Dental patient suffers neglect

A dentist has been suspended for nine months after neglecting a patient and failing to treat her extensive tooth decay.

Brian Ford treated the woman, at his practice in Walton-on-Thames in Surrey, from when she was five-years-old.

She only found out the true extent of her tooth decay in January last year when she saw another dentist after Mr Ford had stopped practising, and was told 18 of her teeth needed treatment.

The General Dental Council (GDC) heard that Ford completed just two dental charts for the patient during 34 visits to the practice between September 1987 and July 2006.

A GDC panel found Ford guilty of a string of charges relating to ‘unprofessional and inappropriate care’. The panel chair said: ‘On numerous occasions and over many years, Mr Ford repeatedly failed to provide the standard of care that the patient was entitled to expect. Mr Ford did not record any radiographic findings and, instead of repeat radiographs as required, based his treatment on inadequate evidence. The consequence of these deficiencies was that Mr Ford failed to detect multiple carious lesions and give appropriate treatment.’

The dentist did not attend the hearing and made no response to the charges.

Thousands to switch surgeries

Thousands of dental patients in Bury St Edmunds are being forced to change to new NHS practices after NHS Suffolk decided to offer more specialist services at one of the town’s practices.

NHS Suffolk, the primary care trust, is making changes to Blomfield Dental Practice, in Looms Lane, so it can specialise in treating ‘vulnerable people and priority groups’, some of whom have learning, sensory or physical disabilities.

An NHS Suffolk spokes-woman said: ‘These patients often need more specialist care and time. To make sure these patients are given the best possible care and attention, we have asked some of the practice’s other patients, who were being treated at Blomfield under a special arrangement set up some years ago, to meet the gap in NHS dentistry, to transfer to another of the town’s NHS dentists.’

Debt-ridden company ends contract

A Primary Care Trust in Yorkshire has had to step in and provide interim NHS dental care after the company Primecare terminated its NHS contracts after running up huge debts.

NHS dental care has been withdrawn from surgeries in Northallerton, Bedale, Leyburn and Hawes.

North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust (PCT) is providing interim services until the tendering process is completed for a new NHS dental provider in the area.

The PCT hopes that normal NHS services will resume from April 1 next year.

Interim cover is being provided by two surgeries in Catterick, one surgery in Richmond and one surgery in Northallerton.

Jane Marshall, director of commissioning and service development for the PCT, said: ‘We remain fully committed to providing a continuity of service to minimise disruption for patients accessing dental services in these areas.’