

SPSO decision report

Case: 201706529, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership
Sector: health and social care
Subject: policy / administration
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C and another member of her family applied for welfare powers for an adult relative. As part of that process, a Mental Health Officer (MHO) interviewed Miss C over the phone. When Miss C saw the MHO's report, she felt what she said during the interview had not been reflected accurately. Miss C complained that the partnership refused to change the report.

We found that the partnership concentrated on the issue of what was actually said or not said during the phone interview. We were critical of this approach, as it meant the central issue of what was the correct position in relation to Miss C's adult relative was overlooked. We looked at the MHO's handwritten note of the phone interview, which we found supported Miss C's view of the phone interview. The partnership did not consider the handwritten note as being the best available record of the call, which we found to be a failure on their part.

We accepted that the opportunity to review a draft of the report was not possible in the circumstances. However, as a matter of good practice, we expected that an interview would start with an explanation of what would happen with the information provided at the interview, and would end with the interviewer reflecting back to the interviewee their understanding of the points made, and seeking confirmation of that understanding. This is standard interviewing procedure, and one we expect all staff conducting interviews to be aware of. We upheld Miss C's complaint.

Recommendations