

Report on the unannounced inspection of
the short-term holding facility at:

Electric House, Croydon

6–7 June 2009

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

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Printed and published by:
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
1st Floor, Ashley House
Monck Street
London SW1P 2BQ
England

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Overview

The short-term holding facility is managed by Group 4 Securicor (G4S) on behalf of the UK Border Agency (UKBA). It is situated in Electric House, in the same building as a UKBA reporting centre, where approximately 800 immigration applicants awaiting final decision report each day. People whose claim has been finally determined and who are to be removed from the UK are detained when they come to report. The room also holds people detained by UKBA enforcement or 'arrest' teams, including family teams, who are also based in the building. There were three detainees present on the day of the inspection.

The facility included a single large holding room with toilet facilities, a staff area and an interview room. It was staffed by three G4S detainee custody officers from 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday but was frequently used to hold people detained by UKBA arrest teams outside these hours.

A second holding room and interview room were under construction at the time of the inspection. The new holding room was intended to be used primarily for families, but UKBA managers indicated that it would also be used to hold unrelated female detainees separately from male detainees.

G4S supplied us with detention logs for the three-month period from March to May 2009, which represented 65 operating days. During this period, 150 detainees (128 male, 22 female), including five children, had been held. The average length of stay was four hours, ranging from 15 minutes to 11 hours 40 minutes. The length of stay figures did not include information for detainees located by arrest teams out of hours, for whom the length of stay was not recorded.

Electric House Short-Term Holding Facility

Inspected: 6–7 June 2009

Last inspected: June 2006

Inspectors

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The healthy custodial establishment

HE.1 The concept of a healthy prison was introduced in our thematic review *Suicide is Everyone's Concern* (1999). The healthy prison criteria have been modified to fit the inspection of short-term holding facilities, both residential and non-residential. The criteria for short-term holding facilities are:

Safety – detainees are held in safety and with due regard to the insecurity of their position

Respect – detainees are treated with respect for their human dignity and the circumstances of their detention

Activities – detainees are able to be occupied while they are in detention

Preparation for release – detainees are able to keep in contact with the outside world and are prepared for their release, transfer or removal.

HE.2 Inspectors kept fully in mind that although these were custodial facilities, detainees were not held because they had been charged with a criminal offence and had not been detained through normal judicial processes.

Safety

HE.3 All detainees had an IS91 authority to detain form, and were given a copy of their reasons for detention, although only in English. Interpreters were used for all immigration interviews, but those arriving with arrest teams did not always have an interpreter and were often confused about what was happening. Information about legal services was translated into a limited number of languages, and detainees were often advised to wait until they were taken to an immigration removal centre (IRC) before arranging to see a solicitor.

HE.4 There was no programme of refresher training in anti-bullying or self-harm and suicide awareness procedures. Staff had a good view of the holding area. The toilet facilities were screened from the holding room. An anti-ligature knife was attached to the first-aid kit in the staff area but staff did not carry anti-ligature knives with them. There had been two incidents of attempted self-harm and in both cases staff had used force to prevent the detainee self-harming.

HE.5 The detention of children was planned to help minimise the length of detention. Information about the detention of children was not properly monitored. There was a child protection policy but it had not been agreed by the local safeguarding children board. Staff were vigilant about the safety of children and were clear about how to manage concerns. Immigration staff had received child protection training but Group 4 Securicor staff were not sufficiently trained in child protection issues and there was no child protection coordinator for the facility. Age dispute cases were always referred to social services. Families were held with unrelated adults pending completion of a new adjoining family holding room.

- HE.6 Force had been used on three occasions in the previous 12 months: twice to prevent a detainee from self-harming and once to remove a detainee from the holding room into an escort vehicle for transport to an IRC. In each case, the incidents had been properly documented and from the paperwork it appeared that the use of force was proportionate.
- HE.7 Daily visits by immigration staff to the holding room did not always take place. An Independent Monitoring Board had not yet been appointed to visit the facility.

Respect

- HE.8 The detainee custody officers on duty were polite and respectful to detainees.
- HE.9 The holding room was clean, with toilet facilities that were effectively screened, but the seating was uncomfortable.
- HE.10 Food and drinks were freely available but the food supplied was not always suitable. Hot meals were not available, despite some long stays of over 11 hours.
- HE.11 There was a diversity policy, although it was not displayed in the holding room or staff area. The national disabilities policy was displayed but there was no liaison officer. The current holding area was not suitable for people using a wheelchair or those with significant disabilities. Staff were unaware of diversity impact assessments. Staff stated they were confident in using telephone interpretation, although records indicated that it had been used on only one occasion in the previous six months.
- HE.12 Details about the complaints procedure were available in a number of languages, but information displayed in the holding room was in English only. Complaints forms in 11 languages were available but detainees had to ask staff for a form.

Activities

- HE.13 There was little for detainees to do, with only a television and a few newspapers and magazines available, only one of which was in a foreign language. Detainees did not have access to fresh air.

Preparation for release

- HE.14 The facility was used as a first place of detention; most detainees were transferred to further detention in an IRC.
- HE.15 Detainees were not allowed visits from family, friends or their legal advisers, and no property or money could be brought in for them. Detainees were able to telephone their family, friends or legal advisers when they were being transferred or released. If they did not have access to a mobile telephone or funds for the pay telephone, staff indicated they would allow them to make a free call.

Section 1

Escort vans and transfers

Expected outcomes:

Detainees under escort are treated courteously, provided with refreshment and comfort breaks, and transported safely.

- 1.1 The main escort contractor was Group 4 Securicor (G4S). During the inspection, an escort vehicle arrived and collected three detainees. This vehicle was a coach containing seats separated into three caged areas. Male and female detainees were transported at the same time. We were told that unrelated female detainees would be located in a separate caged compartment to males. The vehicle was clean and had a supply of small water cartons and sandwiches, stored in a cool box, and also a supply of dry snack packs. Escort vehicles were parked in a secure parking bay a short distance from the holding room. The bay and the route from the holding room were monitored by closed-circuit television cameras.
- 1.2 G4S escorting staff had been subject to Criminal Records Bureau checks to enhanced level. They introduced themselves to detainees and were polite and respectful. All detainees were rub-down searched by escorting staff before being located on the vehicle.
- 1.3 For most detainees, Electric House was the first place of detention, so few had yet experienced escorts. Detainees were advised to use the toilet before transfer and we were advised that few journeys exceeded two hours. If they had to use the toilet en route, staff provided male detainees with a 'gel bag'. The bags contained a gel to absorb the moisture. Escorting staff indicated that they usually telephoned ahead to the next place of detention, to give advance notice of their time of arrival.
- 1.4 The logs indicated that most detainees (approximately 55%) were brought to the holding room by UK Border Agency (UKBA) immigration staff from the reporting centre in the same building. The next largest group (43%) were brought in UKBA vans by UKBA arrest teams, including the family team.
- 1.5 Detainees were not removed directly from the holding room. Most were transferred to a place of further detention, usually an immigration removal centre (IRC) or the short-term holding facility at the Port of Dover. As soon as staff received a movement order from the Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit (DEPMU) indicating where the detainees had been allocated, they were informed of their destination (see section on preparation for release).

Recommendation

- 1.6 Unrelated female detainees should be transported separately from males.

Arrival and accommodation

Expected outcomes:

Detainees taken into custody are treated with respect, have the correct documentation, and are held in safe and decent conditions. Family accommodation is suitable.

