

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

Dallas Court

28 April 2010

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Crown copyright 2010

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

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Overview | 4 |
| The healthy custodial establishment | 5 |
| Section 1: | |
| Escorts, vans and transfers | 7 |
| Arrival and accommodation | 8 |
| Positive relationships | 9 |
| Legal rights | 9 |
| Casework | 10 |
| Duty of care | 10 |
| Childcare and child protection | 11 |
| Diversity | 12 |
| Activities | 12 |
| Facility rules | 13 |
| Complaints | 13 |
| Services | 13 |
| Preparation for release | 13 |
| Section 2: Summary of recommendations | 15 |

Overview

Dallas Court is the UK Border Agency (UKBA)'s immigration reporting centre and holding facility for the Greater Manchester area, where people subject to immigration control are required to present themselves regularly. The facility normally holds people whose claims have been finally determined and who are to be removed from the UK. They are detained when they come to report or following enforcement operations in the community.

Group 4 Securicor (G4S) runs the detention facility for the UKBA. The same company is responsible for detention escorting in the UK. The facility also contains a separate holding area called the Dallas Court transit lounge, which is used as a staging post for vehicle exchange and comfort breaks. This part of the facility is in use by escorts at all hours, including when Dallas Court custodial staff are not on duty. No detainees were in the transit lounge during the inspection.

The main holding area was open from Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm, mirroring the opening hours of the reporting centre. Arrest teams sometimes worked outside these hours and detainee custody officers (DCOs) would arrange with immigration staff to extend the opening times to ensure that the holding area was available when detainees arrived. It was staffed by two DCOs (one male and one female), who were permanently based at Dallas Court. Two detainees were present in the holding area during the inspection.

Between February and April 2010, a total of 78 people, including 13 (16.9%) women and three (3.9%) children had been in the holding room for an average of four and a quarter hours. Over the same period, the transit lounge had held 251 detainees, but incomplete logs meant that it was difficult to ascertain length of stay.

Dallas Court Short-Term Holding Facility

Inspected: 28 April 2010

Last inspected: 9 January 2007

Inspectors

Lucy Young

Martin Kettle

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 Detainees were generally detained from the reporting centre or by enforcement teams from the community. No escorts were observed during the inspection. The absence of detailed and accurate logs for the use of the transit lounge made it difficult to establish exactly how the facility was used. There was insufficient seating in the transit lounge, and the toilets in this area were inadequately screened from the holding area. Detainees in the main holding rooms could not make a free telephone call in private.

HE.4 Staff had received training in suicide and self-harm prevention and management, and first aid. There had been two incidents of detainees harming themselves in the previous 12 months. Both appeared to have been handled appropriately. There was no programme of refresher training in anti-bullying or child care and protection. Staff had a good view of the rooms, which were also monitored by recordable closed-circuit television.

HE.5 Three children had been held over the previous three months. All detention staff in contact with detainees had been Criminal Records Bureau checked to enhanced level. UKBA staff had received some child protection training. G4S staff had been trained in use of force techniques but had not been required to use force on any detainee in the previous 12 months.

HE.6 Immigration managers based at Dallas Court visited the main holding area regularly but did not record visits. They had no oversight of the transit lounge. The Independent Monitoring Board provided independent oversight of the holding room and transit lounge. Staff were willing to send faxes on detainees' behalf. Legal advice lines were available but were of less use to those who spoke little English.

Respect

- HE.7 The holding rooms were clean and detainees had access to snacks and drinks. The detainee custody officers engaged actively with detainees and made good use of telephone interpreting to communicate with those who were unable to understand English. Male and female staff were routinely on duty.
- HE.8 The physical environment was clean and spacious, and allowed for separation of families and single adults. Secure complaints boxes were available, with complaint forms and information in a variety of languages. UKBA staff emptied the boxes daily.
- HE.9 Detainees had access to religious books and some information in translation. Access for those with disabilities was adequate.
- HE.10 Ambient microwaveable meals were unappealing, but there was also a range of sandwiches and snacks, including fresh fruit, crisps and drinks.

Activities

- HE.11 There was no access to exercise in the open air. Each holding room contained a television and a small selection of books and newspapers, some in languages other than English.

