SPSO decision report



Case: 201603357, NHS 24

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the care provided to her father-in-law (Mr A) during a call to NHS 24. Mr A reported that he had been suffering with a cold and cough for five days with symptoms including dizziness, pain in the chest area and a fever. He had also been sick and, while he could drink water, he had not taken his medications. The NHS 24 call handler took details from Mr A and passed these on to a pharmacist. The pharmacist recommended that he buy a medicine to help suppress his cough and allow him to take his other medication. Mr A was also advised on what to do should his condition worsen.

Mr A had further contact with the out-of-hours services the following day. He was later admitted to hospital and died as a result of sepsis (blood infection). Ms C complained about Mr A's first call with NHS 24 as she felt that he had not received appropriate advice or care.

We took independent advice from a practitioner experienced in out-of-hours services. The advice we received was that the care and treatment recommended were reasonable on the basis of the information that was available to the call handler and the pharmacist. The adviser considered that appropriate safety advice had been provided by NHS 24 on what to do if Mr A's condition should worsen. No failings were identified in the way that Mr A was managed by NHS 24 and therefore we did not uphold Ms C's complaint.