- 1.7 Three detainees were received during the inspection, all with completed IS91 authority to detain forms. Relevant risk information about mental health issues relating to one of these detainees was included on the form.
- 1.8 Detainees were placed in a single large holding room, with families and unrelated female detainees being held in the same room as single men. The room was clean and supervised at all times by staff, but was bare of furnishings or décor, other than rigid plastic bench seats, which were uncomfortable to sit on after a short time. There were 27 such seats, and eight plastic fixed chairs around rectangular tables, giving a potential capacity of 35. In the previous three months, the largest number of detainees held at any time was nine.
- 1.9 There was effective air conditioning in the facility, which was controllable by staff. There were separate toilets for men and women, fully separated from the holding room.
- 1.10 A separate family room was in the process of construction. The dimensions of the new holding area were 5.98 metres by 5.20 metres, and it had separate toilet facilities, screened from the holding room, including baby change facilities. A fire evacuation plan was displayed in the staff area.
- 1.11 Staff were courteous and established the nationality of the detainees, who were introduced to them by UKBA staff. Staff responded immediately to detainees' requests for help. The regular team of two men and one woman were on duty during the inspection. They told us that when the female detainee custody officer was on leave, there would often be no female member of staff available. A male member of staff would either search a female detainee by use of the metal detector wand only, or ask one of the female UKBA staff from another department if she would assist.
- 1.12 Hot drinks and sandwiches were provided to detainees soon after arrival, although the range of fillings available was unsuitable (see section on services). We observed property being documented and stored carefully, signed for by the detainee. Detainees were not able to take a shower, and no spare clothing was available for issue. Detainees had been in the room for up to 11 hours and 40 minutes during the previous three months. Hygiene packs were not available, but staff said that these were due to become available shortly after the inspection.
- 1.13 Notices which had been removed for decoration work were replaced during the inspection. During their absence, no arrangements had been made to provide the information which they displayed in any other format. They included G4S's general information about short-term detention in 15 languages, information about legal and helpline services, and the religious material available.
- 1.14 There was a supply of materials for baby care, including nappies, bottles, milk formula and toys. There was no baby changing table, although a changing mat was available. The new family room was being fitted with a fold-out baby changing facility (see above). There was no seating appropriate for pregnant or older people or those with disabilities.

- 1.15 Staff said that detainees were offered a free telephone call, and further calls if necessary. There was a pay telephone available, which accepted cash and credit cards. In addition, two mobile telephones were available, into which detainees could place their own SIM cards to make calls if their own telephone was withheld because it included a camera or recording equipment. Foreign currency could be exchanged to use the pay telephone.
- 1.16 Paramedics had been called in twice in the previous month, and the detainee had been taken to hospital on both occasions. Aeromed, the medical triage contractor providing healthcare back-up, had been called when there was a need to authorise issue of medication, and this was documented.
- 1.17 A UKBA manager was expected to visit the facility daily but records indicated that this did not always occur. Managers told us that during such visits they inspected the holding room and asked if there were any issues that need to be addressed, but they did not usually speak to detainees. No Independent Monitoring Board had yet been appointed to visit the facility, although this was under way.

Recommendations

- 1.18 Cushioned seating should be available.
- 1.19 The décor of the holding rooms should be improved to provide a less bleak environment for detainees.
- 1.20 There should be a clear procedure for the searching and support of female detainees when no female detainee custody officer is on duty.
- 1.21 Single male and female detainees should be held in separate rooms.
- 1.22 Families should be held together and separately from single detainees.
- 1.23 Hygiene packs, spare clothing and shower facilities should be available to detainees.
- 1.24 The holding room should be visited each day by an immigration manager, and part of the visit should include a conversation with detainees, to check on their welfare.
- 1.25 If wall displays have to be removed, the information which they convey should be made available to detainees in another format.

Positive relationships

Expected outcomes:

Those detained are treated respectfully by all staff, who have proper regard for the uncertainty of their situation and their personal circumstances.

- 1.26 Staff were generally courteous and professional, and treated all detainees with respect and consideration. However, we noted one member of staff displayed a dehumanising attitude when reporting to another department on the telephone: 'We have number 2 in. It's male'. Two of the staff had long experience of this work, and showed a mature and thoughtful approach when discussing the problems faced by detainees. They interacted with detainees as necessary. However, for most of the time, they kept the door between the staff area and

holding room locked. They did not introduce themselves by name, and they wore identification cards on which the name was printed in a font that was too small for a detainee to read.

Recommendations

- 1.27 Staff should refer to detainees in a respectful manner at all times.
- 1.28 All staff should wear legible name badges, and should introduce themselves by name to all detainees.
- 1.29 The door between the holding room and the staff area should remain open, unless evidence of risk justifies locking it.

Legal rights

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to obtain expert legal advice and representation from within the facility.

They can understand and retain legal documents. They can communicate with legal representatives without difficulty to progress their cases efficiently.

