

SPSO decision report

Case: 201103140, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: health
Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the way an ambulance crew treated her mother (Mrs A) who had fainted and had been slipping in and out of consciousness. Mrs C said that the crew had shouted at her mother, handled her roughly and treated her as if she was drunk. Mrs C also complained about the time the Scottish Ambulance Service (the service) took to respond to her complaint.

We did not consider the specific complaint about the crew's manner as this was subject to the differing interpretations of those involved. Having taken advice from one of our medical advisers, we found that the crew carried out an appropriate assessment of Mrs A's clinical condition and that it was correct for them to decide to take her to hospital. We also found, however, that the board took too long to formally respond to the complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the service:

- remind staff who have a responsibility to investigate complaints about the timescales in the NHS complaints procedure; and
- apologise for the overall time taken to investigate the complaint.