

Case: 201101093, A Dental Practice, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: complaints handling
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that he had an appointment which was canceled by his dental practice, without the practice informing Mr C. When he complained to the practice, Mr C claimed that the practice neither acknowledged or responded to his complaint.

The investigation established that Mr C had treatment in October 2010 with which he was not satisfied. He complained to the practice in December 2010. The practice manager acknowledged Mr C's complaint and arranged an appointment for him to see one of the dentists to review the tooth and carry out any remedial work on a date in January 2011. A week before the appointment, the practice was contacted by another dentist and told that Mr C was now registered with that other practice and he was requesting Mr C's dental records. The records were sent to the new practice and the appointment was cancelled.

We found that the practice's actions were reasonable and, therefore, we did not uphold the complaint. On the complaints handling issue, the practice provided information that showed that they had responded to Mr C's complaint. Mr C stated that he then wrote again to the practice in February 2011, hand-delivering a letter and following up with emails in April.

The practice manager told us that the reception area is always very busy but that if a letter was hand-delivered she would expect it to be either given to her directly or put in her pigeon-hole. This did not happen in this case and in view of the intervening time the practice manager was unable to explain why. It was established that the emails had been sent to an obsolete address and were never received by the practice. In view of the lack of evidence, no decision was reached on this particular complaint.