

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

Glasgow International Airport

7 September 2011

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

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Overview

In 2010, 6.5 million passengers passed through Glasgow International Airport, making it the second busiest airport in Scotland and the eighth busiest in the UK. Half of the passengers travelled to or from mainly European international destinations, and passengers on such flights were generally those who could enter the UK. Long haul flights arrived from the United States and Dubai, which handled a quarter of a million passengers in 2010.

The private security firm, Reliance, manages the short-term holding facility (STHF) at Glasgow Airport on behalf of the UK Border Agency (UKBA). The airport operates seven days a week, 24 hours a day, while the STHF is staffed between 8am and 8pm. Two teams, each comprising a male and female detention custody officer (DCO), work a four-day rota. The Independent Monitoring Board regularly visited the facility.

The facility's function was to hold arriving passengers who were of interest to UKBA. A number of detainees being removed from the UK were also held in the facility before they boarded their flights. The facility consisted of two rooms: a secure holding room and an adjacent DCO's office. The two rooms were separated by a wall with a small window.

The contractor supplied copy logs for the previous three months, a period of 92 operational days. During this time, the facility held detainees on 41 days. A total of 51 detainees were held, some of them more than once. In total there were 63 instances of detention. The average length of detention was two hours and 28 minutes. Seven detainees were held for five hours or more, with the longest at six hours and 40 minutes. There had been no incident reports during this period.

Most detainees were arriving passengers. On release, detainees were either granted leave to enter the UK, detained further (usually at Dungavel immigration removal centre) or removed from the country. During our inspection two unrelated individuals were held: an adult female and a 17-year old male. In the three months prior to our inspection, one other 17 year old was the only other child held. Half of all those detained were US citizens.

Inspected

7 September 2011

Last inspected

7 January 2009

Inspectors

Colin Carroll

Bev Alden

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 being transported to and from vans avoided public areas and were not handcuffed. All arrivals were given a rubdown search, while children were searched with a wand.

HE.4 The single holding room was clean but furnishing was minimal and fixed to the floor. Unrelated male and female detainees were held together and there was a unisex toilet in the corridor outside the holding room. Detainees' property was stored in a corridor used by other airport staff which was not safe. An information booklet outlining basic facility rules was available in 11 languages.

HE.5 The facility was staffed by a female and male DCO, and we were informed that this gender balance was maintained for most shifts. If necessary, additional staff could be called in from Reliance's regional base. Poor sight lines from the DCOs' office to the holding room were partially mitigated by closed circuit television (CCTV). On occasion detainees could be held in a UKBA interview room, which lacked a television or CCTV.

HE.6 There were few incidents of bullying or tension between detainees, but DCOs said they would intervene if required. In order to prevent self-harm, belts, scarves and ties were routinely removed from detainees but shoelaces were not. DCOs did not carry anti-ligature knives. DCOs received training in self-harm and suicide prevention, but they did not open assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) booklets. They instead used an in-house care planning document.

HE.7 Detainees could easily gain DCOs' attention in an emergency. DCOs received annual refresher training in control and restraint techniques, although rarely used. Detainees

were not routinely seen by a health care professional following the use of control and restraint techniques.

- HE.8** UKBA's children and young person's (CYP) team safeguarded and promoted the welfare of children. The five member team had received appropriate training and background checks, as had the DCOs. They effectively managed the case of a child at potential risk shortly before our inspection. Knowledge of the national referral mechanism was weak. Appropriate adults were only called for children under the age of 17.

Respect

- HE.9** In the three months prior to our inspection, a total of 51 detainees were held for an average of about 2.5 hours. The longest detention was for six hours and 40 minutes. The written authority to detain (IS91) was issued before detainees entered the holding room. An IS91 we examined did not clearly document whether the risk assessment had been completed. Reasons for detention (IS91R) were not served promptly on one detainee.
- HE.10** DCOs were respectful towards detainees. The female detainee held during our inspection spoke positively of her treatment by the facility staff but complained that she had not been kept up to date on her case by UKBA. DCOs did not wear legible name badges.
- HE.11** Notices displaying contact details of legal representatives were out of date. Detainees could only send faxes with permission from UKBA.
- HE.12** DCOs demonstrated an understanding of equality issues despite a lack of formal training. Care plans were completed for detainees with disabilities. The disabled toilet in the baggage hall could be used by detainees with restricted mobility. Religious materials were available on request. Complaint forms were available in English and 14 other languages.