Preparation for release

- HE.12 Most detainees were transferred to further places of detention – primarily Pennine House. Those being transferred to an immigration removal centre were given cards detailing the centre's address and contact details.
- HE.13 Detainees were not permitted to have visitors but could make arrangements for family or friends to bring money and property to the facility for them. They had fairly good access to telephones.

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 We did not observe any escorts or examine any escort vehicles on the day of the inspection. A door in the staff area opened into the car park, and escort vehicles were able to park adjacent to the holding room. As the car park was secure, detainees were not normally handcuffed between the holding room and the escort vehicle, unless a risk assessment indicated a raised risk of escape or harm to the detainee or others.
- 1.2 We were told that as soon as the detention staff received confirmation from immigration staff or a movement order from the Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit (DEPMU), they informed detainees of their destination and gave them an opportunity to inform their friends, family or legal advisers.

The transit lounge

- 1.3 Our inspection of the transit lounge was based on a physical inspection of the area, a review of the logs recording its use, and conversations with detention and immigration staff based at Dallas Court. There were no detainees in the transit lounge during the inspection.
- 1.4 Records showed that 251 detainees had been held in the transit area during the previous three months. The logs did not record the details of individual detainees, and many entries were incomplete and failed to note the time of departure. It was therefore not possible to establish who was being held and for how long. We were told by G4S and on-site immigration staff that the facility was used for male and female detainees and families. The longest recorded stay in the transit lounge in the previous three months had been three hours 50 minutes.
- 1.5 The transit lounge comprised a staff area and a holding room, separated by a partially glazed wall. The holding room measured approximately four metres by 5.5 metres and contained a table with four chairs, a pay telephone, a water fountain, a television and a toilet area. There was a small selection of old newspapers and books, which were mainly in English.
- 1.6 The logs indicated that it was not unusual for more than four detainees to be in the transit lounge at a time, with the result that some detainees would have to stand or sit on the floor during their time in the facility.
- 1.7 There was only one toilet area. It was separated from the holding area by a three-quarter partition, which did not provide sufficient privacy. It contained a baby change unit, a supply of female sanitary products and a sanitary disposal bin.
- 1.8 In the staff area, there was a drinks vending machine, which was stocked with a range of hot and cold drinks, and a stock of snack packs including crisps, cereal bars and dried fruit was available. There was also a supply of unappealing ambient microwave meals, including meals suitable for detainees on a halal or vegetarian diets (see section on services). The microwave oven was clean but the refrigerator was not working. Staff told us that escorting staff using the facility had access to the supply of sandwiches stored in the refrigerator in the main holding

area at all times of the day. There was a notice on the broken refrigerator to advise escorting staff of this.

- 1.9 On-site immigration staff had no oversight of the transit lounge and only visited it to empty the complaints box. There were regular visits by G4S managers and the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB).

Recommendations

- 1.10 Logs in the transit lounge should record the individual details of detainees held and their length of stay.
- 1.11 The transit lounge should contain a supply of up-to-date newspapers in a range of languages.
- 1.12 There should be sufficient seating for the number of detainees held at any one time.
- 1.13 There should be separate male and female toilets.
- 1.14 The toilet area should be completely screened from the holding area.
- 1.15 The refrigerator in the transit lounge should be fixed.
- 1.16 There should be regular and recorded immigration oversight of the transit lounge.

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.

- 1.17 There were two permanent detainee custody officers (DCOs) allocated to the holding room – one male, one female. If one of them was on leave or sick, a replacement DCO of the same gender was posted to the facility.
- 1.18 The DCOs usually had advance notice of all detentions. When immigration staff brought detainees into the holding area, they introduced them to the DCOs, briefed them on the circumstances of the person's detention and provided them with a copy of the IS91 (authority to detain) form. The DCOs said that they would not accept a detainee without a fully completed IS91.
- 1.19 On arrival, detainees were given a rub-down search by a DCO of the same gender. Detainees' property was searched, sealed and placed in a locked storage cage in the staff area, where it was secure but could be seen by detainees. They were then offered a free telephone call to inform family, friends or their legal advisers about their detention. This was taken at the desk in the staff area and could be overheard by staff.
- 1.20 There were two holding rooms; one was designated for women and families and the other for male detainees. Each room measured 4.5 metres by two metres and contained a table with four fixed chairs, a television and a pay telephone. The toilet area in each of the holding rooms was separated from the holding area by a solid door, which afforded privacy. There was a stock of hygiene packs, containing socks, soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste, but there were no shower facilities. The absence of shower facilities was mitigated by the fact that most

detainees only spent a few hours in the holding room before generally going to a residential detention centre. A baby change unit was provided.

- 1.21 Detainees were given a copy of the contractor's information booklet, which contained information in 11 languages about detention in a holding room. They had access to a pay telephone, which accepted outgoing and incoming calls, and could retain their own mobile telephone provided that it did not have an integral camera or recording facility (see section on preparation for release).
- 1.22 The holding rooms were separated from the staff area by a partly glazed wall, which enabled the DCOs to observe detainees. There was a free vending machine in the staff area which was stocked with a range of hot and cold drinks. The area was clean and well organised. The air conditioning system provided ventilation. Staff told us that the area could become excessively warm in hot weather and indicated that, when this occurred, they opened the doors to allow increased ventilation.
- 1.23 Detainees were not given a health screening. If detainees arrived with medication, staff could obtain advice from a telephone medical advice and triage service provided by G4S Forensic Services, and told us that in an emergency they would summon an ambulance by telephoning the emergency services.
- 1.24 There was a good working relationship between immigration and detention staff. Immigration managers based at Dallas Court visited the holding room every day, although their visits were not always recorded and they did not complete a checklist to record any comments or issues. The IMB made regular visits to the holding room.

Recommendations

- 1.25 Detainees should be able to make a free telephone call in private.
- 1.26 Daily visits by immigration managers should be recorded and a log retained of any concerns or issues.

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.

- 1.27 We observed the DCOs engaging actively with the detainees in their care, and all interactions were polite and respectful. One of the permanent DCOs spoke a number of different languages, and during the inspection he was able to interpret for a detainee who did not speak English (see also section on diversity).

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.

- 1.28 Detainees were permitted to retain legal documents while in the holding room. The contact details of two independent immigration advice services were displayed in the two holding

rooms and the transit room; these had been updated in the current calendar year. Details of the Community Legal Advice helpline were not available. The advice lines were not of much help to detainees who could not speak English. Detainees were able to contact their legal representatives by telephone (see section on preparation for release) and staff were willing to send faxes to advisers.

Recommendations

- 1.29 Details of the Community Legal Advice helpline should be available.
- 1.30 The UKBA should negotiate with the Legal Services Commission to offer telephone advice to detainees using an interpretation service similar to that used in its police station telephone immigration advice line.

Casework

Expected outcomes:

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

Detention is for the minimum period necessary.

- 1.31 The copy logs for the three months from February to April 2010, a period of 61 operational days, showed that the holding room had been occupied on 41 days. A total of 78 people had been held, including 13 (16.9%) women and three (3.9%) children, aged seven months, nine months and 14 months. The children had been in the holding room for 2.5 hours, 4.5 hours and 30 minutes, respectively. The overall average length of detention had been four hours 25 minutes, ranging from 10 minutes to nine hours 15 minutes. All detainees except one, who had used the facility as a staging post, had been detained by immigration officers based at Dallas Court, and most had been transferred to other places of detention; five had been released.
- 1.32 We found no evidence of detainees being held without an IS91. The risk assessment section of the IS91 form for one of the people detained at the time of the inspection was blank, so it was not clear whether the risk assessment had not taken place or had found no risks.

Recommendation

- 1.33 An entry should always be made in the risk assessment section of the IS91.

Duty of care

Expected outcomes:

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

Bullying

- 1.34 Staff were alert to the possibility of bullying behaviour, but had not recently had to deal with any such incidents. They used the twin holding rooms to keep detainees apart where appropriate, exercising discretion in separating individuals when any degree of discomfort was evident. They always kept unrelated women and men separate. Staff did not receive refresher training in anti-bullying.

Suicide and self-harm

- 1.35 There had been two incidents of self-harm in the previous 12 months. In one, a detainee had banged his head on the floor in frustration at being detained and had subsequently complained of chest pain and been taken to hospital. In the second incident, a detainee had suffered a compound fracture of his hand after smashing a telephone in frustration. The relevant incident reports indicated that they had been dealt with appropriately. Staff also recalled some occasions when detainees had wrapped shirts around their necks in the form of a ligature, but without any harm occurring to the detainees involved. The staff had been trained in, and were aware of, the assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) system for monitoring and support of those at risk of self-harm. They were also first-aid trained and received refresher training at least every three years. An anti-ligature knife was available in the staff area but staff did not carry one on their belts.

