

SPSO decision report

Case: 201401744, A Dentist in the Tayside NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C said that after having two teeth filled, she began to experience progressively worsening pain. She said that this prevented her sleeping and caused her much distress. However, she said that her dental practice refused to provide her with further treatment on the basis that they considered the cause of her pain to be as a consequence of complex regional pain syndrome (a poorly understood condition where the person experiences persistent and debilitating pain) for which she had been diagnosed in 2008.

Ms C then left the practice. She said that the next day she attended an emergency appointment with another dentist. They determined that she had some decay, a dying nerve and a bleeding root canal and she was given treatment which she said provided immediate relief. She then complained that the original dentist failed to treat her appropriately.

We took independent advice from one of our dental advisers. The investigations showed that given Ms C's symptoms, the source of her pain had been difficult to establish and diagnose and that, in the circumstances, it had been reasonable to suggest that the cause was complex regional pain syndrome. We also established while an x-ray might have helped with a diagnosis, the dentist concerned had, nevertheless, provided Ms C with reasonable care and treatment. The complaint was not upheld.