

SPSO decision report

Case: 201105207, A Dentist in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the treatment he received from his dentist in 2009. He had problems with a crown on one of his teeth. He said that the dentist told him that it could no longer support a crown, it had to be removed and a bridge structure from a neighbouring tooth would be a remedy. The tooth was removed with difficulty (it took twenty minutes) and a temporary denture was fitted. Particles of bone later broke through the surface of the gum. Nine months later Mr C returned to the practice and saw another dentist as his had left. The new dentist said that the suggestion of a crown and bridge structure was not practicable and that it would cost several thousand pounds to rectify the problem privately. Mr C was shocked at the cost as he had expected that treatment costs would be in the region of several hundred pounds. He complained that the dentist failed to provide him with a reasonable standard of dental treatment and a treatment plan, or to explain the likely costs prior to carrying out the dental treatment.

After taking independent advice from our dental adviser, we found that that the dentist's decision to extract the tooth and the extraction itself were reasonable. We also found evidence that Mr C was provided with a treatment plan of the extraction and replacement denture, and about costs. Although we found no treatment plan for any potential bridgework discussed between Mr C and the dentist, we considered that this was also reasonable. This is because any further work that might be required would normally be discussed later with the patient when they returned for the treatment. We did not uphold Mr C's complaints, but we made recommendations about two related points that we noted during our investigation.

Recommendations

We recommended that the dentist:

- consider taking preoperative x-rays of teeth that are going to be extracted; and
- ensure all treatment plans are signed by the patient and scanned into the dental records.