Recommendations

- 1.36 Staff should receive refresher training in anti-bullying.
- 1.37 Staff should carry an anti-ligature knife with them 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.

- 1.38 All immigration staff based at the centre and the G4S DCOs had been Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked to enhanced level. Immigration officers working in arrest teams had received the UKBA's 'Keeping Children Safe' training to tier three, and all case workers had received training to at least tier two. There was no immigration manager at Dallas Court with overall responsibility for child protection issues in the holding area and transit lounge.
- 1.39 The DCOs remembered some general training in child care and protection issues as part of their initial training course. A flow chart showing the actions that they should take in case of concerns about children was displayed in the staff area. Despite this, the DCOs we spoke to said that they lacked training in handling practical difficulties with the detention of children, including problematic dynamics between parents and their children.
- 1.40 One of the custody officers working at Dallas Court was children's champion for G4S in the Manchester area, and had an awareness of child protection issues. A senior G4S manager was responsible nationally for child protection matters. A few games and toys were available for children, and a portable DVD player with DVDs suitable for children. There was also a small selection of children's books in different languages and some activity packs.
- 1.41 Staff mentioned an incident when a female detainee had threatened to kill her two children, who were with her in custody. This incident appeared to have been handled appropriately, with full involvement of social services. Any unaccompanied children were referred immediately on arrival to social services. There was no record or memory of any cases of disputed age since the previous inspection; staff were clear about the appropriate procedures in such cases.

Recommendations

- 1.42 A senior member of staff should act as child protection coordinator for the holding room and transit lounge, and all staff should be aware of the identity of this person.
- 1.43 Staff should be given training on responses to the practical challenges involved in the custody of families and children as part of a child protection training package.

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.

- 1.44 The diversity policy was displayed in each of the holding rooms and the transit room, in 11 languages. The disability policy was also displayed in all locations, and disability questionnaires were provided for detainees to complete. A poster of religious festivals was displayed.
- 1.45 Staff told us that if a detainee was unable to understand English, they would use telephone interpreting to communicate with him or her. Invoices for the telephone interpreting service indicated that it had been used to a reasonable degree, on 27 occasions since the beginning of 2010. The number of calls and length of the calls suggested that staff had made efforts to assist and engage with non-English speakers.
- 1.46 Prayer mats, compasses, Qur'ans and Bibles were available. There were no significant difficulties in access for people with disabilities, and staff said that processes were expedited for detainees with disabilities, to minimise the time spent in the holding room.

Activities

Expected outcomes:

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

- 1.47 Most detainees spent only a few hours in the holding room before being transferred to places of further detention or released. There was no access to exercise in the fresh air or a smoking area.
- 1.48 Each holding room contained a television and a small selection of books. Most were in English but a few were in other languages. There were up-to-date newspapers in English, Punjabi, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Recommendation

- 1.49 Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air.

Facility rules

Expected outcomes:

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

- 1.50 The DCOs on duty had annually updated training in control and restraint techniques, but said that they would only use force in extreme circumstances. There had been two recorded incidents in the previous 12 months (see section on duty of care), and force had not been used by staff in either incident.
- 1.51 Staff had a good view of each holding room. The rooms were also equipped with closed-circuit television, which was recorded.

Complaints

Expected outcomes:

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

- 1.52 There was a complaints box in each of the holding rooms and the transit room, and they were securely locked. They were labelled in 11 languages. Complaint forms were available in 12 languages. Written advice on how to make a complaint, to both the UKBA and G4S, was freely available in 11 languages. Staff told us that a member of UKBA staff visited daily to empty the complaints boxes. Records held centrally by G4S indicated that there had not been any recorded complaints in the previous 12 months.

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.

- 1.53 Detainees were offered food and drinks on arrival and at regular intervals during their stay. The refrigerator and microwave oven were clean. There was a selection of sandwiches and a range of ambient microwave meals suitable for different diets. However, the latter were unappealing. There was no freezer to store for more appetising frozen meals. There was also a stock of snack packs containing crisps, dried fruit and cereal bars.
- 1.54 A supply of women's sanitary products and baby change products were freely available in the toilet area.

