

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201600847, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that, following his discharge from hospital, his medical practice unreasonably failed to contact him for more than 48 hours, and unreasonably failed to carry out a home visit despite his request for one. The practice responded to his complaint by apologising for any lack of care which Mr C felt he had received, but explained that the discharging unit at the hospital usually take responsibility for co-ordinating with community care and district nursing teams. They also noted that where there was a medical need for immediate post-discharge medical input, hospital clinicians would usually communicate this directly to the practice. We noted that Mr C requested a home visit when on the way home from hospital by visiting the practice and dropping off a letter.

We took independent advice from a GP adviser. The adviser reviewed Mr C's medical records and said there was no indication that a house visit was necessary, as it appeared that Mr C was able to attend the practice for an appointment. The adviser also noted that the decision whether or not to offer a home visit lies with the clinician, and should be based on clinical need. The adviser confirmed that it is not routine practice for GPs to contact patients who have been discharged from hospital once they have returned home, although they may do so following a review of the patient's discharge medication and history. The adviser noted that in this case the practice had reviewed Mr C's medication and history and contacted him by phone within 48 hours of his request and considered this reasonable.

The adviser also commented that if there was a clinical need for contact from the GP, this would have been detailed on the discharge letter from the hospital. There was no request for contact in Mr C's discharge letter. It was unfortunate that reception staff at the practice did not make clear to Mr C that home visits would only be carried out on the basis of clinical need, and by phone request on the day. However, we were satisfied that the evidence suggested that a home visit was not required, and that the time taken by the practice to contact Mr C following discharge was reasonable. We did not uphold this complaint.