

Case: 201103341, Scottish Prison Service
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: visits
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C is a prisoner. In receiving visits from his family, Mr C prefers to use his visit allocation to receive visits only once a month and, therefore, requests double visits. However, the prison will not authorise such a request more than 72 hours in advance. Mr C complained that this was unreasonable.

When we investigated this, the prison advised us that, in the interests of fairness, the 72 hour rule is used to keep spaces open as long as possible to ensure that every prisoner has the opportunity to book at least a single visit. If spaces remain within 72 hours of a visiting time, they will then consider granting requests for double visits. However, they also said that they take a flexible approach and will consider requests more than 72 hours in advance - either in exceptional circumstances or when visitors are travelling a considerable distance.

In Mr C's case, they also said that as he only requires one visit per month and as his visitors travel by public transport, his requests will be considered provided he attaches a referral to the Family Contact Officer quoting the reasons for his request. If he requires more than one visit per month, he would have to revert to the 72 hour rule. We clarified this to Mr C at the end of our investigation. We considered the prison's approach to be reasonable and did not uphold the complaint.