

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201502143, Highland NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C had a longstanding spinal problem and the board had been providing treatment to him for many years. When Mr C's condition deteriorated to the point that he could no longer walk 100 yards without pain, his regular consultant at Raigmore Hospital referred him to a specialist colleague. Mr C said he heard nothing and after 12 weeks he phoned the board. He was told they did not know when he would be offered an appointment. He phoned again two weeks later and was told the same thing. After 18 weeks Mr C complained. He said there had been an unreasonable delay and no communication from the hospital.

We upheld both of Mr C's complaints. We found that the time taken to give Mr C an out-patient appointment (30 weeks) was too long. We found the board had not been proactive in communicating with Mr C, which they should have been, given the known pressure the service was under at the time.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- review the process for managing the orthopaedics waiting list to ensure that people receive clear and accurate information about waiting times.