

**Detainees under escort:
Inspection of escort and
removals to Jamaica**

24–25 March 2011

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

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Introduction

This report refers to our first inspection of escorted overseas removals by UKBA – in this case of 35 detainees on a chartered flight to Jamaica. We will now regularly inspect the treatment and conditions of detainees in these circumstances. On this inspection we piloted a modified version of our Expectations for other forms of detention and escorting. These will be revised and sent out for consultation shortly.

An overseas removal is inevitably a stressful and difficult experience. By its nature, this could not be an 'unannounced' inspection but with that proviso, in general, this removal was well managed and passed off without incident. However, there had been incidents where force had been used on previous flights and we were concerned there was no accredited training for the use of force in the enclosed space of an aircraft.

Staff numbers seemed excessive at times but for the most part they were well organised, calm and went out of their way to assist detainees. However, it was particularly concerning that some staff used unprofessional language, swearing freely, telling offensive jokes and indulging in sweeping generalisations about national characteristics. The vulnerability of detainees during the process of removal is not to be taken so lightly, and the behaviour of all staff representing UK authorities should reflect better training and higher standards. In some cases, procedures were also too uniformly risk-averse, failing to recognise the individuality of each detainee.

Future inspections will enable us to get a broader picture of the treatment and conditions of detainees during removals. I hope this will allow us to contribute to ensuring they are treated in as safe and professional way as these difficult conditions allow.

Nick Hardwick
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

July 2011

Section 1: Summary

- 1.1 Inspectors accompanied a charter flight removal of 35 detainees to Jamaica on 24 and 25 March 2011. They also reviewed records of the three previous flights to Jamaica to obtain a clearer picture of the process. This is the first time that HM Inspectorate of Prisons has inspected the entire removal process, from the point at which detainees are collected from immigration removal centres, to the end of the journey to the destination country. New expectations have been drafted and were piloted during this inspection. They will be revised, sent out for consultation and published in due course.
- 1.2 Each stage of the removal process was carefully organised, staff were well briefed and the removal passed without serious incident. The large team of G4S escorts demonstrated confidence in their roles and, on the whole, a willingness to engage positively with the detainees. They checked that detainees had all their property at the point of collection and helped them to make contact with families and legal advisors. This contributed to a safe and calm atmosphere, despite the distress many of the detainees felt on being removed. All of the detainees were aware they would be flying that day, and there were no detainees on a 'reserve' list.
- 1.3 While preparations for departure from immigration removal centres were generally thorough and humane, too many escorts created a feeling of crowding in cramped searching areas. Some detainees had been placed in 'removal from association cells' before departure without any suggestion of non compliance or refractory behaviour. An hour's delay to take-off created a build-up of tension in detainees and staff, and this was intensified by the lack of information about the reason for the delay.
- 1.4 Staff were generally polite, friendly and made an effort to build a rapport with detainees. Each detainee had an individual member of staff assigned as his or her escort. However, unprofessional comments by some escort staff, including swearing and stereotyping of detainees according to nationality, undermined the good work of their colleagues. There was a low proportion of black and minority ethnic staff. Although the treatment of women on the flight we observed was respectful, this had not been the case on a previous charter flight when a male member of staff addressed female detainees inappropriately.
- 1.5 The amount of property that detainees were allowed to take with them from their last place of detention varied, and this unfairly disadvantaged some. Clear HM Prison Service plastic bags, were still used for some property, which could have drawn attention to detainees on arrival.
- 1.6 Detainees were assisted if they wanted to make phone calls to solicitors or families during coach journeys. The physical conditions in coaches and on the plane, including food and health care provision, were adequate. However, during flights detainees were denied access to hot drinks, blankets and pillows. They were not allowed to close the door when using the toilet on the coach or plane, which was undignified and embarrassing. Detainees were not told how they could complain before or after they had arrived at their destination about their treatment at an IRC or during removal.
- 1.7 Records indicated that staff used force appropriately, with de-escalation as soon as possible. However, detainees were unnecessarily subject to light-touch physical contact during escort in secure areas. Some were placed in handcuffs for long periods despite showing no evidence of resistance or violence. It was particularly concerning that staff had not received full accredited training for use of force in confined spaces. The seriousness of this considerable omission was

illustrated by records showing that staff had struggled to safely control detainees on board aircraft. Paramedics were present on all flights.

