

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201004208, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** policy/administration  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr A complained that, as a result of inadequate administration systems in an Orthopaedics Department in an NHS hospital, he experienced a delay in receiving surgery. Mr A suffered from Dupuytren's contractures in both hands. He was referred to hospital by his GP for surgery to his right hand. At that time, the NHS hospital had an agreement with a private hospital to undertake treatments. Mr A was referred to the private hospital where it was established that in fact surgery should take place on his left hand first. He had that surgery in July 2010. At a follow up appointment, the consultant gave him post-operative clearance for surgery to his right hand. However, by that time the agreement between the NHS and the private hospital had come to an end. The private hospital contacted the NHS hospital and were told to re-refer Mr A back to the NHS for treatment to his right hand.

Mr A contacted his GP in November 2010 because he had not received an appointment from the NHS hospital. Mr A's GP re-referred him to the NHS but the hospital said they had never received a re-referral from the consultant at the private hospital. Mr A eventually had surgery on his right hand in March 2011.

We found that Mr A was originally referred for surgery to one hand, his right hand. It was not established until his appointment at the private hospital that he would require surgery to both, so the Board could not have been aware of this. The private hospital was given instructions by the NHS hospital to make a re-referral. We found no evidence that this was done, as the consultant wrote a letter addressed to Mr A's GP but did not write to the NHS hospital directly. We could not, therefore, say that the delay in operating was due to inadequate administration systems within the Orthopaedics Department at the NHS hospital.