

SPSO decision report



Case: 201809223, A Medical Practice in the Lanarkshire NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the actions of staff at the GP practice when she had a seizure in the reception area. Ms C has a medical condition in which she experiences seizures. During seizures she is unable to move or speak, however, is aware of what is happening and can feel pain. Ms C complained that when she had a seizure at the GP practice, her dignity and privacy was not maintained.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that Ms C was not given appropriate privacy when she had the seizure, and this was unreasonable. We also found that Ms C's son was called to take her home in a wheelchair, before she had recovered from the seizure. Staff at the practice should have waited until Ms C had recovered in order to assess her clinically when she was fully conscious and allow her to coordinate her own transfer home as appropriate. We upheld Ms C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for the failure to act reasonably to ensure her privacy, and regarding the arrangements for her to return home. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets>.
- Review Ms C's care plan in light of the findings of this investigation, and discuss with her whether further details should be added in order to prevent similar failings recurring.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The practice should ensure that patient dignity and privacy is maintained in similar situations where a patient has a medical event such as a seizure or collapse at the practice.

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.