Activities

- HE.13** Detainees could not go outside, though they were not held for long periods. A television and a portable DVD player with a small range of children's DVDs were available. There was a range of magazines and books in the holding room for children and adults, but most were in English. The magazines were significantly out of date.

Preparation for release

- HE.14** The holding room lacked a pay phone and detainees without mobile phones had to seek permission from UKBA to make a phone call. There was no email access and visitors were not allowed as the facility was airside. Released detainees were allowed entry to the UK in line with their entry clearance, granted temporary admission, detained elsewhere or removed from the UK. Written information was provided to detainees transferring to immigration removal centres (IRCs).

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 Escorts were provided by Reliance; however, we were unable to observe a detainee being escorted. Detainees were not handcuffed but were held lightly by the arm by two escorts on either side while taken to the vehicle, which was parked at a rear entrance close to the holding room. The corridor leading down to this entrance was covered by both UKBA and airport authority CCTV. The journey to vans did not entail passing public areas.

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.

- 1.2 Twenty-nine per cent of arrivals were transfers from other detention centres, usually Dungavel IRC. Seventy per cent were detained from flights and one detainee was held following a period of temporary admission.
- 1.3 The facility operated between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week. A dedicated team of four DCOs undertook a four-day shift pattern, with one male and one female DCO on duty for each shift. In the event that someone was detained outside of these hours, a night shift team was called in from the Reliance base in Cambuslang.
- 1.4 Detainees were given a rubdown search on arrival, while children were searched with a wand. All property was tagged in front of detainees, but bags were left in the hallway outside the staff office as there was no secure storage. Although this area was covered by CCTV, there were a number of airport staff moving through and property was not sufficiently secure.
- 1.5 The small holding room was clean and minimally furnished with a table and four chairs, which were fixed to the floor. Bench seating ran along the whole of one wall. A unisex toilet was located in the hallway outside the holding room.
- 1.6 If a detainee fell ill, staff could call a telephone triage advice service or 222 for the airport safety team.
- 1.7 Copies of a generic information booklet were available in 11 languages. Reliance's diversity and disability policy statements were displayed, although the latest version had not been translated into other languages.

Recommendations

- 1.8 Detainees should have access to single sex sanitation facilities.
- 1.9 Property belonging to detainees should be stored securely.

Housekeeping point

- 1.10 All information in the holding room should be up to date and translated into a range of languages.

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.

- 1.11 DCOs were courteous and addressed detainees by their first name. A female detainee, who was anxious and upset about detention, reported that she had been treated very well by Reliance staff, although immigration staff had not kept her informed about developments in her case (see section on casework). We observed a 17-year old being interviewed by UKBA staff in a polite and courteous manner. Staff wore an identification card, but the writing on the card was too small to be easily read.

Housekeeping point

- 1.12 Staff should wear legible name badges.

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.

- 1.13 Detainees were allowed to retain their legal documents on entering the holding room, although not all documents were served in a timely manner (see section on casework). Immigration officers and DCOs used interpretation services to communicate with detainees when necessary.
- 1.14 Few detainees had legal representation as most had just arrived in the UK, and those requiring legal advice would contact a lawyer from the holding room. As the facility was located airside, legal representatives were unable to visit detainees. Notices displaying contact details of legal advisors gave the details of two defunct organisations and required updating. Information about the Community Legal Advice helpline was displayed but it provided advice in England and Wales only. Contact details of the Ethnic Minorities Law Centre based in Glasgow were displayed. Detainees without mobile phones could not make calls freely (see section on preparation for release). There was a fax machine in the DCOs' office but detainees required permission from UKBA before using it. Detainees did not have access to email.

Recommendations

- 1.15 Up to date information of immigration advice organisations for detainees should be displayed.
- 1.16 Detainees should be able to send and receive faxes and have access to email.

