

SPSO decision report

Case: 201705806, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the practice regarding the handling and communication of decisions to reduce or remove three medications he was prescribed for chronic pain. The practice had taken steps to reduce these medications, as they considered a continued consumption of a high dosage of opiate medication was placing Mr C at risk of further health problems and addiction. However, Mr C was concerned that his pain was no longer being suitably managed and also that he was not adequately involved in the decision making process.

We took independent advice from a GP adviser. We found that the clinical decision to reduce the medications was correct, and in line with relevant guidelines. We were also satisfied that the decision to remove the prescription for one of the medications was reasonably handled and communicated. For this reason, we did not uphold the complaint about this prescription. However, we considered that the practice had failed to appropriately discuss the decisions to reduce the dosage of the other two medications with Mr C in advance of the reduction. As such, we upheld these two complaints.

Although we upheld the complaints we found that, in response to Mr C's initial complaints, it was clear that the practice had accepted the failings in question, apologised for them, and taken steps to ensure these mistakes would not be repeated. As such, we did not make any recommendations.