

SPSO decision report

Case: 201601729, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: health
Subject: failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's husband (Mr A) suffered a suspected stroke at work. An ambulance was called. Mrs C complained that there was an unreasonable delay in an ambulance attending. She was also unhappy that the caller was not properly informed that there were no ambulances currently available and, later, that there was going to be a delay in the ambulance attending.

We took independent advice from a specialist in emergency medicine. The adviser found that the categorisation of the call was reasonable and that, while there was a delay in attending, there are times when demand will exceed capacity and that at these times, it will not be possible to provide a response within an ideal timescale. Therefore, while we accepted that there was a delay, we did not consider that the delay was unreasonable. We also accepted the adviser's view that it was reasonable that initially the caller was told that the ambulance would be there as soon as possible and, in relation to the further call, that it took four minutes before the ambulance arrived, so giving further detail to the caller was not necessary. We therefore did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.