

SPSO decision report

Case: 201605327, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C was referred for an endoscopy (a camera test into her stomach) by the practice to investigate stomach pain she was suffering from. She complained that this was not appropriately followed up and that further specialist investigation was not arranged. The practice said that all relevant investigations appropriate to Miss C's condition were undertaken by them. Miss C disputed this, noting that her psychiatrist had referred to anticipated follow-up investigation for her stomach issues, in a letter to the practice. Miss C said that this follow-up was not arranged by the practice.

We took independent advice from a GP, who considered that the investigations arranged by the practice were appropriate. We found that the psychiatrist's letter was written in advance of the endoscopy appointment and that it referred to this investigation. It did not suggest that further investigation was expected. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Miss C's complaint.

Miss C also complained that some of her prescription requests were not appropriately responded to and that she had to go for long periods without her pain-killing and anti-anxiety/depression medication. The practice acknowledged that one monthly prescription for Miss C's anti-anxiety medication was missed and they apologised to her for this oversight. They also acknowledged some recording and communication issues, meaning some of Miss C's medication requests were not responded to appropriately. In particular, they recognised that an improved system was required for communicating with patients where medication requests have been declined. We upheld this aspect of Miss C's complaint, however, noted that the practice had appropriately reflected on the communication issues highlighted by this complaint and had instigated a reasonable plan to avoid similar future problems.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Miss C for the identified failures to clearly communicate with her regarding her medication requests; to issue her with her medication; and to respond to her complaint about her medication. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.