Casework

Expected outcomes:

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

Detention is for the minimum period necessary

- 1.17 Detainees were admitted into the holding room on 63 occasions in the three months prior to our inspection. Seven detainees were held for five hours or more and the longest was held for six hours and 40 minutes. The average length of detention was two hours and 28 minutes.
- 1.18 Ten detainees were detained twice in the three months. They were refused entry, detained overnight at Dungavel IRC and removed the following day via the holding room. Two detainees were held on three consecutive days with overnight stays at Dungavel IRC. Half of all those detained in the same period were US citizens.
- 1.19 DCOs confirmed that they did not accept custody without an IS91 being issued. An IS91 had been issued for the single detainee in the holding room, but there was no indication on the form that the risk assessment had been completed.
- 1.20 An IS91R (reasons for detention) was not served promptly on a female detainee. She had been held since 7.50am but a written reason for this was not provided until after midday. The detainee was upset and anxious. She had arrived from her country of origin that day and had been refused entry. Her boyfriend who lived in Scotland had travelled to the airport to pick her up was waiting for her landside. She did not know what would happen to her next or when she would find out. She was granted temporary admission while UKBA retained her passport, and was directed to return to the airport the following day to be removed back to the US.

Recommendations

- 1.21 **The risk assessment section on the written authority to detain (IS91) should be completed, and where there are no risks, the IS91 should reflect this.**
- 1.22 **Written reasons for detention (IS91R) should be served on detainees before they enter the holding room.**
- 1.23 **Detainees should be regularly updated on case progress in a language they understand.**

Duty of care

Expected outcomes:

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

Bullying

- 1.24 DCOs were alert to potential bullying but said they had not come across any instances where they had to intervene. The facility was staffed by a male and female DCO during our inspection, and we were informed that this gender balance was maintained as far as possible. If necessary, a female DCO could be called in from Reliance's escorting team based in Cambuslang.
- 1.25 Unrelated men and women were held together. Although we were told that DCOs asked the woman if she was happy with the situation, this was not a satisfactory substitute for separate accommodation as detainees may have acquiesced in order to appear compliant.

- 1.26 On occasion women or those at risk of bullying were held in a UKBA interview room beside the holding room. The room lacked a toilet or CCTV coverage, although a floor to ceiling glass wall enabled a DCO sitting outside to have a clear view of the detainee.
- 1.27 The sight lines of the holding room from the DCOs' office were poor. DCOs could observe detainees through a small window between the office and the holding room next door, but unlike at other STHFs, this window did not run the whole length of the wall. The window was also partially obscured with reflective tape. Poor sight lines were somewhat mitigated by CCTV.

Recommendation

- 1.28 **Men and unrelated women should be held separately in rooms with appropriate facilities.**
- 1.29 **The window between the DCOs' office and the holding room should be expanded to give a view of the entire holding room.**

Suicide and self-harm

- 1.30 Regardless of individual risk factors, belts, scarves and ties were routinely removed to prevent suicide. This practice was disproportionate, and inconsistent, as shoelaces were not removed.
- 1.31 Staff had attended in-house training on suicide and self-harm prevention within the previous 12 months. Staff were familiar with the assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) system used in the wider immigration detention estate. However, where a detainee displayed behaviour or thoughts of self-harm, rather than opening an ACDT document, staff opened an in-house care plan by Reliance. If detainees were transferred to another part of the immigration estate, this document may not have been instantly recognised.
- 1.32 DCOs did not carry anti-ligature knives. One was attached to the first aid box in the DCOs' office, which could have caused unnecessary delays in an emergency.
- 1.33 Following an incident of self-harm or suicide, staff would complete an incident report form which would be forwarded and held at Reliance's operations office. In the last three months, there had been no incidents of self-harm.

Recommendations

- 1.34 **Confiscation of clothing items should be based on an individual risk assessment.**
- 1.35 **Detainees at risk of self-harm or suicide should be placed on assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) plans.**
- 1.36 **DCOs should carry anti-ligature knives.**

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

- 1.37 Two 17-year olds were the only children held in the previous three months. UKBA's CYP team comprised a chief immigration officer and four immigration officers. The team's role was to take responsibility for children's cases or, where this was not possible, to offer guidance and advice to other immigration officers. Rota arrangements made it impossible to have a member of the team present on every shift. We spoke with three members of the team, who had all completed tiers one to three of UKBA's in-house training package: Keeping Children Safe. Team members said that this was useful overall, but lacked a Scottish perspective to reflect national differences in policing and child protection. Team members and DCOs had undergone Disclosure Scotland background checks to work with children, but this was not the case for other immigration officers. DCOs completed a childcare plan when an unaccompanied minor was held in the facility.
- 1.38 Most children coming to the CYP team's attention were entering as students or visitors and few claimed asylum. Despite being aware of the potential of children being trafficked through the airport, the team members we spoke to were unaware of the national referral mechanism.
- 1.39 The CYP team aimed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A 17-year old girl had recently been refused entry and was held in the holding room prior to our inspection. She arrived seeking entry as a visitor but told the immigration officer that she intended to study at Glasgow University and that she was to meet her boyfriend. The team arranged for an appropriate adult (see below) to be present while she was interviewed as she was considered vulnerable, and contacted the child's mother. The mother was unaware of the boyfriend and requested that the child be returned home. The CYP team contacted Renfrewshire social services who arranged for the child to be placed with a foster family for one night with instructions to prohibit male visitors. The child went to the airport the next day and returned home.
- 1.40 The CYP team had a list of appropriate adults who could be called to support young people being held and interviewed. However, they were only called for children below the age of 17, or 17-year-olds who were considered vulnerable. During our inspection a 17-year old boy was interviewed and held in the holding room, with no appropriate adult used.
- 1.41 Links had been established with Renfrewshire County Council and Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee, and the CYP team leader had contacts with the police. Staff confirmed that there was a good relationship with social services and they attended promptly when requested.
- 1.42 Children were held with their parents in the same holding room as unrelated males. Efforts had been made to soften parts of the holding room by placing posters on the wall. Children's toys, books and activity packs were available, and children's DVDs could be watched on a portable DVD player. Nappies and baby wipes were available on request. Baby food was not routinely kept due to low demand but could be purchased from shops within the airport. Sterilised baby bottles were kept under a sink with cleaning products. The toilet contained a baby change facility.

Recommendations

- 1.43 Immigration officers should be aware of the national referral mechanism.
- 1.44 All detainees under the age of 18 should have access to an appropriate adult when interviewed or held.

Housekeeping points

- 1.45 Detainees should have access to nappies without the need to request them from staff.
- 1.46 Baby bottles should not be stored with cleaning products.

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

- 1.47 Staff had not received any specific equality training, although they demonstrated a good understanding of cultural differences. Staff had not held anyone with a disability, but were aware of the requirement to complete a disability care plan.
- 1.48 Copies of the Bible and the Qur'an were available along with a prayer mat and compass, although these had to be requested from staff. An information leaflet setting out relevant dates and times of fasting had been displayed, and a notice identifying the direction for prayers was posted on the holding room wall. Our inspection took place shortly after Ramadan and staff were familiar with its requirements.

Recommendation

- 1.49 Staff should receive ongoing equality training.

Housekeeping point

- 1.50 Detainees should have access to religious and faith based books such as the Bible and the Qur'an without the need to request them from staff.

Activities

Expected outcomes:

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

- 1.51 Detainees could not go outside, although they were not held for long periods. A television and a portable DVD player with a small range of children's DVDs were available. There was a range of magazines and books in the holding room, including for children, but most were in English and the magazines were significantly out of date.

Housekeeping point

- 1.52 Detainees should have access to books and up to date newspapers in a variety of languages.

Facility rules

Expected outcomes:

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

- 1.53 An information booklet providing basic facility rules was available in 11 languages. As the staff office was directly adjacent to the holding room and also covered by CCTV, detainees could easily gain staff attention in an emergency. DCOs received an initial week of training and annual refresher training in control and restraint techniques. Incident reports were used to document the use of force, although control and restraint had rarely been used. Detainees were not routinely seen by a health care professional after being subject to control and restraint.

Recommendation

- 1.54 Detainees subject to control and restraint techniques should be seen by a health care practitioner as soon as possible after restraint is removed.

Complaints

Expected outcomes:

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

- 1.55 Complaint forms were available in English and 14 other languages in the holding room, along with pens and a complaints box. Detainees were therefore able to raise a complaint without staff attention. The complaints box was emptied by the duty chief immigration officer on his regular checks. The Independent Monitoring Board visited the facility around once a week.

