

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201407184, Scottish Ambulance Service  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment of his late wife (Mrs C) during an ambulance visit and, in particular, the decision not to take Mrs C to hospital. Mrs C had been recently admitted to hospital. Two days after discharge, Mr C became concerned about Mrs C's symptoms and called 999. An ambulance crew attended and gave Mrs C oxygen treatment and advice about fluid intake. However, the paramedic decided not to take Mrs C to hospital immediately.

Mr C said the decision to leave Mrs C at home was made because the paramedic could not get through to the duty doctor for permission to bring her to hospital. He said Mrs C's hospital admission later that day was arranged by a community nurse who visited shortly afterwards and raised concerns about Mrs C's condition with the duty doctor. The ambulance service disagreed with this account. They said the paramedic spoke to the duty doctor and agreed that it would be appropriate to leave Mrs C at home to allow time for Mrs C's recent insulin injection, and the advice about fluid intake, to take effect. The ambulance service said the paramedic arranged for an unscheduled care nurse to visit in four hours to check whether Mrs C had improved, and this was what prompted Mrs C's admission later that day.

After taking independent advice from a paramedic adviser, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint. There was evidence that the paramedic did call the duty doctor to discuss Mrs C's condition and to arrange review. The adviser considered that, in these circumstances, the decision to leave Mrs C at home was reasonable.