

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201608679, A Dentist in the Tayside NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C complained about the treatment a dentist provided to her over a number of years. We took independent advice from a dental adviser. We found that there was a failure by the dentist to observe decay in three teeth, and possibly other teeth. Consequently, the dentist failed to plan for the management and treatment of the affected teeth. This meant that Miss C's decay profile was wrong, and she did not receive the level of observation and intervention needed, which led to an increase in the risk of decay and a significant impact on the health of her gums. We also found that fillings placed by the dentist were of a poor standard. We concluded that the treatment provided to Miss C was below a reasonable standard and we upheld her complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Miss C for failing to observe decay, which meant a failure to plan appropriately for the management and treatment of her teeth. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.
- The dentist should make a payment to Miss C, equivalent to the costs of care and treatment provided (excluding an amount already paid as a goodwill gesture) as redress for Miss C not getting the level of observation and intervention needed.

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

- The dentist should ensure that they have the professional knowledge and skills to understand and act on decay diagnosis on radiographs.
- The dentist should ensure that they have the professional knowledge and skills to achieve proper placement and finishing of fillings within teeth.

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.