- 1.30 Detainees had access to their legal documents if they had them with their property; otherwise, there was no help available to have them collected. If they did not have their documents already, detainees were usually advised to wait until a friend or relative could bring them in to the receiving residential establishment following transfer. If the detainees did not have a solicitor but wanted one, they were advised to wait until they arrived at the IRC and request one there, by which time they would be a considerable way into their 72-hour removal notice period.
- 1.31 Most of the legal advice telephone numbers provided to detainees were out of date. The number for the 'Refugee Legal Centre' (now Refugee Migrant Justice) was correct and advice was available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. There was an advice line number for the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, but this organisation no longer provided advice to detainees. The other number was for the Immigration Advisory Service, but only helped people who could go to their offices for appointments. They were able to give another number for those detained, but this provided a recorded message which required a voice message to be left for someone to call back within 48 hours. Telephone numbers for the 'Refugee Legal Centre' and the Immigration Advisory Service were also written on the IS91R form. If detainees did not have the means to make a call to their legal representative, they were either given the cash to do so by custody staff from their petty cash or allowed to use the office telephone. Information about legal services, including bail information for detainees, the Chinese Welfare Association and the Law Centre, was also detailed in a booklet, but this was available in only three languages.
- 1.32 Detainees were not able to receive visitors, including legal visitors. There was no facility for detainees to send faxes but the telephone number of their immigration officer was provided on the top of their IS91R form and they were told that their legal representatives could ring this number and arrange for documents to be faxed. There was no email access.

Recommendations

- 1.33 Friends and families of detainees should be able to bring in important documents for detainees.
- 1.34 Detainees should be given assistance in applying for legal advice and bail soon after arriving at the facility, and take-up or refusal should be documented.
- 1.35 Up-to-date information about legal services should be available in the main languages spoken by detainees.
- 1.36 Detainees should be able to received legal visitors while in detention.
- 1.37 Detainees should be able to send faxes and emails, including to legal representatives.

Casework

Expected outcomes:

Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated.

Detention is for the minimum period necessary.

- 1.38 Most detainees were brought over from the reporting centre. Out of 800 immigration applicants reporting to the UKBA reporting centre each day, staff aimed to remove three a week, and tried to detain six a week, which was consistent with the logs.
- 1.39 All detainees had an IS91 form and detention officers were clear that they would not take anyone without one. Each detainee was allocated to an immigration case worker, but more than one immigration worker could be involved in a case if it was urgent. If a detainee did not speak English, an interpreter would be present during immigration interviews. Detainees were also given a copy of the form stating the reasons for their detention (IS91R) in English, which would be explained to them by the interpreter if they did not speak fluent English.
- 1.40 Details of most detainees were recorded in the log. Out-of-hours detentions were recorded in a separate book, but this did not include the time that they were released or transferred, nor their transfer location. It was not therefore possible to calculate their length of stay. The average length of fully recorded detentions was four hours but had been up to 11 hours and 40 minutes. Delays often occurred because detainees were waiting for escorts, particularly those who had arrived earlier in the day, as transport almost always came between 4.15pm and 5.30pm.

Recommendations

- 1.41 Written copies of the reasons for detention should be given in a language that the detainee understands.
- 1.42 Out-of-hours detentions should be properly recorded on the log, including the duration of stay and transfer location.

Duty of care

Expected outcomes:

The centre exercises a duty of care to protect detainees from risk of harm.

Bullying

- 1.43 The contractor's operating procedures contained a policy and guidance on bullying. Detainee custody officers had received training in anti-bullying awareness as part of their initial training course, but there was no programme of refresher training.
- 1.44 Men and women were held in the same holding room. Staff had a good view of the holding room, but told us about a situation in which a male detainee had presented a risk to females. In this instance, an unrelated female being held at the same time had been located separately in an interview room, with the door open, so she had access to staff. Families were usually detained and transferred before any unrelated adult detainees were detained in the holding room, but staff could recall incidents when families had been held at the same time as other detainees (see recommendation 1.22).

Suicide and self-harm

- 1.45 The inspected IS91 forms included known information about risks and vulnerabilities. Officers had received initial training in self-harm and suicide awareness but there was no programme of refresher training.
- 1.46 Detainee custody officers were trained in first aid and received refresher training every three years. The toilet areas had a few ligature points, and an anti-ligature knife was taped to the first-aid box in the staff area. However, it was not carried routinely by detainee custody officers. The holding area was monitored at all times.
- 1.47 There had been two incidents of attempted self-harm at the facility in the previous 12 months. In both cases, detainee custody officers and G4S escorting staff had used force to prevent the detainee from injuring himself and staff. The use of force paperwork indicated that use of force had been necessary to prevent injury to the detainee and that the incidents had been de-escalated at the earliest opportunity. In one case, staff had asked the duty manager at Colnbrook IRC, the receiving establishment, to arrange for the detainee to be examined by a nurse. In the second incident, there was no record that the detainee had been examined on arrival at Colnbrook, although all detainees arriving there are normally seen routinely by a nurse.
- 1.48 Lessons learned following investigations into incidents that had occurred in any of the short-term holding facilities and escorting services operated by the contractor were disseminated to staff in regular information notices.

