

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201102523, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments/admissions (delay, cancellation, waiting lists)  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C is 76 years old and has a disability. He complained about the board's toenail cutting service. He said he needed his nails cut every eight to ten weeks, but the board only provided the service every 12 to 14 weeks. Mr C also said that because they recently told him that it would be 16 weeks until his next appointment, he had to pay for private treatment in between times. He felt that the service he received was inadequate.

When we investigated, the board explained that their view of Mr C's requirements was based on an assessment that they make of each patient to decide how often appointments were needed. This assessed Mr C as requiring appointments every 12 weeks. They said that they had obtained a detailed second opinion from a senior specialist at another of their clinics, which supported this view. The board also said that they try to meet the required timescale for the next appointment but there were times when this was not possible, for example when there were staff absences. At such times, patients such as Mr C who need only routine attention may find that their appointment is after the end of the recommended return period.

As part of our investigation, we obtained advice from our nursing adviser. She said that the board's assessments appeared to have been carried out appropriately. There was no clinical evidence to suggest that Mr C needed appointments more often than every 12 weeks. Our adviser noted that although Mr C would like to have his nails cut more often, the board had to make difficult decisions about managing resources. We found that they had managed Mr C's case appropriately and provided an adequate service.