

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201202323, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C attended the board's dental service, as her dentures were loose and uncomfortable. She had a new lower denture fitted and her top denture relined. However, she found the new dentures uncomfortable from the outset and returned to the service. The dentist made her a new lower denture based on her original dentures. Mrs C was unable to eat with these dentures and they caused her pain. She went back to the dental service again and was referred to the dental hospital. She was told to wear her old dentures in the meantime, as they fitted better.

Mrs C saw a consultant at the hospital. He suggested replicating her old dentures, and adding a permanent soft lining material. He placed her on the waiting list for treatment by postgraduates at the hospital. However, at that time, they were reaching the end of their placements and were unable to offer treatment to new patients. Mrs C told us that due to the delay, she decided to get private treatment. She said that the dentist she saw privately was able to make her dentures without any difficulty.

Our investigation found that the board had failed to let Mrs C know that there would be a delay in her treatment because the postgraduates were unable to offer treatment to new patients at that time. Due to the delay that occurred as a result of this, the board failed to meet the 18 weeks referral to treatment target. Although the board's view was that the dentures made by the dental service were not defective, we found that they had accepted that the dentures were not fit for purpose by agreeing to make new ones.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- consider how they can prevent delays for patients referred to postgraduates at the dental hospital for treatment; and
- refund the money Mrs C paid for dentures that she was unable to wear.
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