Recommendations

- 1.49 Detainee custody officers should receive regular refresher training in anti-bullying and suicide and self-harm prevention.

- 1.50 All detainees who have attempted to self-harm or have been subject to use of force should be examined by a healthcare practitioner as soon as possible after the incident and details should be recorded on the incident paperwork.
- 1.51 Detainee custody officers should carry a personal anti-ligature knife at all times.

Childcare and child protection

Expected outcomes:

Children are detained only in exceptional circumstances and for the minimum time.. Children's rights and needs for care and protection are respected and met in full.

- 1.52 There was a national G4S child protection policy document, which staff were aware of, but it had not been agreed with the local safeguarding children board. Staff were vigilant about the safety of children and were clear how they would manage situations where they were concerned. A child protection policy prompt card was on display, to assist staff if they were concerned about a child's welfare. Although the policy referred to developing 'a culture in which staff feel comfortable enough to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviours to each other', there was no code of conduct informing staff of their duty to raise legitimate concerns about the conduct of colleagues and managers in relation to the treatment and management of children.
- 1.53 All custody staff had been subject to Criminal Records Bureau checks to enhanced level, and we were told that all UKBA operational staff had completed training on child trafficking and 'keeping children safe' child protection training up to tier 3. Detainee custody officers had not completed any recent child protection training. Some related issues had been covered in their initial training but this had been up to eight years earlier. There was no child protection coordinator for the holding room, although G4S had a nationally nominated person who could give advice on children's issues.
- 1.54 Managers estimated that they brought in two children a week on average, but holding room logs indicated that in the three months before the inspection only five children had been held in the facility, aged three (two children), four, eight and 17. The logs suggested that the four-year-old, who had been brought in out of hours, had not been accompanied by an adult. In addition, these out-of-hours logs did not record how long the person was detained or where they were sent afterwards.
- 1.55 We were told that the detention of children was always planned in advance and that consideration was given to the welfare needs of the child before deciding whether to detain; for instance, the family would not be detained if the child had forthcoming important schooling, such as exams. The child's physical and mental health would be considered, as well as relationships with siblings remaining in the UK. Apart from the log, which contained only basic information, data about the detention of children were not monitored or analysed.
- 1.56 We were told that age dispute cases were always resolved with the assistance of social services before detainees arrived at the holding room. When there was uncertainty about the relationship between children and adults, this was resolved before detention, and usually involved the police. There were occasions when a person had been detained at the reporting centre with a child whom staff suspected did not belong to him or her. In all such cases to date, the child had belonged to a friend or relative and had apparently been brought along to prevent detention of the accompanying adult. We were told that such children waited with immigration staff in the administrative area, rather than the holding room, until a parent could collect them.

- 1.57 Families were always held together and were sometimes held in the interview room if it was judged more appropriate to keep them separate from detainees who were strangers. Children had access to toys and DVDs but were not able to play outside in the fresh air. The new family holding room was almost ready for use and would enable families to be held separately from other detainees, and therefore more safely, and would be better equipped for children. We saw new equipment, including bean bags, toys, play mats and 14 DVDs suitable for children of all age ranges, ready to go into the room when it was finished.

Recommendations

- 1.58 Information about the detention of children should be monitored and analysed.
- 1.59 The child protection policy should be tailored to the specific purpose of the holding room and should be agreed by the local safeguarding children board.
- 1.60 The child protection policy should include a specific code of conduct informing staff of their duty to raise legitimate concerns about the conduct of colleagues and managers in relation to the treatment and management of children.
- 1.61 All staff in contact with children should receive appropriate child protection training.
- 1.62 There should be a nominated child protection coordinator for the holding room.

Diversity

Expected outcomes:

There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural norms. Detainees are not discriminated against on the basis of their race, nationality, gender, religion, disability or sexual orientation, and there is positive promotion and understanding of diversity.

