

SPSO decision report



Case: 202304529, Scottish Ambulance Service
Sector: Health
Subject: Failure to send ambulance / delay in sending ambulance
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained that the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) unreasonably delayed in dispatching an ambulance for their late parent (A) and, as a result, this had an adverse impact on A's care and treatment. C questioned why an SAS call handler initially advised them that an ambulance was not needed, when a locum GP subsequently arranged for one as soon as they learned of A's condition. Shortly after arriving at A&E, A died following a cardiac arrest.

We took independent advice from a paramedic adviser. We found that the actions of the SAS in relation to the allocation and dispatch of an ambulance for A were reasonable, based on the information, resources, and systems in place at the time. We also found that the project improvement initiatives the SAS are undertaking to mitigate the challenges with the triaging of abdominal pain are reasonable. Therefore, we did not uphold the complaint. We did, however, provide feedback to the SAS that when responding to a complaint, where possible, it would be helpful if they provided the complainant with information and explanation of any improvement initiatives that they are taking to address issues raised within the complaint.