

SPSO decision report



Case: 202207640, A Medical Practice in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area

Sector: Health

Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the practice failed to provide them with reasonable care and treatment. C suffered from inflammatory conditions of the skin and joints and was under the care of rheumatology (specialists in the diagnosis and management of chronic inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis), dermatology (specialists in the in the diagnosis and treatment of skin disorders) and the practice. C was being prescribed an immunosuppressant and the practice was in a shared care agreement with the NHS board for monitoring bloods in regards to the prescription. C required a liver transplant due to liver cirrhosis induced by the treatment. C complained that the practice had not properly monitored their bloods, had not picked up on warning signs and had not communicated appropriately with the relevant specialists or with C. C noted that they had also been incorrectly prescribed an antibiotic containing penicillin.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that the practice had monitored bloods appropriately, and where there were gaps in monitoring, C's attendance had been requested. We also found that the practice had sought specialist advice and followed NICE guidelines appropriately. We noted that the practice had verbally apologised for the penicillin mistake. Therefore, we did not uphold this part of C's complaint but fed back to the practice that it would be appropriate to apologise in writing.

C also complained that they were immediately removed from the practice register after making a comment on social media expressing concerns about their treatment. C noted that they were given no warning and that their poor health, vulnerability and their requirement for continuity of care were not taken into account. We found that the practice had not followed guidelines in respect of removing the patient from the register, without warning. Therefore, we upheld this part of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for prescribing an antibiotic containing penicillin, which they were allergic to. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.
- Apologise to C for the manner in which their removal from the practice register was handled. 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:

- Reconsideration of the social media policy and patient removal policy and process, such that they are in line with BMA and GMC guidance.

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.