

SPSO decision report



Case: 202402261, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained about the treatment provided to their parent (A) who was a resident in a care home. C said that the practice failed to provide A with appropriate treatment for repeat urinary tract infections (UTIs) and continued to prescribe incorrect antibiotics despite urine tests showing that resistant bacteria was present. C also considered that a referral to urology (specialists in the male and female urinary tract, and the male reproductive organs) omitted important information.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that the referral to urology was reasonable, timely and appropriate. In relation to antibiotic treatment for UTIs, we noted that caution should be exercised in basing treatment solely on microbiology results in the absence of other relevant symptoms. This is because bacteria being present in a urine sample does not automatically mean there is an infection. This is especially true in patients who are elderly and patients who are catheterised.

However, we did not find that the prescribing was reckless or without a clinical basis, despite there being occasions when antibiotics were prescribed when they were not strictly indicated. The practice has identified areas for improvement in relation to prescribing antibiotics in the absence of symptoms and communicating with families.

We concluded that the treatment provided to A was broadly reasonable. Therefore, we did not uphold this complaint.