

SPSO decision report

Case: 201202822, A Dentist in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that when he went to the practice for root canal treatment, the dentist fractured a crown and broke a portion of a front tooth. The dentist put in the existing crown, which lasted for two days. Mr C returned to the practice, but a further repair only lasted a day. Mr C obtained an emergency appointment with another dentist who inserted a temporary crown. On returning to the first dentist for further treatment Mr C explained he had been in a lot of pain and was unhappy that he had to pay for a new crown.

The practice said that Mr C had agreed to save the tooth and in order to carry out root treatment it was necessary to drill through the inner surface of the tooth/crown. At that point it was not possible to ascertain how much tooth structure was present below the crown. The practice said that the first dentist explained this to Mr C and that a fractured crown is a recognised problem which occurs fairly commonly after root treatments. The practice went on to say that it was also relatively common for temporary crowns to fall out, as normally they are only used for two weeks until permanent restoration can take place.

Mr C complained to us that the treatment options were not explained to him and he was not told the crown could be damaged. After taking independent advice from a dental adviser, we found that clinically the treatment which had been provided was appropriate. However, we upheld part of Mr C's complaint as we found no recorded evidence that the dentist had communicated the risks to him.

Recommendations

We recommended that the dentist:

- reflects on the importance of completing detailed records regarding communication with patients.