

SPSO decision report

Case: 201709148, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment provided by the ambulance crew who attended to her husband (Mr A). Mrs C had called an ambulance in the early hours of the morning as her husband was unwell. The crew examined Mr A and told Mrs C that they were not going to take Mr A to hospital, but that she should contact her GP for a home visit when the medical practice opened later that morning. A GP made a home visit and found Mr A to be disorientated and confused, which had been mentioned by Mrs C in her phone call to the ambulance service. The GP arranged for Mr A to be taken to hospital for further assessment and it was later diagnosed that he had suffered a stroke. Mrs C felt Mr A should have been taken to hospital by the ambulance crew.

We took independent advice from a clinician involved in the training of paramedics and concluded that the ambulance crew had failed to adequately record Mr A's symptoms and that he should have been transported to hospital for further clinical assessment. We upheld Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr A and Mrs C for the failure to adequately record Mr A's symptoms and for failing to transport him to hospital for further assessment and investigations. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- The ambulance crew should be competent to adequately record the patient's full symptoms and be aware of the need to transport patients to hospital for further assessment.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.