

SPSO decision report

Case: 201702224, A Medical Practice in the Forth Valley NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to us about the decision making of his GP practice. Mr C had received annual checks for prostate cancer for several years. However, the practice decided to change this to every two years. When Mr C's PSA levels were next checked, they had risen considerably and Mr C was found to have developed prostate cancer. Mr C complained that the practice unreasonably changed the frequency of his prostate checks. In addition to this, he complained about a number of administrative and communication issues relating to his prescriptions and treatment following his diagnosis.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that there is currently no national guidance relating to prostate screening but noted that it was important to discuss the pros and cons with the patient so they could make an informed decision. The practice told us that a discussion had taken place but Mr C recalled that it was more a case of the practice stating a firm position and taking the decision. We were unable to confirm that a discussion had taken place. However, the records did state that Mr C should be monitored based on symptoms rather than testing and that he should be seen as required. In addition to this, an International Prostatic Symptoms Score (IPSS, a tool used to screen for, rapidly diagnose and track the symptoms of prostate enlargement) taken after the consultation showed a lower score. In light of the known information at the time of the consultation, and the fact that there is no national policy regarding screening for prostate cancer, we considered that the practice's decision was reasonable. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

In respect of the administration and communication issues, there appeared to have been some minor failings which were partly acknowledged in the practice's response to Mr C's complaint. However, we considered that the administration of prescriptions and paperwork had been largely adequate. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.