

SPSO decision report

Case: 202111152, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their parent (A) for whom they hold power of attorney. C complained that the practice had incorrectly diagnosed and treated A with chronic back pain. C stated that A was later admitted to hospital with a fractured back and pneumonia.

The practice advised that there was nothing to clinically suggest a fracture at the time and it would not have altered treatment. They noted that A did not have pneumonia as per hospital discharge.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that a thorough physical examination was undertaken which did not raise concerns of a fracture. We also found that appropriate pain relief is the only immediate treatment for vertebral fractures. There were no symptoms of pneumonia when the patient was seen by the GP and no suggestion of pneumonia in the medical records. We did find one mention of pneumonia in a letter between two third party medical professionals, who were not involved in A's hospital care. Therefore, we did not accept this as evidence of a pneumonia diagnosis. In light of this, we found that the overall care and treatment provided to C was reasonable and did not uphold C's complaint.