

SPSO decision report

Case: 201609108, A Medical Practice in the Tayside NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: policy / administration
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that his GP practice unreasonably failed to arrange a scan of his shoulder and that they failed to refer him to an external psychology service. Mr C also had concerns that the practice failed to consult with him following a review of his medication, and that they failed to act on a letter sent to them by a consultant neurologist regarding changes to his medication. Mr C also complained that the practice failed to provide adequate responses to his letters and that they failed to apply the correct complaints handling procedure.

Mr C required a cortisone injection in his shoulder and he requested that a scan be performed prior to receiving the injection. We took independent advice from a GP adviser and found that giving a scan prior to a cortisone injection is not standard practice in Scotland, therefore it was reasonable that the GP did not request this. We did not uphold this complaint.

We found the standard procedure would be for a clinician to make a referral to external services, such as an external psychology service, and that a GP would not usually make such a referral. We, therefore, saw no evidence of failure on the part of the practice in this regard, and did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

We found that changes to Mr C's medication were discussed with him by his consultant, and that the GP correctly followed the consultant's instructions to amend the prescription. We found that when Mr C enquired with the practice about this change, they correctly advised him to make an appointment with his GP to discuss the review of his medication. We did not uphold this complaint.

We found no evidence that the practice had failed to respond to Mr C's queries in a reasonable manner, and we did not uphold this complaint. However, we did find that the practice failed to follow the correct complaints procedure, and that they provided Mr C with the incorrect complaints procedure. The practice acknowledged this mistake, and we upheld this aspect of the complaint. We asked that the practice send us a copy of their new complaints handling procedure and evidence that all relevant staff have received training on this.

Recommendations

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Information about the complaints procedure should be accessible and made easily available to patients by providing leaflets in the practice and information on their website.

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.