

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201202492, Grampian NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** appointments/admissions (delay, cancellation, waiting lists)  
**Outcome:** some upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her brother (Mr A) that his hip replacement operation was unreasonably delayed. Mr A's consultant put him on the waiting list for surgery. Mr A waited 13 weeks before receiving a phone call offering him an appointment for surgery in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde health board area. As Mr A had not discussed this option with his consultant, and as he had significant difficulty in mobilising, he said he would prefer to wait for a local appointment. Mr A and Mrs C then wrote to the board asking for all further communication about Mr A's care to be via Mrs C. Unfortunately, the board did not receive this before they called Mr A again and offered him an appointment in the Tayside health board area. Again, Mr A refused this and said he would rather wait for a local appointment.

Mrs C complained that Mr A's treatment was unreasonably delayed. We upheld her complaint, as there was no evidence that Mr A was told or had any discussion with his consultant about the possibility of having to travel for treatment. On this basis, we took the view that it was unreasonable to offer him treatment outside his local health board area. He was, therefore, not provided with any reasonable offers of treatment within the 18 week target time. Mr A's surgery was eventually carried out 26 weeks after he went on the waiting list, and we did not consider this to be reasonable.

Since Mr A's treatment, there have been several changes in local and national policy and practice, including the implementation of new legislation relating to waiting times. As these changes have addressed many of the shortcomings that led to this complaint, we did not make any recommendations.