

SPSO decision report

Case: 201303934, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that an out-of-hours (OOH) dentist had failed to provide him with appropriate treatment when extracting one of his teeth. He said that the dentist was unable to administer the anaesthetic competently, causing him unnecessary pain and discomfort. Mr C said that the extraction was also incompetent, causing the fracture of the tooth and damage to the adjacent tooth.

Mr C raised his concerns with the board, and they investigated his treatment. They found that the records of his appointment were too brief for the treatment to be assessed. They asked the dentist in question to voluntarily remove himself from the OOH rota until he had received training on his record-keeping. The board apologised to Mr C for his dissatisfaction with the treatment he had received and arranged for him to be reviewed by a senior member of the OOH dental service.

We took independent advice on the case from a dental adviser, who said that the standard of record-keeping was inadequate. Because of this, it was not possible to comment on Mr C's description of his treatment. The adviser said that the extraction was appropriate, given Mr C's symptoms and that in difficult extractions, damage could occur to surrounding teeth. There was no evidence from later treatment, however, that the extraction had caused damage. Our investigation found that although the record-keeping was inadequate, the board had taken action to address this before Mr C made his formal complaint. The lack of records did not allow us to comment on how Mr C's treatment was carried out, but we found that extraction was the appropriate treatment in the circumstances.