- 1.8 Several detainees were anxious about what would happen after their arrival. Some useful information was eventually provided, but this was well into the flight, and would have been beneficial at an earlier stage. An informal surgery was held on the flight by a UK Border Agency (UKBA) manager. It was useful to an extent but some detainees were unnecessarily crowded round by escort staff during these consultations, regardless of individual risk or lack of it, removing any possibility of confidentiality or discretion.

Section 2: Background

- 2.1 Charter flights to Jamaica, referred to as Operation Waldrop, take place every two or three months. The aircraft are chartered by UKBA which, at the time of our inspection, contracted G4S to carry out the removal of detainees.
- 2.2 Detainees were transferred to Stansted airport from four IRCs: Harmondsworth, Colnbrook, Yarl's Wood and Brook House. The majority of detainees travelled in coaches, but five, who had been assessed as presenting a risk of physical resistance or disruption, were taken individually in vans. At Stansted, normal air travel security checks were conducted at the Inflight Jet Centre, not the main airport terminal building. Detainees were then given a rubdown search by members of G4S's escort team and taken one at a time to an airport bus for boarding.
- 2.3 There were 104 escorts on the aircraft and 35 detainees. Three inspectors travelled on the aircraft. Take off was at 6.50pm, and touch down at 5am GMT.

Section 3: Safety

Preparation and departure from removal centres

- 3.1 Thirty-five detainees were removed, with no detainees placed on a reserve list to fill any last minute spaces. Detainees were fit for travel and preparations for departure were generally thorough and humane, although the presence of too many escort staff in searching areas led to detainees being crowded.
- 3.2 On the removal monitored, the G4S staffing complement comprised a senior supervising officer, two assistant senior supervising officers, four coach commanders and 96 escorts. There was also a security team of eight. A further 21 officers were involved in escorting the detainees from the removal centres to the aeroplane. The regular notional allocation for Operation Waldrop is 70 detainees and 140 staff. Sixty detainees were initially identified for the flight; 43 were listed on the day, but 35 actually flew. On this journey, then, there was a ratio of approximately three escorts to one detainee. In the three preceding Jamaica flights, there had been 46, 47 and 60 detainees respectively, with similar staff complements.
- 3.3 High Court injunctions were the main reason that detainees were not removed. One detainee lodged a statutory appeal which suspended his removal and another was deemed not fit to fly.
- 3.4 There were no detainees on a 'reserve' list (detainees not booked to fly but who would be put on the flight should another detainee not be able to). This was welcome, since the practice of leading people to believe that they are being removed when the initial intention is not to remove them introduces additional stress.
- 3.5 Most of the detainees we spoke to had been in an IRC for at least a week before being removed. None appeared excessively weary or disoriented owing to long journeys shortly before removal.
- 3.6 Systems were in place for property to be restored and any private cash to be withdrawn before leaving the IRC. Detainees could check their luggage before leaving the centre and were allowed to retain paper cash. In one case a detainee's family had brought 43 kilograms of luggage to the removal centre. UKBA had given authorisation for the detainee to take the property home with him.
- 3.7 At each IRC the coach commander shook hands with each detainee, introduced himself and asked if they understood what was happening and/or had any questions. At Colnbrook, the escort staff took time and considerable care to ensure that the detainee was happy they had all their property. IRC staff similarly took care over property, and one went back to the wing to fetch a phone and some papers which two detainees had left behind.
- 3.8 At Brook House, in the cramped area where searching and luggage checking was done, there were up to a dozen escorts present, some of whom did not appear to be doing anything. The apparently unnecessary crowding put extra pressure on detainees.

Recommendation

- 3.9 The number of staff present during the IRC discharge process should be kept to a minimum, respecting the need of many detainees for space and time to deal with what is happening to them.

Security, order and rules

- 3.10 Security was calmly and competently managed, although the security team's appearance was somewhat forbidding. Several detainees had been held in separation conditions before departure, some without apparent justification. Seating was organised on the basis of risk and with proper regard for decency. Detainees' ability to move around the aeroplane was restricted, and tension was increased by an unexplained delay to take off. Handcuffs were used on two occasions before and during boarding; there was a low threshold for use of handcuffs, and escorts routinely held all detainees by the arm when walking to coaches or the aircraft. Records of previous Jamaica flights showed proportionate use of force and readiness to de-escalate, but also illustrated the need for full accredited training on the use of force in confined spaces. The key transition periods at the airport and in boarding the aircraft were filmed, which was good practice.