- 1.63 The contractor had a national diversity policy but this was not displayed in the holding room or staff area. The generic G4S policy on the treatment of staff, detainees and visitors with disabilities was displayed on the holding room wall in English. Although there was no local disability liaison officer, G4S had a national disability officer who was available to provide advice to staff on disability issues. We were told that no people using a wheelchair had ever been detained in the facility. The new 'family' holding room area would have a disability-compliant toilet and there was evidence that rails were to be put up before it was finished.
- 1.64 Apart from some basic initial training, which had taken place up to eight years earlier, detainee custody officers had not received specific training in diversity issues.
- 1.65 If detainees wanted to make a racist incident complaint, this could be done using the normal complaint form. Staff said that they would assist detainees with completing a complaint form. None of the staff we spoke to were aware of any racist incident complaints submitted to date.
- 1.66 Neither managers nor staff were aware of any impact assessments carried out on policies.
- 1.67 The holding room was in the final stages of redecoration, and notices were being replaced on the wall, including information about short-term detention in 15 languages and on how to make a complaint in 21 languages. One notice made detainees aware that religious items were available, including a Bible, a Qur'an, a prayer mat and a kiblah (indicating the direction of

Mecca). However, this notice was displayed only in English and the copy of the Qur'an was available only in Arabic.

- 1.68 Detention officers told us that it was common for detainees to ask further questions about the reasons for their detention after the interpreter had gone. In these circumstances, we were told that staff would ask for the interpreter to return, if he or she was still in the building. We were told that detainees brought in by arrest teams did not always come with an interpreter, and these detainees were often confused about what was happening to them. Although staff indicated to us that they would use telephone interpretation if necessary, records indicated that it had only been used on one occasion in the previous six months.

Recommendations

- 1.69 Staff should receive refresher training in diversity.
- 1.70 There should be a diversity policy displayed in the holding room in the main languages spoken by detainees.
- 1.71 There should be a nominated local disability liaison officer.
- 1.72 There should be an assessment of the impact of policies on detainees within the different strands of diversity, including ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, age, sexuality and disability.
- 1.73 All notices should be displayed in a range of languages.
- 1.74 There should be an English translation of the Qur'an.
- 1.75 Staff should always use interpretation for detainees who do not speak fluent English, to explain what is happening to them on first detention and whenever necessary thereafter.

Activities

Expected outcomes:

The facility encourages activities to preserve and promote the mental and physical well being of detainees.

- 1.76 There were insufficient activities available to occupy detainees. The holding room was equipped with a television with access to the five terrestrial channels, but there was no access to foreign language channels or DVDs. There were two English language newspapers and one French language newspaper, a car magazine and a 'Hello' magazine. There were no magazines or books in languages other than English.
- 1.77 Detainees had no access to exercise in the fresh air.

Recommendations

- 1.78 Newspapers, magazines and books which reflect the main languages spoken by detainees should be available and reviewed regularly.

- 1.79 Detainees should have access to exercise in the fresh air.

Facility rules

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to feel secure in a predictable and ordered environment.

- 1.80 Staff had excellent visibility into the holding area, and detainees could easily attract staff attention. There was no information on rules or standards of expected behaviour displayed in the holding room.
- 1.81 A closed-circuit television system monitored the holding room, staff areas and vehicle bay. There were 15 cameras at the time of the inspection and this was due to be increased to 17 when the second (family) holding room was opened. The cameras could be monitored in the holding room and the building's security control room, which was staffed by Home Office security staff.
- 1.82 The staff on duty had all received control and restraint training and attended an annual refresher course.
- 1.83 Detainees who had been subject to use of force were not immediately examined by a healthcare practitioner (see recommendation 1.50). If they had any obvious injuries, staff would summon an ambulance; otherwise, they were examined by a nurse or doctor on arrival at an IRC.
- 1.84 There had been four incidents recorded at the facility in the previous 12 months. One related to a medical emergency. Two incidents involved detainees who had attempted to self-harm and had been restrained to prevent injuries to themselves and staff (see section on suicide and self-harm). The fourth incident involved a detainee who had refused to move from the holding room into a van, to be transferred to Harmondsworth IRC. He was restrained by immigration officers from a UKBA arrest team and G4S detainee custody officers. This incident had been the subject of a complaint by the detainee (see section on complaints).

Complaints

Expected outcomes:

There is a published complaints procedure; compliant forms are freely available.

- 1.85 The generic G4S detainee information booklet gave some basic information about complaints in 15 languages, but this simply advised detainees to speak to staff. On the wall in the holding room, there was a poster explaining how to make a complaint but this was only in English. Posters in other languages were available, but had been temporarily removed during the redecoration. Both information on the complaints procedure and complaints forms, translated into 11 languages, were available in the staff area, but detainees had to request these from staff.
- 1.86 There was a complaints box in the holding room. The key for the box was held by UKBA managers, who emptied the box as part of their daily visit and forwarded complaints to the central UKBA detention services complaints office.
- 1.87 There had been one recorded complaint in the previous 12 months, which arose out of the use of force incident mentioned above (see paragraph 1.84). The detainee concerned complained

that he had been assaulted. The complaint was submitted by the detainee at Harmondsworth IRC and acknowledged within seven days. The UKBA Professional Standards Unit conducted a thorough investigation into the complaint and provided the complainant with a comprehensive response indicating that his allegations could not be substantiated.

Recommendation

- 1.88 Information about how to complain should be displayed in the holding room in the main languages spoken by detainees, and the complaints forms should be freely available.

Services

Expected outcomes:

Services available to detainees allow them to live in a decent environment in which their normal everyday needs are met freely and without discrimination.

- 1.89 There was a vending machine in the staff area which supplied a range of hot and cold drinks. Detainees were able to have as many drinks as they requested. They were offered a drink on arrival and at regular intervals during their stay, and could request further drinks at any time. Sandwiches were delivered to the holding room three times a week and stored in a refrigerator in the staff area. The detention logs suggested that all detainees had been offered a sandwich, although 26% had refused. At the time of the inspection, mostly ham sandwiches were stocked, which would have been unsuitable for many detainees, and one tuna sandwich, but no cheese or egg sandwiches. Detainee custody officers indicated that detainees from some cultural backgrounds would not eat bread and thought it would be helpful to have a stock of salads available. We were told that there was £20 in petty cash to buy food to meet the particular needs of detainees. Dry snack packs were also available but hot meals were not, despite detainees being held there for up to 11 hours 40 minutes. Complaints about food could be made through the normal complaints procedure. There was no food complaints book.
- 1.90 Detainees were able to retain cash in their possession to use the pay telephone.
- 1.91 A range of women's sanitary products and a sanitary disposal unit were available in the toilet area. There were no nappies available in the holding room but a supply was available in a store cupboard, and staff indicated that a baby changing mat and products were brought out of the cupboard when they knew a young child was arriving.

Recommendations

- 1.92 Meals suitable for the full range of detainees should be available at all times, including hot meals.
- 1.93 There should be a food complaints book.

Preparation for release

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to maintain contact with family, friends, support groups, legal representatives and advisers, are given adequate notice of their release, transfer or removal,

and are able to recover property. Families with children and others with special needs are not detained without items essential to their welfare.

- 1.94 Detainees were unable to receive visitors and property could not be given to the detainee by others while held in this facility. Discharge from the facility was generally managed sensitively by the escort staff, who spoke calmly and explained every step in the process to detainees. Property and money were carefully accounted for and stored, and accompanied the detainee on leaving the holding room. Detainees were able to telephone legal advisers and family to let them know their future movements. Detainee custody officers were forbidden from sending faxes on behalf of detainees by UKBA. All requests to send faxes were referred to UKBA, to check the authenticity of the recipient before transmission. There was no apparent justification for this restriction. Bags were available in case detainees needed to carry property from the holding room, but no clothing was available. Detainees being transferred to further detention were given reasons orally by UKBA staff. Staff had a stock of cards giving basic information about each IRC, and gave the relevant card to each detainee being transferred to further detention.
- 1.95 The holding room was usually the first place of detention. Most detainees were transferred to further detention. In the previous three months, approximately 57% had been transferred to an IRC, a further 23% had been taken to the short-term holding facility at Dover, a few had been transferred to the short-term holding room at Lunar House and two had been temporarily released. In the remainder of cases, no destination had been recorded.

Recommendations

- 1.96 Detainees should be able to receive visitors and to receive property from outside contacts, given in person or handed in.
- 1.97 Detainees should be able to send and receive faxes without restriction.

