

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201706768, Scottish Ambulance Service  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance  
**Decision:** some upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained that the ambulance service delayed in sending an ambulance to her daughter (Miss A) when Miss A dislocated her knee. The ambulance took almost an hour to arrive, which the ambulance service acknowledged was much longer than they would have expected. They apologised for the delay and explained it was due to a lack of resource, and the need to prioritise life threatening situations.

We took independent advice from a paramedic. We found that the request was assessed and prioritised appropriately. We were satisfied that the ambulance service responded reasonably to the request, and could not have done anything differently with the resources available to them at the time. We did not uphold this complaint.

Mrs C also complained about the time taken to respond to her complaint; the lack of interim update which led to her having to chase for a response; and also the adequacy of the response in addressing her concerns. We were content that the response was a reasonable and proportionate response to Mrs C's complaint. However, we were critical that the ambulance service failed to adhere to the NHS Scotland Model Complaints Handling Procedure in that they did not issue their response within 20 working days, and did not proactively contact Mrs C in the interim to explain the delay and agree a revised response timescale. We upheld this complaint.

### Recommendations