SPSO decision report

SPSO Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Case:	**201608924, A Dentist in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area**
Sector:	health
Subject:	clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision:	some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained about the treatment that she received from her dentist, after they removed one of her teeth. She explained that, following the removal, she felt that the wrong tooth had been removed. This led her to attend another dentist, who found a crack in the remaining tooth, meaning this also had to be removed. Miss C was also unhappy with the dentist's handling of her complaint, as it took almost a year to receive a response.

In their response to Miss C's complaint, and in response to our enquiries, the dentist defended their decision to remove the tooth based on the symptoms Miss C presented with. They said that this tooth was loose and the area around it was badly infected, leading them to conclude that this was not saveable and the most likely source of Miss C's pain. We sought independent advice from a dental adviser, who reviewed the records and agreed with this assessment. For this reason, we did not uphold the first complaint.

With regards to the complaints handling, we found that there had been a considerable delay caused by the dentist awaiting an independent expert report they had commissioned in order to respond to Miss C's complaint. During this time, the dentist failed to provide Miss C with regular updates, or to formally agree extensions to the deadline for response, which is not in line with the most recent model complaints handling procedure. For these reasons, we upheld the second part of the complaint. However, we considered that the eventual response was reasonable in its content and conclusions.

Recommendations

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Adopt the model complaints handling procedure and ensure that all staff are aware of this.

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.