

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201204936, Lothian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C had a temporary dental bridge put in place while he was abroad. He complained that the board delayed in providing appointments after his dentist referred him to the dental institute for a treatment plan to replace it. Mr C said that the delays resulted in additional damage to his teeth, which meant that his preferred treatment plan was no longer possible. In response to the complaint the board said that Mr C had been seen twice within the guaranteed waiting time of 12 weeks for an out-patient appointment.

We confirmed that Mr C's first appointment was within the national waiting time target for new out-patient referrals. Although the institute agreed the treatment plan at this appointment, one of Mr C's teeth then fractured, so his dentist had to refer him there again because it affected the new bridge design. We did not consider that it was reasonable for Mr C to wait a further 13 weeks to have his original treatment plan reviewed, and we upheld his complaint. However, after taking independent advice from our dental adviser, we noted that his tooth could have fractured at any time, even if the new bridge had been in place.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Mr C for the delay in his treatment plan being re-assessed; and
- consider reviewing the referral process so that patients who require their original treatment plans to be reviewed are seen in a timely manner.