

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201608532, A Dentist in the Western Isles NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained that the dentist failed to provide her with a reasonable standard of dental care and treatment. Ms C attended the dentist over a number of months, concerned about a number of issues. Ms C had experienced pain in one of her teeth which she subsequently discovered had a crack in it. She said that the dentist failed to investigate this appropriately. As a result, Ms C said an adjoining tooth was extracted, and she was unreasonably prescribed three courses of antibiotics before the cracked tooth was extracted. Ms C also had to receive root canal treatment on another tooth which had an infection Ms C said that as a result of the failings, she was in pain for months and needed to get veneers or implants to close the gap at the front of her mouth because she could not eat or smile.

We took independent advice from two dentists. We found that there were significant failings around record-keeping, the prescription of antibiotics, and the management of two teeth. We also found that the dentist was not in a position to appropriately monitor any potential decay progression, which was unreasonable. However, we did not find that the extractions were unnecessary. On balance, we found that the care and treatment Ms C received was unreasonable and therefore, we upheld the complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Ms C for failing to follow relevant guidelines and standards. The apology should comply with the SPSO guidelines on making an apology, available at <https://www.spsos.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Records should meet the relevant standards and the dentist should become fully aware of and comply with the requirements of these standards.
- Ensure that the approach to patient care is in line with professional guidance (including key skills in primary dental care and management of acute dental problems) and complies with the new guidance due in 2018 in relation to x-rays (Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations).

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.