

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201402028, Highland NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C had been living abroad but returned to Scotland, although she still had connections overseas. She was experiencing difficult personal circumstances and she was referred for psychiatric review. She received mental health care but complained that her treatment was inadequate and that the board failed to provide appropriate support. In particular, Ms C complained that after a referral to psychological services, it took too long for her to be seen; that although she was frequently suicidal, she was not admitted to hospital; and that there was a general failure to respond to her needs which contributed to her acute mental distress. She said as a consequence, this led to her child being taken into care.

We took independent advice from one of our advisers who specialises in mental health. We found that Ms C's initial assessment and plan were appropriate and a psychiatric review took place on schedule. At times of crisis, there was a good response with reasonable follow-up arrangements being put in place. However, although it was not considered that Ms C required compulsory treatment, her management was complicated by her continuing treatment overseas and her travel between the two countries and, at various times, she declined psychiatric appointments.

However, we found there was an extended delay before Ms C was seen by psychological services and so we upheld her complaint about this. The board had already apologised to Ms C for the delay, so we did not make a recommendation about this, but we did make two other recommendations.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- confirm to us the actions they have taken to resolve the delay identified; and
- confirm to us that they are satisfied that they can meet reasonable waiting times for psychological services.