

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202408340, A Dental Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area

**Sector:** Health

**Subject:** Lists (incl difficulty registering and removal from lists)

**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained about being de-registered from their dental practice. C also complained that the practice failed to handle their complaint reasonably. Due to a broken tooth, C phoned for an emergency appointment and was told they could attend the same day. However when C arrived, they were given a temporary substance to place over the tooth until an appointment the next day. When C later phoned the practice to explain their situation had worsened, they were told to wait until the following day. C emailed the practice to complain about the service they had received but returned the following day to have the tooth treated. A year later, C requested an emergency appointment but was told that they had been de-registered and would not be seen.

We found that there was only very limited evidence to show that the de-registration letter was ever sent and that there was a delay in doing so. We found that the lack of record keeping in this case has made it difficult to assess the practice's complaint handling. This in itself is unreasonable, given the concerns C raised. Overall, we upheld both complaints.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the specific failings identified in respect of the complaint. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets).

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

- Patients should be notified of de-registration from the practice within a reasonable timeframe. Letters sent by post should be correctly addressed.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- All complaints should be handled in line with the NHS Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP). In particular, where an early resolution response is provided, a full and accurate record of the decision reached and given to the person should be made. We offer SPSO accredited Complaints Handling training. Details and registration forms for our online self-guided Good Complaints Handling course (Stage 1) and our online trainer-led Complaints Investigation Skills course (Stage 2) are available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/training-courses>.

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.