

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201304894, **Scottish Prison Service**  
**Sector:** Scottish Government and devolved administration  
**Subject:** food  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained that the prison he was in failed to make adequate arrangements for the provision of halal food. He said that he wanted the imam for the prison to taste random halal meals, as he considered that the halal goods brought into the prison were not halal by the time they reached prisoners' plates.

The prison rules say that the prison governor must taste and check samples of the food. They must also ensure that every prisoner is provided with food that takes into account, as far as practical, the prisoner's age, health and religious, cultural, dietary or other requirements. However, there is no requirement for the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to arrange for an imam to taste halal food. During our investigation, the prison told us that halal food is prepared separately, and that utensils are sterilised before use to prevent cross-contamination. They said that, once the meat is prepared, it is placed into individual containers and is then refrigerated or frozen and the containers stored in separate sections. They also sent us halal certificates from their meat suppliers.

Mr C also wanted his food to be served by a Muslim prisoner. Ideally, halal food would be served by a practising Muslim and we could understand Mr C's concerns that, in the prison, it was not. However, there was no requirement for the SPS to arrange this and the decision on who served halal food in the prison was one for them to make, which we could not question in the absence of any evidence of maladministration in the taking of that decision.

We found that the SPS had made reasonable arrangements to provide halal food in the prison, and did not uphold Mr C's complaint.