Section 2: Summary of recommendations

Recommendation	To UKBA
2.1	The holding room should be visited each day by an immigration manager, and part of the visit should include a conversation with detainees, to check on their welfare. (1.24)

Recommendations	To UKBA and facility contractor
2.2	The décor of the holding rooms should be improved to provide a less bleak environment for detainees. (1.19)
2.3	Single male and female detainees should be held in separate rooms. (1.21)
2.4	Families should be held together and separately from single detainees. (1.22)
2.5	Friends and families of detainees should be able to bring in important documents for detainees. (1.33)
2.6	Detainees should be given assistance in applying for legal advice and bail soon after arriving at the facility, and take-up or refusal should be documented. (1.34)
2.7	Up-to-date information about legal services should be available in the main languages spoken by detainees. (1.35)
2.8	Detainees should be able to receive legal visitors while in detention. (1.36)
2.9	Detainees should be able to send faxes and emails, including to legal representatives. (1.37)
2.10	Written copies of the reasons for detention should be given in a language that the detainee understands. (1.41)
2.11	Information about the detention of children should be monitored and analysed. (1.58)
2.12	All staff in contact with children should receive appropriate child protection training. (1.61)
2.13	There should be a nominated child protection coordinator for the holding room. (1.62)
2.14	There should be a nominated local disability liaison officer. (1.71)
2.15	There should be an assessment of the impact of policies on detainees within the different strands of diversity, including ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, age, sexuality and disability. (1.72)
2.16	Detainees should have access to exercise in the fresh air. (1.79)
2.17	Detainees should be able to receive visitors and to receive property from outside contacts, given in person or handed in. (1.96)

- 2.18 Detainees should be able to send and receive faxes without restriction. (1.97)

Recommendations

To the escort contractor

- 2.19 Unrelated female detainees should be transported separately from males. (1.6)

- 2.20 Cushioned seating should be available. (1.18)

Recommendations

To the facility contractor

- 2.21 There should be a clear procedure for the searching and support of female detainees when no female detainee custody officer is on duty. (1.20)

- 2.22 Hygiene packs, spare clothing and shower facilities should be available to detainees. (1.23)

- 2.23 If wall displays have to be removed, the information which they convey should be made available to detainees in another format. (1.25)

- 2.24 Staff should refer to detainees in a respectful manner at all times. (1.27)

- 2.25 All staff should wear legible name badges, and should introduce themselves by name to all detainees. (1.28)

- 2.26 The door between the holding room and the staff area should remain open, unless evidence of risk justifies locking it. (1.29)

- 2.27 Out-of-hours detentions should be properly recorded on the log, including the duration of stay and transfer location. (1.42)

- 2.28 Detainee custody officers should receive regular refresher training in anti-bullying and suicide and self-harm prevention. (1.49)

- 2.29 All detainees who have attempted to self-harm or have been subject to use of force should be examined by a healthcare practitioner as soon as possible after the incident and details should be recorded on the incident paperwork. (1.50)

- 2.30 Detainee custody officers should carry a personal anti-ligature knife at all times. (1.51)

- 2.31 The child protection policy should be tailored to the specific purpose of the holding room and should be agreed by the local safeguarding children board. (1.59)

- 2.32 The child protection policy should include a specific code of conduct informing staff of their duty to raise legitimate concerns about the conduct of colleagues and managers in relation to the treatment and management of children. (1.60)

- 2.33 Staff should receive refresher training in diversity. (1.69)

- 2.34 There should be a diversity policy displayed in the holding room in the main languages spoken by detainees (1.70)

- 2.35 All notices should be displayed in a range of languages. (1.73)

- 2.36 There should be an English translation of the Qur'an. (1.74)
- 2.37 Staff should always use interpretation for detainees who do not speak fluent English, to explain what is happening to them on first detention and whenever necessary thereafter. (1.75)
- 2.38 Newspapers, magazines and books which reflect the main languages spoken by detainees should be available and reviewed regularly. (1.78)
- 2.39 Information about how to complain should be displayed in the holding room in the main languages spoken by detainees, and the complaints forms should be freely available. (1.88)
- 2.40 Meals suitable for the full range of detainees should be available at all times, including hot meals. (1.92)
- 2.41 There should be a food complaints book. (1.93)