Security

- 3.11 It was clear that each stage of the removal process was carefully organised, and that all staff knew their roles. Consequently, security procedures were well-ordered and were carried out calmly. Thorough staff briefing aided this process.
- 3.12 The members of the eight-strong security team fulfilled their tasks with discretion. However, they wore branded T-shirts, some of which featured the words 'use of force instructor', and other quasi combat-style clothing. While the behaviour of the team was appropriate, some detainees may have found their appearance unnecessarily stark or intimidating.

Recommendation

- 3.13 The security team uniform should be softened and team members should not wear T-shirts featuring the words 'use of force instructor' when removing detainees.

Good order and behaviour management

- 3.14 The Detention and Escorting Population Management Unit (DEPMU) had produced a movement sheet specific to each IRC, providing quite detailed information on each detainee and any risks they posed, especially of harm to themselves or to others.
- 3.15 A few of the detainees had been held in separation under Detention Rule 40 before departure. At Brook House, not all the detainees in the 'removal from association' cells had been placed there because they were refractory. We were told by one officer that three of the four were there because of lack of space in the normal accommodation; only one was thought to be refractory. Being held in separation before departure increases stress and reduces access to legal advice and contact with family and friends. It is not a legitimate recourse unless

absolutely necessary and within the criteria set by the detention centre rules. At Colnbrook, two detainees had been held in separation because of a history of secreting razor blades, and because one had been heard by staff inciting others to cause trouble during the removal.

- 3.16 On the aircraft there were eight seats to a row: two beside each window, and four between the aisles. Up to three detainees were seated in each row: two at each window and one in the middle. Detainees at the window had one escort beside them. Detainees in the middle set of seats were mainly those judged to be higher risk: they had two officers beside them and, in some cases, officers in the rows behind and in front as well.
- 3.17 The key moment of boarding was managed very quietly and calmly by G4S, and there was some sensitive interaction with detainees. They were escorted by members of the security team in order to avoid undermining the rapport built up by the staff who had escorted them thus far, and would do so during the flight.
- 3.18 The aircraft passenger area was divided into three sections. The front section was occupied by female detainees, the central section by male detainees who were not assessed as presenting a significant risk, and those assessed as having the potential to cause disruption were located at the back.
- 3.19 G4S staff said that they used to allow detainees to mingle on the plane, but since a serious incident on arrival during one charter flight, UKBA had requested that this should not be permitted. Detainees were only able to get up to use the toilet.
- 3.20 The hour's delay after boarding and before take-off caused a palpable build-up of tension, as both staff and detainees were anxious to get on with the journey – not least because this was the point at which tensions sometimes boiled up into verbal and/or physical aggression, and this had happened on the preceding Jamaica flight. The anxiety was increased by the lack of information given to the escorting staff and detainees about the reason for and possible length of the delay. The delay was, in fact, due to a problem with weight distribution on the plane, leading to an inability to shut a cargo door and the need to move a container. At the same point on the previous Jamaica flight, the captain had requested that a number of people should move forward from the rear of the passenger cabin to balance the weight before take-off; there had been some movement of staff, and this preceded a violent incident involving eight detainees.

Recommendation

- 3.21 **Where there are delays at any stage in the removal process, and especially after boarding the aircraft, the UKBA monitor should ensure that staff and detainees are given as much information as possible.**

Use of force

- 3.22 There was no forcible restraint of detainees during the removal, other than use of handcuffs and of light-touch contact (see below). The Prison Service had provided training on control and restraint techniques, and a National Police Improvement Agency team had given training on the use of rigid handcuffs and leg restraints. Three accredited instructors in control and restraint techniques were with the ground escort teams, and one of them was on the flight. The techniques to lift and carry detainees where necessary had been taken from police procedure. Since none of these training resources covered the specific situation of an aircraft passenger

cabin, attempts had been made to source such training: we were told that NOMS and UKBA were still in negotiation on this.

