

SPSO decision report

Case: 201603200, A Medical Practice in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the medical practice on behalf of his mother (Mrs A). Mrs A was discharged from hospital and given three new medications. On learning of these new medications, the practice decided to carry out a review of Mrs A's prescriptions, as this would result in her being prescribed 18 different medications a day.

Mrs A's GP phoned Mrs A's daughter (Mrs B) to discuss the medications as they considered that these new medications were not necessary and may cause side effects that would exacerbate Mrs A's existing conditions. Mrs B felt that the GP's manner was callous and uncaring and that the content of the call was inappropriate. Following the call, the practice decided to prescribe the medications in line with the request from Mrs A's respiratory consultant.

However, this call led Mrs A's family to decide that they would change GP practices. Mrs A died before the new practice was able to arrange Mrs A's medications.

On investigation we found that there was some discrepancy in the information available to the practice, caused by a delay in the hospital sending them Mrs A's full discharge letter. This meant that they were not in possession of the consultant's rationale for providing the new medication and had to carry out the review based on the medical history they were aware of.

Our adviser considered the relevant medical records and concluded that it was reasonable for the practice to carry out a review of Mrs A's medications in the circumstances. They also considered the conclusions reached in the review to be reasonable, based on the information available to them at that time.

On reviewing the records we were unable to see any evidence that the content or manner of the call in question was unreasonable. For these reasons, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint.