

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201695, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: health
Subject: failure to send ambulance/delay in sending ambulance
Outcome: some upheld, action taken by body to remedy, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the treatment that the Scottish Ambulance Service gave to her mother (Mrs A). Mrs A, who suffers from rheumatoid arthritis (an inflammatory disorder that mainly affects the joints), had hurt her leg and was unable to put weight on it. She had been in pain for a number of days and Mrs C phoned 999 for an ambulance. However, the person who took the call assessed it as a non-emergency situation, and decided not to send an emergency ambulance.

Our investigation found that this was reasonable in the circumstances, and that it followed the protocol of the medical priority dispatch system. We did note that the call taker had not told Mrs C that there was another route she could use - she could call NHS 24 to see if her mother could be referred to hospital that way. However, as the service had already recognised this omission when investigating of Mrs C's complaint, and had taken steps to address it, we made no recommendation about this.