- 3.23 On the previous Jamaica flight, there had been an outbreak of violence involving the use of force in relation to eight detainees. Records indicated that the use of force by staff had been appropriate, with de-escalation as soon as possible. The difficulty of operating in a confined space, and the consequent need for clear and accredited training, was illustrated in these records. For example, one account stated: '... the detainee then lunged forward with his teeth bared. Due to the paucity of space, it was not possible to get behind Mr H to control his head, therefore the detainee custody officer (DCO) used his hand to push Mr H's head to one side towards the window...'
- 3.24 We were told that in the ground travel and boarding processes, 'speed is of the essence' since flight times were not flexible, so that minimum force and restraints were liable to be used where there was even a small delay caused by a detainee. Staff were given instructions to this effect at the morning briefing. Personal protective equipment was carried for health protection (dust masks, gloves, goggles, paper suits), but not riot gear.
- 3.25 At the IRCs, escorts advised detainees, 'I have to take your arm', before leading them onto the bus with two escorts on either side of them. Sometimes each escort held onto one of the detainee's elbows; always at least one elbow was held. This appeared to be excessive as the journey from the discharge area to the bus was within a secure area of the removal centre. At Colnbrook, even the Facilitated Return Scheme cases (who had agreed to return to Jamaica with the promise of financial assistance for resettlement) were held by the arm as they were escorted out to the coach. An older man was held by both arms, even though he was fully cooperative.
- 3.26 At Yarl's Wood, the female detainees were escorted to the coach by two DCOs without any physical handling. At Stansted, escorts took detainees lightly by the arm in leading them to the coach; this seemed appropriate since the area (though fully fenced) did not have a high level of security.
- 3.27 A woman became distressed on the bus on the tarmac. She was talking loudly in Patois and hit the window with her hand. Escorts moved her away from the window but she continued to talk loudly. The coach commander decided to place her in handcuffs, although she was not displaying any violent or recalcitrant behaviour which might justify the use of restraints. The detainee immediately became compliant and quiet. The coach commander reported to his colleagues: 'She's not kicking off. She's just upset.' Despite this, the detainee remained in handcuffs until the flight took off an hour later; the handcuffs were on for two hours 10 minutes. As a routine measure for the detainee's safety, the handcuffs were transferred from behind to in front of her before boarding the plane.
- 3.28 Another detainee, who had an assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) plan, had been handcuffed at Harmondsworth IRC, when he was slow to move to the coach. The incident report said that he 'was showing signs of being disruptive', and the management authorisation for handcuffing gave the reason as: '... threats to self-harm so that he can go to hospital and escape. Has been abusive to IRC staff'. He had not offered any physical resistance to moving and the application of restraints was therefore an excessive response. The cuffs were removed once he was on the coach and complying with instructions.
- 3.29 Upon removal of cuffs, a member of the security team checked the detainee's wrists and called for the medic if there were any concerns – this did not apply in either of these cases. Since a

paramedic is always present, there was no reason why they could not check detainees after every sustained period of handcuffing in line with best practice.

- 3.30 Hand-held cameras were used to film the screening and searching process in the terminal, and the boarding and seating process at the aircraft. Some detainees objected, but it was explained that this was primarily to monitor staff actions.
- 3.31 Of the three previous flights to Jamaica, the flight in November 2010 had involved the use of force only in the serious incident involving eight detainees, referred to above. In July 2010 there had been no use of force and no application of handcuffs. In May 2010 there had been three uses of force: one to get a detainee into a car at an IRC, one to carry a passively non-compliant detainee up the aircraft steps, and one to restrain a detainee collected from the segregation unit at a prison. This last incident began with nine prison officers entering the cell to remove a violent and threatening detainee, but de-escalated quickly thereafter. There were also two uses of handcuffs: one with a detainee coming straight from category A status in a high security prison; the other with a man reported as advancing aggressively towards an officer. Overall, the evidence of staff reports and video recordings indicated a proportionate use of force and a readiness to de-escalate the situation at the first opportunity.

Recommendations

- 3.32 Detainees should not routinely be handled while being escorted onto coaches within secure areas of an immigration removal centre.
- 3.33 Detainees should only be placed in handcuffs when necessary for control or to make removal possible when all means of persuasion have failed, and for no longer than is necessary.
- 3.34 All escorting staff should receive full accredited training for the use of force in any situation which may arise, especially on board an aircraft.

Good practice

- 3.35 *There was continuous filming of those stages in the removal where the use of force was most often found to be necessary.*

Personal safety

- 3.36 Staff defused tension between detainees, although a few staff were loud and insensitive. Several detainees were anxious about what the removal would mean for them and their families. Where risk of self-harm documents had been opened, they were kept up to date with adequate monitoring and support by staff.

Bullying and intimidation

- 3.37 We witnessed two detainees arguing loudly on the plane. They were seated two rows apart. Escorts were alert to a potential conflict and moved reasonably discreetly to the area where the detainees were seated. The situation was resolved without escorts intervening.

- 3.38 The great majority of escorting staff behaved with courtesy and sensitivity towards detainees. However, the sheer numbers of staff created an inevitably intimidating atmosphere, regardless of how they conducted themselves. This effect was significantly aggravated by the loud behaviour of a few staff (see section on positive relationships) and by the appearance of the security team (see section on security).

Recommendation

- 3.39 The number of escorting staff on a flight should not exceed that required by the normal risk assessment procedure.

Emotional distress and self-harm

- 3.40 Many detainees had strong ties to the UK, and several said that they had few active links with friends or family in Jamaica. We spoke with a 19-year-old who said that he had arrived in the UK when he was four and was being removed following a 12-month sentence; another detainee expressed concern about this young man's safety on arrival in Kingston. Two detainees said they had lived in the UK for 27 and 36 years respectively. A female detainee, on her own account, had lived in the UK for 12 years and was leaving her 18-year old daughter behind.
- 3.41 Detainees considered at risk of self-harm had an ACDT plan that accompanied them on the flight. At the muster briefing at the beginning of the operation, all staff were instructed to keep detainee welfare records and ACDT forms updated. The ACDT documentation we inspected, for two detainees, was kept up to date, with monitoring and support given and entries made in the observation logs during the journey. Detainees were seated beside an escort on the plane and were therefore safe and could easily summon help. We spoke to the two detainees with an ACDT plan, and they felt adequately supported by the staff.
- 3.42 At Stansted, a detainee told escorts that she had taken an overdose. The paramedics were notified and they checked what medication she was taking. Two of them boarded the coach and attended the detainee. The detainee was on an open ACDT and had a history of self-harm. The paramedics checked her temperature and blood pressure. As these were both high and the detainee reported feeling dizzy, the responsible paramedic declared her not fit to fly. The detainee was taken back to the IRC. This was the only act of self-harm reported on any charter flight in the first three months of 2011.

Legal rights

- 3.43 Administrative procedures for removal appeared to have been carried through correctly. Staff were helpful in enabling detainees to contact legal advisors at any stage in the process leading up to boarding the aircraft.
- 3.44 All the detainees we spoke to had received at least 72 hours notice of their removal. The authority to detain (IS91) accompanied each detainee. Those we checked were correctly completed.
- 3.45 Not all detainees had criminal records; some were being administratively removed rather than deported. A couple in their late fifties had lived in the UK for 12 years. Their application for

leave to remain in the UK had been refused and the subsequent appeals dismissed. They said they had been taken from their home at 6am and held in a removal centre for a week before joining the flight.

- 3.46 Detainees were able to make phone calls to solicitors on the coach from Brook House IRC to Stansted airport. We saw detainees request and be granted the opportunity to use G4S mobile phones. At Brook House, a member of UKBA's criminal casework directorate was present. A detainee who believed that his removal had been cancelled asked to speak with her and she duly tried to answer the detainee's questions. The detainee then asked to speak with his solicitor. The coach commander advised the detainee that he could phone his solicitor once he got on the bus. At Colnbrook, we observed staff lending a mobile phone to a departing detainee to enable him to contact his lawyer.
- 3.47 After the flight touched down and before the doors opened, a UKBA representative who was on board contacted the UK by mobile phone to confirm there were no last minute injunctions preventing a detainee's removal (see preparation for reintegration section). UKBA staff told us that they had, in the past, brought detainees back at this late stage.

Child care and protection

- 3.48 There were no children on the flight. Forms for childcare plans were available for use when children were being removed. Escorting officers had received basic child protection training during their initial training and in their annual refresher training.

Section 4: Respect

Physical conditions

- 4.1 Conditions in vehicles and the aircraft were basic but adequate. Blankets were not made available for the night-time flight, and privacy in the toilets was restricted by keeping the door ajar. Sufficient food and drink was provided.
- 4.2 Detainees were transported on coaches that were safe, clean and comfortable. Standard coaches were used to transport the majority of detainees, and the smaller vehicles used to transport detainees presenting raised risk were not caged.
- 4.3 The coaches, airport terminal building, airport bus and aircraft were all clean, appropriately supervised and suitable for purpose. They contained televisions and a toilet. The layout and fittings on the aircraft were similar to any normal passenger charter flight.
- 4.4 Detainees were denied access to blankets and pillows. One female detainee asked for a blanket – detainees were on the aircraft from 5.50pm to 4.30am GMT – and was told there were none. This was not the case.
- 4.5 The door was not fully closed when detainees used the toilet both on the coach and on the aircraft. An escort was detailed to 'toilet duty'. He placed his handcuffs in the toilet door in order to prevent it being fully closed. In practice the door was left ajar by approximately one centimetre. Ostensibly this was done in case detainees attempted to self-harm but it undermined the dignity of detainees, especially women.
- 4.6 Detainees were provided with a packed lunch on the coach to the airport consisting of a sandwich, chocolate bar, packet of crisps and a piece of fruit. Hot food was provided for a diabetic detainee on the Colnbrook coach who refused to eat the packed lunch. On the plane, detainees received soft drinks, water and two hot meals. Vegetarian options were available.
- 4.7 Hot drinks were not available to detainees during the flight, for reasons of safety. This blanket prohibition, when detainees had already had no access to a hot drink for most of the day, unfairly disadvantaged those presenting no risk of disruption.

Recommendations

- 4.8 Unless an individualised risk assessment indicates otherwise, detainees should be able to use the toilet with full privacy, consume hot drinks and obtain pillows and blankets during flights.
- 4.9 Detainees should be able to close toilet doors fully while being escorted on coaches and planes unless an individualised risk assessment indicates otherwise.

Property and clothing

- 4.10 Management of property and clothing was reasonable and reliable, although some property was in HM Prison Service bags.
- 4.11 All detainees had suitable clothing for the journey. At Brook House, escorts acceded to a detainee's request to change his clothes, even though this delayed the departure from the centre. Two officers accompanied him into a small room and were present when he changed his trousers and shirt. At Yarl's Wood, some detainees were distressed about not being able to retain a handbag.
- 4.12 Detainees' property was placed in large check-patterned plastic bags that were zipped and sealed. One ex-prisoner's property was still in the clear plastic bags issued in prison with a large HM Prison Service logo. While these bags were placed inside a check bag, it would have been better to replace the HM Prisons bags altogether. This would enable detainees to avoid undue attention on searching or unpacking of their bags after arrival.
- 4.13 The Verne, a men's prison in Dorset, had allowed only 20 kilograms of property on transfer to an IRC for removal, whereas most detainees (including those who had recently come from a prison) had much larger amounts. Understandably, the detainee from The Verne felt unjustly treated, since he had had to give away a lot of property he would have liked to have taken with him.
- 4.14 Handheld items including mobile phones, large pieces of jewellery that could be used as a weapon and coins were sealed in small clear plastic bags. Staff took a common-sense approach: detainees were allowed to retain paper cash, earrings and bracelets, and to write down phone numbers contained in their mobile phones. The plastic bags were sealed and carried onto the aircraft by escorts. After landing in Kingston, Jamaica and before disembarkation, the small plastic bags were returned to detainees.
- 4.15 A detailed property record was maintained to address any complaints regarding property. We were told by managers that the rate of complaints about property was around one a month.

Recommendations

- 4.16 UKBA should ensure that prisons have and communicate correct information about property allowances on removal.
- 4.17 Detainees' property should not be transported in bags marked as the property of HM Prison Service.

Positive relationships

- 4.18 Most staff took care to establish and maintain a rapport with detainees and ensure that problems were resolved. Their efforts were undermined by a few who swore loudly in the presence of detainees, and some who talked and joked inappropriately to each other on the aircraft.

- 4.19 From the first contact of the coach commander with a detainee at the IRC, most staff made positive efforts to establish a rapport with the detainees they were escorting. This was supported by the fact that, as a matter of policy, the same escort stayed with a detainee throughout the journey. Escorts tried to establish a rapport with detainees, and several detainees confirmed that they appreciated the efforts made by staff. The officer escorting each detainee held the detainee welfare record. Several made full and frequent entries on the detainee's disposition and behaviour throughout the process, evidencing positive interactions and good observation; most noted the main events during the journey; a few had made no entry at all.
- 4.20 We heard some escorts swearing in front of detainees when speaking with colleagues. This was unprofessional and could have increased the discomfort and stress for detainees.
- 4.21 At Yarl's Wood there was a great deal of loud laughter and conversation between staff while detainees were being processed at the desk. This was insensitive and inappropriate.
- 4.22 At Colnbrook, escort staff showed a professional attitude in dealing with two detainees who had been expected not to cooperate; one was clothed only in a towel and declared that he would not put on the clothes he was given. Escorting staff engaged well with him, and after a short time he complied and walked fully clothed to the waiting van. He was concerned about luggage and his money, and staff took great care to reassure him. This involved unloading a large amount of luggage from the coach, so that his own bags could be laid out for his inspection. Staff were cheerful and patient in this process.
- 4.23 Throughout the flight, some G4S staff at the rear of the aircraft, the area occupied by the detainees presenting the greatest risk, were telling each other jokes, laughing very loudly and having conversations within earshot of detainees. The subject matter of some of the talk and jokes concerned women and was overtly sexual. All could have been found offensive and were, at least, unprofessional. There was also a great deal of loud swearing, both profane and sexual.

