

Case: 201100178, A Dental Practice, Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis

Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C made several complaints about her dental practice. She complained that her dentist failed to deliver the appropriate treatment and service when she asked him to check on her bridge. She also complained that either the dentist or the dental practice failed to ensure that the dental hospital received her x-rays within a reasonable time, and that the failure to do so led to a delay in her being seen at the dental hospital and so exacerbated the decay in the teeth supporting the bridge.

On investigation we found that the actions of the dentist did not result in the loss of the bridge. The bridge had failed due to Ms C having extensive decay in both supporting teeth. The dentist had provided Ms C with appropriate advice, which was to have a new bridge fitted or otherwise for him to refer her to the dental hospital. Therefore, we did not uphold this part of Ms C's complaint.

Ms C asked to be referred to the dental hospital. Following the referral, x-rays were required by the dental hospital. However, due to a lack of record-keeping by the dental practice, our investigation was unable to establish what had occurred regarding the taking of the x-rays and when they were sent to and received by the dental hospital. We, therefore, found that the dentist or the dental practice failed to ensure that the dental hospital received the x-rays within a reasonable time and upheld this part of Ms C's complaint.

We accepted that, as a result, Ms C had to wait a number of months before being seen and given a diagnosis at the dental hospital. While we considered that part of this delay was caused by the dental hospital not having Ms C's x-rays we also considered that part of the delay was also due to Ms C's personal circumstances. Furthermore, while the delay caused by the lack of x-rays was unfortunate we considered that it would not have had any effect on

the outcome in Ms C's case and we, therefore, did not uphold this part of the complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- review their record-keeping so that telephone calls received and made in relation to a patient's treatment are recorded; and
- review their practices and procedures so as to ensure that a patient's x-rays, where appropriate, are sent to and received by the dental hospital.