

**Case:** 201102608, Tayside NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment; diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C was referred for orthodontic treatment by her dentist in 2008. She was first seen by a restorative dentistry consultant in February 2009 for hygiene therapy as she had severe gum disease. She was then referred to orthodontics, and was seen in December 2009. She was referred to see a specialist about orthognathic (jaw) surgery as she wanted to undergo this form of treatment, but was not seen until January 2011.

Following this assessment, Mrs C was placed on the waiting list for surgery, and seen again in September 2011, when she was advised that her gum disease and level of oral hygiene were not sufficiently stable for surgery at that time. A treatment plan was put in place to continue to treat Mrs C's gum disease. Mrs C had also been advised previously to give up smoking, as this would affect her oral health and hygiene.

Mrs C complained to us that the board failed to provide her with treatment for her dental problems within a reasonable time. We upheld her complaint as our investigation found that her wait to see a orthognathic specialist was unreasonable. We noted that the board had implemented evening clinics to tackle the long waiting lists, and that they had experienced a shortage of qualified staff. We found, however, that the board could make further efforts to reduce waiting times within the orthodontic/orthognathic department, and we made a recommendation about this. We did not, however, find that the delay itself had adversely affected the state of Mrs C's teeth, as her oral health and hygiene needed to be addressed before surgical treatment could begin.

### Recommendation

We recommended that the board:

- implement an action plan to reduce the current waiting lists for treatment within the orthodontic/ orthognathic department.