Recommendations

- 4.24 The lead escort for each detainee should make regular entries on the detainee welfare record, including a brief description of their mood and behaviour.
- 4.25 Escorting staff should behave professionally at all times, and should not swear or make inappropriate references to sexual or religious matters in front of detainees.

Diversity

- 4.26 There was a low proportion of staff from minority ethnic groups. Some staff indulged in inappropriate sweeping generalisations about different nationalities, thereby undermining the objective of treating detainees as individuals. There were no detainees with evident or declared disabilities but care planning procedures were in place for use when applicable. Consideration was shown for religious needs. Provision for women detainees was adequate.
- 4.27 The proportion of black and minority ethnic staff was low. Managers explained that the competences for overseas escort work, involving unusual hours and conditions, were common among those who had served with the police or armed forces, and that fewer black and

minority ethnic candidates tended to be found among those groups. The consequence was an overall impression of a largely white escort group.

- 4.28 In conversation, a number of managers and staff observed that there were certain national characteristics which manifested themselves in the behaviour of detainees: for example, of the disruptiveness experienced in the past on flights to Jamaica, a manager observed 'Jamaican nationals are like that'. Other staff observed that people from the Caribbean tended to be vocal, those from Africa were more often violent, while those from the Far East and Sri Lanka were more likely to self harm. These sweeping generalisations clearly gave rise to prior assumptions in relating to individuals of one ethnic group or another.
- 4.29 Both the initial training of escort officers, and the annual refresher training, included modules on cultural awareness (as well as managing self-harm risks, child protection, and matters of security and procedure).
- 4.30 We were told that care plans, disability plans or childcare plans were used for detainees with any additional needs. There were no detainees with special needs on the flight we observed.
- 4.31 Bibles and Qur'ans could be taken onto the aircraft. We were told that on one occasion a detainee had been permitted to take a prayer mat with him.
- 4.32 Female detainees were transported from Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre. There was one male detainee on the Yarl's Wood coach because he was married to a female detainee. Provision for women was adequate: they boarded the aircraft by a different set of steps from the men, were seated in a separate area, and used toilets in separate locations on the aircraft. On the flight observed, treatment of women was respectful and decent. In the previous Operation Waldrop charter, recordings showed a leading male member of staff greeting each female detainee with 'my darling', which was clearly inappropriate.
- 4.33 While most staff were men, there appeared to be a sufficient gender balance in the G4S staff complement. However, one female detainee was escorted by a male officer.

Recommendations

- 4.34 Managers should take steps to increase the proportion of black and minority ethnic escorting staff.
- 4.35 In training and mentoring of staff, the importance of treating all detainees as individuals should be stressed in contrast to generalisations about 'national characteristics'.
- 4.36 Female detainees should be escorted by female staff, and should be addressed with respect at all times.

Complaints

- 4.37 The UKBA monitor on board gave the opportunity for oral questions and complaints. However, it was not possible to make a confidential complaint during the flight and detainees were not told how they could make a formal complaint after removal. This deprived UKBA of a potentially valuable source of information.

- 4.38 At one point an escorting officer came to the rear of the aircraft and said loudly to detainees: "Are they treating you well? Feel free to make allegations if you wish". The access to the UKBA monitor's surgery (see section on preparation for return) alleviated the problem, but it did not provide a confidential setting. The G4S luggage tags gave a UK number that detainees could ring after arrival, and we were told that in the past some detainees had made complaints through staff of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the destination country.

Recommendation

- 4.39 Detainees should be provided with information on how to make a confidential written complaint and submit comments on their experience of removal. UKBA should ensure that detainees know how such information can be submitted after removal.

Health

- 4.40 Paramedics accompanied the detainees at all times and, in general, the continuity of care through handover of information and medications was good.

- 4.41 Four paramedics, one on each coach, accompanied the detainees from the IRCs to the airport. Two boarded the plane and flew to Jamaica. The medics were trained to the intermediate level of First Person on the Scene (FPOS) and were all ex-service personnel. All had completed the one-week DCO accreditation training.

- 4.42 The paramedics received medical notes and medication from the IRC, and spoke with each detainee about any medical needs. All medication was retained by one of the two paramedics on board who administered it to the detainees at the appropriate times. On arrival, medication was handed to a Jamaican official rather than to the detainees.

