

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201403196, A Dentist in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Miss C was concerned about a large lump in her mouth, and made an emergency appointment at a dental practice. The dentist who carried out the emergency appointment examined Miss C, prescribed antibiotics and advised her to see her regular dentist. Following further visits to different dentists, Miss C was diagnosed with an abscess in her mouth, and a few days later she was referred to hospital, where the tooth was removed and the abscess drained.

Miss C complained to us about the care and treatment she received. In particular, Miss C was concerned that the dentist who she saw during the emergency appointment did not take an x-ray, or attempt to remove the tooth or drain the abscess in her mouth. In response to our enquiries the dentist said that Miss C had been undergoing root canal treatment to her tooth about a year previously, but had cancelled the appointment to complete the treatment and not made another. The dentist explained that, at the time of her appointment, it was not clear whether this tooth was the cause of the problem, as Miss C had multiple treatment needs.

After taking independent dental advice, we upheld Miss C's complaint. We found that, while the abscess was probably not swollen enough at that stage to drain it, the dentist should have taken an x-ray to establish which tooth was the source of the infection.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the dentist:

- issue a written apology to Miss C, acknowledging the failings our investigation found; and
- reflect on the findings of our investigation, as part of their on-going professional development.