

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201704207, A Dentist in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr and Mrs C complained on behalf of their daughter (Ms A) about the orthodontic treatment (a speciality field of dentistry that deals with malpositioned teeth and the jaws) she received. Ms A underwent orthodontic treatment to treat mild crowding of her teeth (when there is not enough space for all teeth to fit normally within the jaws). Four of her teeth were removed, and braces were fitted. After the braces were removed Mr and Mrs C were concerned that the treatment had changed Ms A's facial profile and affected her lip support. They believed that there had been other methods of treatment available, which they felt that the orthodontist had failed to discuss with Ms A.

We took independent advice from a dental and orthodontic adviser. We found that Ms A's overcrowding was treated appropriately and that a good result was achieved. We did not uphold the complaint about the treatment provided.

Mr and Mrs C also complained that the orthodontist failed to obtain Ms A's informed consent before proceeding with the treatment. We found that there was no evidence of a proper discussion of the problem that Ms A presented with or the expectations she had of any treatment. We also did not see any evidence of any information being given to Ms A about what treatment options were available. We upheld this aspect of the complaint.

Finally, Mr and Mrs C complained about their way that their complaint was handled by the orthodontist. We found that the complaint had been handled appropriately and in a timely manner. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise for failing to obtain valid consent to the treatment plan, with recognition of the implications of failing to obtain full consent on the choices made. The apology should meet the standards on apology set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance](http://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance).

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

- The quality of the orthodontist's clinical treatment notes should be improved. In particular, they should focus on improving the way they document orthodontic assessments, gather orthodontic records and use them to ensure that a comprehensive explanation

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.