

**Case:** 201004020, Scottish Prison Service  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** behaviour related programmes (including access to)  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that there was a delay in him being assessed for the Substance Related Offending Behaviour Programme, to which he had been referred in late 2008. He said that he was unable to progress through his prison sentence until he completed the programme. He also said that even when he completed the programme, he would need to wait for the psychology report to be finalised before he could progress. The prison acknowledged Mr C's frustration and agreed that waiting times were lengthy. They assured Mr C that they were not deliberately holding him back and pointed out that many prisoners were keen to participate in programmes. This made it difficult to prioritise places. In the light of similar complaints to the SPSO from other prisoners, the prison had already explained to us that a pilot programme ran for some prisoners from November 2007 until November 2008. After that plans were put in place to deliver the programme more widely. Our investigation confirmed that Mr C did have to wait for two years before he was assessed for the programme. However, the prison had a duty to deliver the programme to different groups of prisoners. Managing this meant that one group of prisoners was necessarily given priority over another group. Therefore the delay in Mr C accessing the programme was unavoidable.