

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201403048, Scottish Prison Service  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** religious services and visits  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that he cannot attend Friday prayers in prison. The prison explained to Mr C that the Scottish Prison Service (SPS)'s Islamic chaplaincy adviser had advised that prisons did not need to hold prayers on Fridays and that the same applied to other religions because they did not follow traditional service days.

We found that the prison rules say that every prisoner is entitled to observe the requirements and engage in the practices of their religion or belief. They also say prisoners are entitled to attend religious services or meetings arranged by members of the chaplaincy team. In addition, prison governors are required to tell prisoners what facilities or arrangements are in place for the purpose of practising their religion.

The SPS told us that their Islamic chaplaincy adviser confirmed that providing prayers on a day of the week which is suitable to the prison was appropriate. The adviser confirmed there was no requirement to provide prayers on Fridays, and that whilst in prison, whenever prayers take place they are considered as a benefit. The SPS confirmed that, for example, in the prison Mr C was located, Muslim prayers were held on Mondays and Roman Catholic Mass was held on Mondays for some prisoners, and Wednesdays for others. In light of this information, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint.