

SPSO decision report

Case: 201805751, A Dentist in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained to us that a dentist had failed to provide reasonable care and treatment to her. She said that the dentist inappropriately removed an inlay despite the fact that this had not caused her any problems.

We took independent advice from a dental adviser. We found that it had been reasonable for the dentist to remove the inlay, as there was evidence of decay, and to carry out drilling on the tooth to do so. We also found that it was reasonable for the dentist to refer Ms C to a specialist for root canal treatment. There were no failings by the dentist that led Ms C to develop an infection. The presence of decay meant that there was a risk of infection for Ms C, with or without treatment, and this risk would increase through time, given that the decay would most likely spread further. However, we found that there was insufficient evidence that the dentist gave Ms C adequate information about the likelihood of infection. Therefore, we upheld the complaint for this specific reason.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for this failing. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [HYPERLINK "http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets"](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets) www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets .

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

- Dentists should ensure that, where appropriate, patients are given adequate information about the likelihood of infection and that this is documented.

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.