

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201908887, Highland NHS Board  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** appointments / admissions (delay / cancellation / waiting lists)  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained on behalf of their child (A) who has a background of low mood and anxiety. C complained about the assessments of A by two paediatric consultants. C also complained that the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) unreasonably rejected referrals from A's GP due to social work's involvement with the family.

We reviewed the relevant medical records and took independent advice from a consultant paediatrician and registered mental health nurse. We concluded that the assessments by both paediatricians were reasonable and appropriate tests and follow-up were arranged. We did not uphold this aspect of C's complaint.

However, we considered that it was unreasonable for CAMHS to reject the referrals on the basis that they failed to risk assess A in accordance with the board's guidance. On that basis, we upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C and A for failing to accept the initial referrals to CAMHS and for the subsequent delay in treatment and the distress caused. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets).

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Ensure staff have reflected and learned from the findings of this investigation.
- The CAMHS service correctly follows the board's suicide prevention guidance and pathway.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.