

**Case:** 201004712, Highland NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments; admissions (delay, cancellation, waiting lists)  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

In early 2011, Mr C complained to the board about the length of time he was told he would have to wait on the waiting list for a psychological assessment. He had already been on the waiting list for over nine months and was told it would be another eight to ten months before he would be seen.

The board apologised to Mr C for the length of time that he would have to wait before treatment and told him that the problem was caused by the departure from post of one of the psychologists. They hoped to recruit a replacement as soon as possible and the manager had been working with the psychological department to reduce the waiting times as quickly as possible.

Mr C complained to us and we found that in 2008 the Scottish Government issued guidance to health boards so that they could take action to be best placed to meet new waiting time targets of 18 weeks from referral to treatment due to take effect from 2014. We found that the board failed to demonstrate to us that they had taken action in accordance with the guidance and that Mr C had waited too long for an appointment.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- develop an action plan to deliver aspects of the 'Matrix' (the 2008 Scottish Government guide to delivering evidence-based psychological therapies) which are relevant to the situation in their area; and
- apologise to Mr C for the unreasonable delay he had on the psychological therapy waiting list.