

SPSO decision report

Case: 201103939, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: health
Subject: policy/administration
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the Scottish Ambulance Service's (the service) investigation into the circumstances where her late partner's wallet went missing when an ambulance attended to him following a serious accident.

We found that initially it was reasonable for the service to wait for the result of a police investigation into the missing wallet (which concluded that it had most likely been disposed of as clinical waste). However, after receiving the police report it was 40 days before the service wrote to Ms C with this information. This was despite Ms C telephoning during that period asking for updates. We, therefore, upheld her complaint and made recommendations to address these failures. The service also told us that they did not at that time have a lost property procedure but would develop one, so we made no recommendation in respect of this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the service:

- remind staff of their responsibilities to respond to complaints in a timely manner; and
- apologise to Mrs C for the delay in responding to her complaint.