

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201507666, Scottish Ambulance Service  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the time it took for the Scottish Ambulance Service to send an ambulance after he and his wife (Mrs C) were involved in a road traffic collision. It took 40 minutes for the ambulance to arrive and Mr C felt that the ambulance service should have contacted either off-duty staff or trained responders to assist his wife, who was in pain.

We found that the ambulance service had acknowledged from the outset that there had been a delay in the ambulance being dispatched. We considered the ambulance service had acted in accordance with their call-out procedures in relation to off-duty staff and trained responders (including GPs) because there was no apparent threat to life.

The ambulance service provided information on the action they took as a result of the delay. They have reviewed their shift capacity and put further measures in place including the training of staff and new posts.

In terms of the ambulance service's handling of Mr C's complaint, we considered that there was an unreasonable delay of around six months in responding to additional questions Mr C had asked. The ambulance service accepted that there were failings in relation to the time they took to reply to Mr C. Therefore they introduced a pilot method to record contact from individuals as part of their complaints handling.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the ambulance service:

- apologise to Mr and Mrs C for the delay in dispatching an ambulance and the delay in responding to the additional questions Mr C raised as part of his complaint; and
- provide documentary evidence on the outcome of the pilot they conducted in order to ensure appropriate steps have been taken to address the failings in relation to record-keeping and responding to complaints correspondence.