

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201301796, Scottish Ambulance Service  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality  
**Outcome:** upheld, action taken by body to remedy, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C is 88 years old and has a number of health issues, including osteoarthritis (the most common form of arthritis that affects the joints). After she attended hospital for investigation of a breathing problem, she complained that service staff treated her unreasonably when assisting her to and from their patient transport vehicle. Mrs C also complained that there was an delay in the vehicle arriving to take her home from hospital, and that the service's handling of her complaint was unreasonable.

As there was no independent evidence of what occurred when Mrs C arrived at the hospital, or when she was returned home, we could not say for certain what happened. However, we noted that the service upheld her complaint about patient transport crew walking her to and from their vehicle when they should have used a wheelchair, and that the methods they used to assist her caused her pain. They also acknowledged that Mrs C was left waiting for a considerable time for transport home from the hospital, and we found that the records in fact showed that she had to wait for almost two and a half hours from when the service logged her as ready for transport. In relation to complaints handling, we saw evidence that the service had taken Mrs C's complaint seriously, but had accepted that there were delays in their investigation. We upheld all Mrs C's complaints, but as the service had already taken action by apologising, speaking to the staff involved, and amending their records to show the correct type of transport she needs in future, we made only one recommendation.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the service:

- ensure there is no unnecessary delay in crews providing statements in response to complaints.