

SPSO decision report

Case: 201204847, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained about the dental treatment she received from the board following a referral from her dentist. She said the board did not provide her with reasonable care and treatment during her four appointments at the board's clinic and did not reasonably respond to her attempts to complain about the care and treatment they provided. Miss C explained that shortly after her treatment was completed, one of her teeth cracked, went black and eventually had to be removed.

We took independent advice on the case from our dental adviser, a general dental surgeon. The adviser said that the treatment Miss C received from the clinic appeared to have been carried out to a satisfactory standard and within the terms of the referral from Miss C's dentist. The adviser explained that following her root canal treatment, the clinic advised Miss C that the crown on one of her teeth could be replaced to improve aesthetics but noted that she declined this treatment. The evidence suggested that the clinic completed the treatment in the referral from Miss C's dentist as far as Miss C would allow them to go. However, based on the information in Miss C's records, we were not satisfied that the clinic advised Miss C that replacement of the crown could have improved the long term health of her tooth and were critical of the clinic in this regard.

The evidence showed that over a year after her treatment was completed, Miss C made multiple phone calls to her own dentist and phoned the clinic twice about her treatment. There was no documentary evidence that Miss C made contact with the clinic in the year after her treatment. The adviser explained that the clinic's response to Miss C's attempts to complain about her treatment was reasonable and that as Miss C was under the care of her own dentist at that time it would not have been reasonable for the clinic to see her again without her being referred there by her own dentist.

Although we did not uphold this complaint, we made two recommendations for improvement.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- ensure that reasons for treatment provided to patients are fully explained and documented; and
- ensure that discussions of potential risks and benefits take place when a patient has not had sedative drugs administered so that the patient is fully capable of making an informed choice.