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.

- 1.56 Crisps, biscuits and a good range of microwave meals, including vegetarian and halal meals, were available. Staff were able to use petty cash to buy sandwiches for detainees if preferred. Detainees could request hot and cold drinks from a vending machine located outside the holding room.
- 1.57 Women's sanitary products were available in the toilet. Toiletry bags containing basic hygiene items, clothing packs and towels were issued to detainees who needed them. Pillows and blankets were available on request.

Recommendation

- 1.58 The vending machine should be relocated so that detainees have access to drinks without the need to ask staff.

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.

- 1.59 There was no pay phone in the holding room. Only mobile phones without cameras could be retained by detainees, which meant that most were confiscated by staff. SIM free mobiles could be loaned to detainees to insert their own SIM cards. Detainees without a mobile phone were offered a free phone call on arrival, which they conducted in the holding room. Subsequent phone calls were only granted with the approval of UKBA. During our inspection, a detainee sought permission from an immigration officer to make a phone call, and this was allowed. DCOs told us that when permission was refused, a note was made on the detainee's records. Detainees did not have access to email. As the facility was airside, visitors were not allowed.
- 1.60 In the previous three months, of those leaving the holding room, a third were granted temporary admission, a quarter were detained elsewhere, a quarter were removed, 11% were admitted into the country and three per cent were handed to the police. Those being transferred were escorted a short distance to the door which opened directly to a waiting escort van. Handcuffs were used only when an individual risk assessment deemed it necessary.
- 1.61 IRC information cards were available to detainees. In addition there was an information booklet about Dungavel IRC in a range of languages.

Recommendation

- 1.62 The holding room should have a pay phone.

Section 2: Recommendations and good practice

Recommendation	To UKBA
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- 2.1 Immigration officers should be aware of the national referral mechanism. (1.43)

Recommendations	To the facility contractor
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Arrival and accommodation

- 2.2 Detainees should have access to single sex sanitation facilities. (1.8)
- 2.3 Property belonging to detainees should be stored securely. (1.9)

Legal rights and casework

- 2.4 Up to date information of immigration advice organisations for detainees should be displayed. (1.15)
- 2.5 Detainees should be able to send and receive faxes and have access to email. (1.16)
- 2.6 The risk assessment section on the written authority to detain (IS91) should be completed, and where there are no risks, the IS91 should reflect this. (1.21)
- 2.7 Written reasons for detention (IS91R) should be served on detainees before they enter the holding room. (1.22)
- 2.8 Detainees should be regularly updated on case progress in a language they understand. (1.23)

Duty of care

- 2.9 Men and unrelated women should be held separately in rooms with appropriate facilities. (1.28)
- 2.10 The window between the DCOs' office and the holding room should be expanded to give a view of the entire holding room. (1.29)
- 2.11 Confiscation of clothing items should be based on an individual risk assessment. (1.34)
- 2.12 Detainees at risk of self-harm or suicide should be placed on assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) plans. (1.35)
- 2.13 DCOs should carry anti-ligature knives. (1.36)

Childcare and child protection

- 2.14 All detainees under the age of 18 should have access to an appropriate adult when interviewed or held. (1.44)

Diversity

- 2.15 Staff should receive ongoing equality training. (1.49)

Facility rules

- 2.16 Detainees subject to control and restraint techniques should be seen by a health care practitioner as soon as possible after restraint is removed. (1.54)

Services

- 2.17 The vending machine should be relocated so that detainees have access to drinks without the need to ask staff. (1.58)

Preparation for release

- 2.18 The holding room should have a pay phone. (1.62)

Housekeeping points

To the facility contractor

Arrival and accommodation

- 2.19 All information in the holding room should be up to date and translated into a range of languages. (1.10)

Positive relationships

- 2.20 Staff should wear legible name badges. (1.12)

Childcare and child protection

- 2.21 Detainees should have access to nappies without the need to request them from staff. (1.45)
- 2.22 Baby bottles should not be stored with cleaning products. (1.46)

Diversity

- 2.23 Detainees should have access to religious and faith based books such as the Bible and the Qur'an without the need to request them from staff. (1.50)

Activities

- 2.24 Detainees should have access to books and up to date newspapers in a variety of languages.
(1.52)