

SPSO decision report

Case: 201707641, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication / staff attitude / dignity / confidentiality
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C arranged an emergency appointment at the out-of-hours dental service as she was suffering from toothache. The dentist performed the first stage of a root canal treatment, however they experienced difficulty in accessing all the root canals. Ms C's tooth pain worsened and she had to return to the out-of-hours dental service the following day and she opted to have the tooth extracted. Ms C complained that the dentist failed to properly explain the treatment options to enable her to give informed consent. She also complained the dentist failed to provide the appropriate treatment and that, had the dentist informed her of the difficulty they would have performing the treatment, she would have opted to have the tooth extracted.

The board explained that the dentist had difficulty accessing all the root canals and this would explain why Ms C had significant post-operative pain, however, they did not consider that the dentist failed to provide the appropriate treatment or that they failed to appropriately explain the treatment options.

We took independent advice from a dentist. We found that it was not possible to identify from scans taken of Ms C's mouth that the root canal treatment would be so difficult to perform, therefore the appropriate treatment was provided. We also found that the information provided to Ms C in terms of treatment options was reasonable in the context of an emergency service setting. We did not uphold Ms C's complaints.