

SPSO decision report

Case: 201306133, Scottish Prison Service
Sector: Scottish Government and devolved administration
Subject: communication by telephone
Outcome: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) delayed in repairing a phone that he reported broken. We found that the SPS had not taken any action to repair the phone for over two weeks after Mr C complained about it and we upheld his complaint.

Mr C also complained about the way in which the SPS had handled his complaint about this. In their initial response, they said that the fault had been reported. When we investigated this, we found no evidence that this had happened. When we asked for an explanation, the SPS told us that they had confused this with another problem that was affecting phones in the prison. Mr C then made a further complaint about the matter. In their response to this, the SPS again confused the two problems and told him that the fault had been reported and resolved. This was incorrect and we found that there had been a clear failure by the SPS to investigate and address a relatively straightforward complaint. Their responses to Mr C were clearly inaccurate and we also upheld this aspect of his complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the SPS:

- take steps to ensure that there is an effective process in place for identifying phones in the prison, logging reports of phone faults and ensuring that they are investigated and repaired;
- issue a written apology to Mr C for the failures we identified in relation to the handling of his complaint; and
- issue a reminder to the staff involved in handling Mr C's complaint that the issue complained about should be adequately investigated in line with the prison rules and the SPS's staff guidance on prisoner complaints and disciplinary appeals.