

SPSO decision report

Case: 201103755, Scottish Prison Service
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: progression
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C, who is a prisoner, complained about the delay in allocating him to a rehabilitation course. Mr C was unhappy that the course he was scheduled to attend did not go ahead and that the proposed rescheduled date would impact on his chances of early release on parole licence. When the parole board met to discuss Mr C's case, they acknowledged that he needed to undertake the course and be tested in open conditions before being considered for release. A further parole hearing was, therefore, arranged several months later to allow for this.

Our investigation found that the prison were unable to run the course when they said they would because there were not enough participants for it to go ahead. The prison explained that on average, there is a 20 percent drop-out rate and that all courses are terminated when reduced to four participants. The option of completing the course in another prison or in the community was considered but this was not possible. The prison, therefore, took steps to interview individuals for the course over a six week period. This resulted in more participants being identified and allowed the course to start about eight weeks later.

Mr C completed the course three months later and his review by the parole board was brought forward by a couple of months where his release on parole licence was approved. Being mindful that the prison have limited resources, in Mr C's case we did not consider it was unreasonable for the prison to reschedule the course because it needed more participants. We also found that the eight week delay was not in itself unreasonable.