

SPSO decision report

Case: 201708346, Scottish Prison Service
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: clothing
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C submitted a lost property claim to the prison service, alleging that some items of his property had gone missing after he handed his laundry bag in to the prison laundry. Mr C complained to us about the way the prison service handled his lost property claim, and about their handling of his complaint.

We found that Mr C's lost property claim had been handled appropriately. The prison service accepted that Mr C's kitbag had not been returned from the laundry, and had initially offered compensation for a lost t-shirt and lost shorts. They refused to compensate him for the loss of branded boxer shorts, saying they considered these items disposable once in use and explaining that they do not itemise them on prisoner's property cards so cannot track them as they do with other property. After Mr C escalated his complaint and it was investigated further, it became apparent that the t-shirt and shorts had in fact been handed out two months after he submitted his claim. The offer of compensation was therefore retracted.

Mr C said that the prison service had failed to record the number of pairs and brand of boxer shorts handed in, which he said was contrary to prison policy. We thought that the prison service could not reasonably be expected to itemise and note the brand of all items of underwear being handed into prisons, and we considered that their position was reasonable. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

In relation to the complaints handling, the prison service had accepted some shortcomings in the original complaints response. Other than this, we found that they had responded within prescribed timescales and had given clear reasons for their decisions. We, therefore, did not uphold this part of the complaint.