

SPSO decision report

Case: 202102737, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: Health
Subject: Failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance
Decision: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained about Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) on behalf of A for whom they hold welfare Power of Attorney. A waited for an ambulance for nearly 21 hours. A has multiple sclerosis (a disease that affects central nervous system), lives in a care home and usually has a catheter (a thin tube used to drain and collect urine from the bladder). The catheter was not working and there was concern that A had an infection.

C was unhappy with the delay as A had a known history of sepsis (blood infection) as a result of urinary infections. C also said that A's case had been incorrectly prioritised, that they had received only two calls from SAS during the wait, and that the overall time waiting for the ambulance had been unreasonable.

We found that A's case had been correctly triaged and prioritised by SAS clinical support desk paramedics, however, we noted that SAS did not meet their own standards for the frequency of welfare calls but recognised that the service was under extreme pressure at the time. We upheld the complaint that the ambulance response time was unreasonable as it had taken nearly 21 hours to attend the patient, which significantly breached the 60-minute target for cases like A's.

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.