

SPSO decision report

Case: 201706604, A Dentist in the Tayside NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Miss C attended the dentist to receive restoration treatment which included having a filling replaced, and previous fillings smoothed over as they still had overhangs of amalgam (mixture used to fill the teeth). The dentist who provided the treatment was undergoing vocational training, and was supervised by another dentist. Miss C complained that the treatment she received was below a reasonable standard.

We took independent advice from a dentist and found that overhangs of amalgam were still partially present, despite having been smoothed, and a significant gap was created between two teeth. Both the remnant amalgam and the gap were risks to Miss C's dental health, in particular as she had an underlying risk of tooth decay. We found that the treatment provided to Miss C was below a reasonable standard and, therefore, we upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Miss C for providing treatment below a reasonable standard. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

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

- The dentist's supervisor should ensure that the dentist has a periodontal update, concentrating on the impact of poor restoration contouring.

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.