about care their daughter (Miss A) received from her medical practice. They also complained about the response to their complaint.

Miss A attended her medical practice on three occasions over two months. On the third attendance she was seen by a locum doctor who urgently referred her to hospital where she was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Miss A died later that month.

We sought independent medical advice. The adviser's view was that no symptoms were recorded at Miss A's earlier appointments that would have indicated a serious neurological problem and that the treatment given was reasonable. The adviser said the only significant symptom appeared in the last consultation, where Miss A was appropriately referred to hospital. For these reasons, we did not uphold this complaint.

However, we did uphold Ms C's complaint about the practice's response to the complaint as there were unreasonable delays in responding and third-party information was included in the response when it should not have been.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- provide us with a copy of their complaints handling procedure demonstrating compliance with the Patient Rights Act and government guidance 'Can I Help You?';
- reassure us that they have a robust system for recording and storing complaints documentation; and
- ensure that the GP concerned undergoes relevant appraisal with regard to complaints handling.