

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201607591, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment provided to her late mother (Mrs A) by the practice. In particular, she complained that Mrs A had not been seen by a medical professional before antibiotics were prescribed to her, and, further, that she had not been seen when the antibiotics were subsequently changed.

We took independent advice from an advanced nurse practitioner. We found that a home visit should have been carried out before the antibiotics were prescribed to Mrs A and that, as such a visit did not take place, it was even more important that a review should have been undertaken of Mrs A before her antibiotics were changed. The advice we received was that there was a lack of detail in the clinical records and that it was not clear from the records what symptoms Mrs A had when the decision to change antibiotics was made. We were concerned that the practice had failed to follow guidelines that all older patients suspected of having a urinary tract infection, like Mrs A was, should be seen and fully examined. In light of these failings, we upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Mrs C also complained that the practice had inappropriately decided not to undertake a home visit after she had contacted them a number of times. We found that, when the visit was requested, Mrs A had deteriorated and she needed to be seen or arrangements needed to be made for admission to hospital. We also found that, whilst reasonable advice had been given to Mrs C to contact the ambulance service if Mrs A's condition deteriorated, there was a delay in this advice being given to Mrs C. The practice accepted that a home visit should have been carried out. We upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Finally, Mrs C complained that the member of staff she was complaining about had responded to her complaint. We found that neither the Scottish Government guidance on complaints handling which was in place at the time of the complaint, or the new NHS Scotland model complaints handling procedure introduced since the complaint was made, specified that the person being complained about should not handle a complaint. In view of this, we did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mrs C for the failings identified in relation to the clinical treatment provided to Mrs A and for the failure to carry out home visits.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The practice should follow guidelines in relation to diagnosing urinary tract infections in adults aged 65 and over.
- The practice should maintain records in line with relevant guidelines.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.