

SPSO decision report

Case: 201402414, A Dentist in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained on behalf of her son (Mr A) about the treatment he had received from his dentist. Mr A had x-rays taken of his teeth and an area of decay was identified in a tooth. The dentist considered that this required a filling and carried out the treatment at a later appointment. Mr A experienced some pain following the filling and returned to have this assessed on two occasions. He then continued his treatment at a different dental practice. Ms C complained to the dentist about the size and shape of the filling. She also questioned why no attempt had been made to protect the nerve before proceeding with the filling, and commented on attempts to treat Mr A's pain with the use of toothpaste for sensitive teeth.

In the response from the practice, the dentist advised that the tooth had been lined before it was filled and that at no time had the nerve been exposed. The dentist considered the size and shape of the filling to be reasonable and in proportion to the decay. As a goodwill gesture, a refund was offered for the cost of the NHS treatment Mr A had received.

After taking independent advice on this case from a dental adviser, we did not uphold Ms C's complaint. We found that the treatment that had been provided to Mr A represented reasonable practice. Our adviser agreed that the filling was of a reasonable size and shape. They also considered that steps had been taken to protect the nerve and that while toothpaste for sensitive teeth may have had minimal effect, it would not have worsened the situation.