

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302723, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment provided to his father (Mr A) by the medical practice after he raised concerns about Mr A's deteriorating health. Specifically, he was concerned that doctors failed to assess his father's deteriorating mental health. Mr A refused to go into respite care, was suffering from kidney failure and liver disease and was an alcoholic. Mr C felt that his father no longer had capacity to make decisions for himself. The practice agreed that Mr A's medical condition was very poor. However, they considered that, despite not being willing to go into respite care, stop drinking or allow some visits by doctors, Mr A did have capacity to make his own decisions about his health and welfare.

We reviewed the complaints correspondence and medical records and sought independent advice from our medical adviser, who is a GP. We found that a formal mental health assessment was carried out a couple of weeks before these events and that Mr A had scored highly. In addition, our adviser noted that doctors reviewed Mr A's mental health whenever they visited him and that the records of this did not show any concerns. In addition to the reviews by doctors from the practice, Mr A attended the local renal unit for kidney dialysis, where he had to give informed consent for this procedure to be carried out three times a week. Doctors in the renal unit were also content that he had capacity to make such decisions. As we found no evidence to support the view that doctors had failed to properly assess Mr A's mental health, and as the care provided was reasonable in this regard, we did not uphold the complaint.