Recommendation

- 1.55 **Ambient meals should be replaced with a range of frozen meals.**

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.

- 1.56 Approximately 63% (49) of the detainees who had been detained at Dallas Court in the previous three months had been transferred to Pennine House, the residential short-term

holding facility based at Manchester Airport. The DCOs at Dallas Court realised that some detainees might have concluded that they were being taken to an airport for immediate removal, and said that they made a point of reassuring them that they were not being taken to a flight.

- 1.57 Of the remaining 37% of detainees, 25.6% (20) had been transferred to an immigration removal centre (IRC), 6.4% (five) had been released, 2.5% (two) had been moved to a police station, one had been taken to an airport and it was unclear from the logs where the other detainee had been taken.
- 1.58 Those being transferred to IRCs were given cards containing details of their location and contact telephone numbers. Detainees had access to a pay telephone, their own mobile telephones if they met UKBA criteria (see paragraph 1.21), or by transferring their SIM card to a mobile telephone lent by the holding room staff. Staff assured us that if a detainee had no money for any of these options, they would make a call on his or her behalf using the office telephone and give the call recipient the number of the pay telephone in the relevant holding room.
- 1.59 No visitors were permitted at any time. Family and friends were able to bring property in to be handed to detainees; we observed money being given to a detainee immediately after it had been brought in. Staff ensured that detainees were able to give information to legal advisers and other key contacts when they were to be released or transferred.
- 1.60 Zip bags were provided for detainees without cases to hold property, but no clothing was available for issue to those lacking suitable clothes.

Recommendations

- 1.61 **There should be provision for detainees to receive visitors.**
- 1.62 **Clothing should be available for issue to those needing it.**

Section 2: Recommendations and good practice

| Recommendations | To the UK Border Agency |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
|------------------------|--------------------------------|

- 2.1 There should be regular and recorded immigration oversight of the transit lounge. (1.16, see paragraph 1.9)
- 2.2 Daily visits by immigration managers should be recorded and a log retained of any concerns or issues. (1.26, see paragraph 1.24)
- 2.3 The UKBA should negotiate with the Legal Services Commission to offer telephone advice to detainees using an interpretation service similar to that used in its police station telephone immigration advice line. (1.30, see paragraph 1.28)
- 2.4 An entry should always be made in the risk assessment section of the IS91. (1.33, see paragraph 1.32)

| Recommendations | To the UK Border Agency and Group 4 Securicor |
|------------------------|--|
|------------------------|--|

- 2.5 A senior member of staff should act as child protection coordinator for the holding room and transit lounge, and all staff should be aware of the identity of this person. (1.42, see paragraph 1.38)
- 2.6 Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air. (1.49, see paragraph 1.47)

| Recommendations | To Group 4 Securicor |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
|------------------------|-----------------------------|

- 2.7 Logs in the transit lounge should record the individual details of detainees held and their length of stay. (1.10, see paragraph 1.4)
- 2.8 The transit lounge should contain a supply of up-to-date newspapers in a range of languages. (1.11, see paragraph 1.5)
- 2.9 There should be sufficient seating for the number of detainees held at any one time. (1.12, see paragraph 1.6)
- 2.10 There should be separate male and female toilets. (1.13, see paragraph 1.7)
- 2.11 The toilet area should be completely screened from the holding area. (1.14, see paragraph 1.7)
- 2.12 The refrigerator in the transit lounge should be fixed. (1.15, see paragraph 1.8)
- 2.13 Detainees should be able to make a free telephone call in private. (1.25, see paragraph 1.19)

- 2.14 Details of the Community Legal Advice helpline should be available. (1.29, see paragraph 1.28)
- 2.15 Staff should receive refresher training in anti-bullying. (1.36, see paragraph 1.34)
- 2.16 Staff should carry an anti-ligature knife with them at all times. (1.37, see paragraph 1.35)
- 2.17 Staff should be given training on responses to the practical challenges involved in the custody of families and children as part of a child protection training package. (1.43, see paragraph 1.39)
- 2.18 Ambient meals should be replaced with a range of frozen meals. (1.55, see paragraph 1.53)
- 2.19 There should be provision for detainees to receive visitors. (1.61, see paragraph 1.59)
- 2.20 Clothing should be available for issue to those needing it. (1.62, see paragraph 1.60)