

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508552, A Dentist in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the treatment provided by her dentist. Mrs C said the treatment she received was unsatisfactory and as a result she had been left with problems with her teeth for which she held the practice responsible. Mrs C had attended two appointments with a dentist in the practice to re-cement a temporary crown and then to fit a new crown.

We took independent advice from a dental adviser who said that the dentist had noted that the crown did not fit well due to an overgrowth of the gum around the tooth, which the adviser explained was a common occurrence when a tooth has been without a crown or temporary crown for some time. The adviser said that the dentist had quite correctly, and in Mrs C's best interests, decided that this was not acceptable and took remedial action to deal with the problem by excising the excess gum tissue under local anaesthetic and taking impressions for the crown to be remade. The adviser said that the treatment provided by the dentist was reasonable. We accepted that advice and did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.

However, the adviser also commented that because Mrs C saw the first dentist with an available appointment whenever she contacted the practice, she was seen and treated by six different dentists in the practice over several months. The adviser said this may have resulted in a failure in communication in that Mrs C was not provided with consistent messages and advice about her treatment, so we made a recommendation about this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the dentist:

- work with other dentists in the practice to give consideration to ensuring that, where a patient is seen and treated by more than one dentist, appropriate processes are in place so that the patient is given consistent messages and advice about their dental treatment.