

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201100156, Grampian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C said that she experienced pain and difficulty eating after having her tooth filled. She was unhappy that, when she twice called the dental practice about the pain she was suffering, reception staff advised her to call the emergency dentist. We did not uphold Miss C's complaint about her dental treatment. We could not find enough evidence to support what Miss C said about the phone calls she said she made to the dental practice after the treatment, or what was discussed with the reception staff. We noted that when Miss C visited a different dentist a few months later, the filling was removed and a small exposure of the pulp tissue was found (the pulp is the central soft core of the tooth, sometimes referred to as the nerve). Our dental adviser said that exposure of the pulp is relatively common when providing a deep filling and can often go undetected as it can be fractions of a millimetre in size. In Miss C's case, our adviser said that it was possible that a small exposure occurred following the tooth being filled but did not consider that the treatment was inappropriate. We did, however, uphold Miss C's complaint about complaints handling, as we found that the board had not provided a full and comprehensive response to her complaint. We noted that the board's feedback services are currently under review.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Ms C for not responding fully to her complaint; and
- update the Ombudsman when the Feedback Service review is completed.