

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201303552, Forth Valley NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)  
**Outcome:** upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C, who is a prisoner, submitted a request to the prison health centre for an appointment with the mental health team. This was on the advice of the forensic psychologist who was running the offending behaviour programme that Mr C was attending. As Mr C did not receive a response to his request, he complained to the health board. The board told him that the mental health team had assessed his request and decided that he did not need input from them. Mr C did not dispute this decision, but complained to us that the board had not told him about the decision when it was made.

In response to our investigation, the board told us that due to staff shortages in the prison health centre there had been a backlog of referrals at the time Mr C submitted his request. This meant that it was not assessed until almost six weeks later. They confirmed the decision that had been taken but acknowledged that this did not appear to have been communicated to Mr C until he complained. They explained that a reply slip should have been issued, informing Mr C of the decision, and confirmed that they had reminded staff to adhere to this process in future. They also took steps to speak to Mr C and apologise to him. We upheld the complaint, due to the failure to communicate the outcome of the referral to Mr C, but in light of the action already taken by the board to address this, we had no further recommendations to make.