

SPSO decision report



Case: 201004486, Scottish Prison Service
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: policy/administration; access to information
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the SPS unreasonably refused his request to access and review the Integrated Case Management Guidance Manual. This manual is aimed at staff, to help them help identify needs and programmes that may assist prisoners throughout their sentence, and to guide the management of prisoners' case conferences. Mr C received notice that a case conference was due. The notice mentioned the manual, and he asked to see it. He was told that he could not, as it was for staff use only.

When we investigated, the SPS confirmed that they designed the manual to provide staff with support and guidance. They were therefore not obliged to give Mr C direct access to it. We also, however, identified that a copy is held in the prison library and prisoners are allowed to see it. No one told Mr C this. It appears that when he complained he in fact received mixed messages from staff at different stages of the complaint process about whether he could have access to the manual. Had staff simply told him it was available in the library, his complaints to the SPS and to us could have been avoided. We therefore upheld his complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the prison:

- apologise to Mr C for failing to explain how he could access the manual; and
- take steps to remind staff what documents are available for prisoners to access from the prisoner library.