

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201903349, Scottish Ambulance Service  
**Sector:** Health  
**Subject:** failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr A fell at home and a 999 call was made to the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to attend. The call was prioritised as an emergency response where an ambulance would be dispatched as soon as one became available. An ambulance arrived with Mr A approximately four hours after the initial call. Mr A was later diagnosed with a broken hip.

During Mr A's rehabilitation in hospital, there were concerns that he had sepsis. Staff at the hospital called for an ambulance and requested an emergency response to transfer Mr A to another hospital for treatment. The ambulance arrived over two hours after the initial request.

Mr A's daughter (Mrs C) complained that the time taken for an ambulance to attend on both occasions was unreasonable and that Mr A's condition, on both occasions, should have resulted in an emergency response.

We took independent advice from an appropriately qualified adviser. We found that on each occasion the delay in an ambulance attending was not attributable to failings on the part of SAS assessing and prioritising the requests for an ambulance, or not appropriately allocating its resources. The delays were a result of a lack of availability of resources at the times in question and ambulances attending to higher priority calls. Whilst there was a significant delay in the ambulance attending to Mr A on each occasion, this was not attributable to failings on the part of SAS handling the calls. We did not uphold the complaint.