

SPSO decision report



Case: 202103490, Fife Health and Social Care Partnership
Sector: Health and Social Care
Subject: Assessments / self-directed support
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their client (A) about Fife Health and Care Partnership's (HSCP) assessment of A's needs and the level of support being provided by the HSCP. A is registered blind and has a number of other health conditions, including diabetic neuropathy (nerve damage) requiring A to use a wheelchair.

C complained to the HSCP that support previously available for C to access the community or go shopping had been withdrawn. C also believed that the HSCP operated a blanket policy not to fund services to support service users to access the community or go shopping.

In response to the complaint, the HSCP said that the arrangement to go shopping was via an unregistered cleaner and that the Care Inspectorate identified issues with this, and the worker was removed. They explained that a worker taking A shopping was not deemed as critical care criteria, that they could not offer funding for it and that alternative options were not taken up by A.

We took independent advice from an adult social work adviser. We found that, whilst there was evidence that the HSCP undertook an assessment of A's needs, the assessment was unclear about what needs were assessed as being critical and substantial, and therefore eligible for funding. We also found that the Assessment and Support Plan failed to offer sufficient detail about the discussions with and options available to A with respect to the support available. We upheld the complaint that the assessment of A's care plan was unreasonable.

With respect to complaints made about the operation of a blanket policy, it was noted that a number of statements and comments in A's case notes and assessments gave the impression that this may be the case. However, whilst we found failings with respect to the assessments in this case, there was no evidence available which demonstrated that the HSCP operated a blanket policy not to fund access to social supports or the community. We did not therefore uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to A via their representative C for the failings. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

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

- Reflect on this decision, and the relevant Assessment and Support Plan, in this case and ensure that assessments are clear with respect to the needs of the individual and the assessment of needs according to the relevant eligibility criteria for support.

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.