

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507683, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who received treatment for high blood pressure and kidney disease, complained that GPs at his medical practice had not monitored his blood pressure reasonably, and that this had caused damage to his kidneys. In response to Mr C's complaint, the practice said that his blood pressure had been monitored in accordance with the relevant guidelines.

We took independent medical advice. The adviser was satisfied that it was appropriate for the practice to measure Mr C's blood pressure at whatever time he attended for an appointment and noted that there was no requirement in the guidelines stating that blood pressure cannot be taken in the morning, or after a patient's medication has been taken. The adviser considered that both Mr C's blood pressure and kidney function had been monitored with reasonable regularity and in accordance with the relevant requirements. Furthermore, the adviser did not have concerns about the medication prescribed to Mr C by the practice and concluded that there was no evidence that the practice had failed to adequately monitor Mr C's blood pressure or that their actions had contributed to reduced kidney function. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Mr C also complained that the practice did not respond reasonably to his complaint. In response to our enquiries, the practice identified that some of the complaint correspondence did not meet a number of the requirements of the Patients Rights (Scotland) Act 2011. The practice told us that the practice manager had undertaken to fully familiarise themselves with the requirements of the Act and that they would update the practice's complaints procedure to reflect the requirements. Although we found that many aspects of the practice's handling of the complaint were reasonable, we were critical that the practice had not followed the guidance in relation to acknowledging complaints and updating complainants after a delay. We therefore upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise to Mr C for failing to handle his complaint in accordance with the relevant guidance; and
- provide this office with a copy of their updated complaints procedure.