

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201403193, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)  
**Outcome:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C complained to us about the treatment she received for a sore knee, and for delays in diagnosing and treating the problem. Ms C was referred to the orthopaedic (conditions involving the musculoskeletal system) department at Crosshouse Hospital for consideration, and was seen by a consultant shortly after. She was referred for an injection in her hip, as an initial approach to treatment, which took place three weeks later. She had a follow-up appointment six weeks later, and was seen by a junior doctor who referred her for an MRI scan (a magnetic resonance image – a special kind of scan). She had to wait a further six weeks for the scan. She had a follow-up appointment with the consultant ten weeks later, and was then referred to an orthopaedic surgeon. She waited 14 weeks to see the surgeon, who then put her on his list for a knee operation. The surgeon told her she could expect to wait around nine weeks for the operation. However, Ms C had an operation on her knee in England while she was waiting for her operation.

We sought independent orthopaedic advice on this case. Our adviser noted that the injection Ms C was given was an appropriate first line treatment for her knee pain. He said that it may have relieved her pain, and if it had, it would have helped to diagnose the source of the pain, so we did not uphold Ms C's complaint that this treatment had been unnecessary. In terms of the timescales for Ms C's diagnosis and treatment, our adviser noted two significant delays: the wait for a clinic appointment following her scan and the wait for an appointment with the surgeon; and concluded that these were both unreasonable delays.

We considered the evidence of the delays in the clinic appointments, and concluded that there had been unreasonable delays and that the board could have managed the appointments differently.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- apologise to Ms C for the delay in diagnosing and treating the source of her pain; and
- review their procedures for making appointments within orthopaedics to minimise any delays during or following requests for scans.