

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201202847, A Dentist in the Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment/diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C had been a patient of a dentist at the practice for 20 years. She visited him complaining of toothache and a history of loosening teeth, and he referred her for a specialist assessment, mainly to discuss an implant and bridge. The specialist she attended told Mrs C that she had chronic adult periodontal disease (a condition involving infections of the gums and bone that surround and support the teeth). This had resulted in significant bone loss, and she also had a chronic infection. The specialist suggested a number of options for dealing with the problem but warned that the damage done would be difficult to address.

Mrs C complained that her dentist did not identify or treat her for periodontal disease and that, as a consequence, her teeth and gums had deteriorated to the extent that it would be difficult to maintain her remaining teeth or deal with the problem with which she had been left.

As part of our investigation, we obtained independent advice from one of our dental advisers. Our adviser confirmed that the dental records made by Mrs C's dentist were minimal and that there was no explicit diagnosis or treatment plan. There was no evidence that he had told her that she had serious periodontal disease or that she had been given any preventative advice. Given Mrs C's symptoms, we found that the dentist should have at least carried out a basic periodontal examination and taken x-rays, but he did not do so.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the dentist:

- apologise to Mrs C for his failure in this matter; and
- discuss this matter at his next professional appraisal and provide evidence that he has done so.

*When this report was first published on 27 March 2013, it was incorrectly categorised as being about Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board. This was due to an administrative error which we discovered on 9 April 2013, and for which we apologise.*

