

SPSO decision report

Case: 201803695, NHS 24
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that NHS 24 failed to handle his call appropriately. Mr C initially phoned 999 to request an ambulance for his wife (Mrs A). However, it was deemed that an ambulance was not required and Mr C was referred to NHS 24 for a further assessment of Mrs A's symptoms to be carried out. Mr C complained to NHS 24 about the call handler's line of questioning and their refusal to send an ambulance. NHS 24 acknowledged the call could have been handled better. Mr C was unhappy with this response and brought his complaint to us.

We took independent advice from a nursing adviser who reviewed the case records and the audio recording of the call. We found that the call handler should have been more flexible in their questioning and they could have been more empathetic and understanding of Mr C's frustration. We upheld the complaint and asked NHS 24 to provide an update on the learning and improvement they had already identified.