

# SPSO decision report



**Case:** 201810361, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** Clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

## Summary

C, a support and advocacy worker, complained on behalf of their client (A) that the board failed to ensure clinicians provided a surgical assessment and procedure to A within a reasonable time frame. A had been referred to the board's neurosurgical department (specialists in surgery on the nervous system, especially the brain and spinal cord) following an injury to their back but decided to undergo a surgical procedure privately following delays from the board. A continued to experience pain and felt that the board's delay had led to an adverse outcome from the surgery.

We took independent advice from a consultant neurosurgeon. We found that the board unreasonably delayed the clinical assessment and treatment of A. We also found that there was an unreasonable delay to A being given a clinic appointment and that communication around the treatment time guarantee process could have been better. However, we could not say with any certainty that the delay led directly to an adverse outcome for A. We upheld C's complaint.

## Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to A for failing to progress their treatment within a reasonable timescale. 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:

- Consideration as to how to better manage patients' expectations in terms of their treatment time guarantee calculation and how the treatment booking process works.
- Make improvements to the clinic booking process to ensure patients are seen within national waiting time targets.

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.