Recommendation

- 4.43 Detainees should be given their medication on arrival at the destination country unless there is a known risk of doing so.

Section 5: Preparation for reintegration

- 5.1 Many detainees were concerned about what would happen after their arrival in Jamaica. The UKBA monitor held a useful 'surgery' during the flight, but these interviews were not confidential. A helpful pack of information about resettlement opportunities in Jamaica was distributed in the latter part of the flight; many detainees might have benefited from having this information much earlier.
- 5.2 On the coach from Brook House, we heard one detainee call his solicitor and another call his mother in Kingston, Jamaica. Many detainees were worried about re-establishing their lives in Jamaica. One man, who had spent 14 years in the UK and had had indefinite leave to remain, did not have anyone in Jamaica to support him. He was worried that he was about to become destitute.
- 5.3 A UKBA manager routinely accompanied flights. She held a 'surgery' during the latter part of the flight, when any detainee could ask questions about their case and about resettlement needs. The detainee was required to sit in the middle seat of the central row of seats, with the UKBA representative kneeling on the seat in front and talking over the top of it. A minimum of six DCOs at any time surrounded the detainee, irrespective of which detainee it was and the risk they posed. The UKBA monitor said that this was a G4S decision based on managing risk, and that UKBA did not question it. The DCOs leant inwards and participated in the conversation. It was not proportionate to have so many DCOs surrounding detainees during the UKBA surgeries, and one female detainee remarked that it was intimidating. It was inappropriate for them to be party to the discussion, which should have, within the limits of safety in each case, offered more confidentiality and discretion.
- 5.4 During the flight a helpful pack of information entitled *Welcome Home: Information on resettlement services in Jamaica* was distributed to detainees. The pack contained information about non-governmental organisations that offered support to returned deportees. One offered accommodation for 30 days to deported persons, exactly the kind of support which at least one detainee on the flight required. This information was distributed four hours after the flight had taken off. Had the pack been distributed earlier, or at the IRC, many detainees may have felt less anxious about their flight.
- 5.5 After touchdown the detainees' sealed handheld property was distributed and some detainees immediately made phone calls to relatives and friends to let them know they had arrived.

Recommendation

- 5.6 The information pack, *Welcome Home: Information on resettlement services in Jamaica*, should be distributed to returning detainees as soon as practicable during the journey. Copies should be held by welfare officers in immigration removal centres.

Section 6: Recommendations

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>To UK Border Agency</u>
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- 6.1 The number of staff present during the IRC discharge process should be kept to a minimum, respecting the need of many detainees for space and time to deal with what is happening to them. (3.9)
- 6.2 Where there are delays at any stage in the removal process, and especially after boarding the aircraft, the UKBA monitor should ensure that staff and detainees are given as much information as possible. (3.21)
- 6.3 UKBA should ensure that prisons have and communicate correct information about property allowances on removal. (4.16)

<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>To G4S</u>
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- 6.4 The security team uniform should be softened and team members should not wear T-shirts featuring the words 'use of force instructor' when removing detainees. (3.13)
- 6.5 Detainees should not routinely be handled while being escorted onto coaches within secure areas of an immigration removal centre. (3.32)
- 6.6 Detainees should only be placed in handcuffs when necessary for control or to make removal possible when all means of persuasion have failed, and for no longer than is necessary. (3.33)
- 6.7 All escorting staff should receive full accredited training for the use of force in any situation which may arise, especially on board an aircraft. (3.34)
- 6.8 The number of escorting staff on a flight should not exceed that required by the normal risk assessment procedure. (3.39)
- 6.9 Unless an individualised risk assessment indicates otherwise, detainees should be able to use the toilet with full privacy, consume hot drinks and obtain pillows and blankets during flights. (4.8)
- 6.10 Detainees should be able to close toilet doors fully while being escorted on coaches and planes unless an individualised risk assessment indicates otherwise. (4.9)
- 6.11 Detainees' property should not be transported in bags marked as the property of HM Prison Service. (4.17)
- 6.12 The lead escort for each detainee should make regular entries on the detainee welfare record, including a brief description of their mood and behaviour. (4.24)
- 6.13 Escorting staff should behave professionally at all times, and should not swear or make inappropriate references to sexual or religious matters in front of detainees. (4.25)
- 6.14 Managers should take steps to increase the proportion of black and minority ethnic escorting staff. (4.34)

- 6.15 In training and mentoring of staff, the importance of treating all detainees as individuals should be stressed in contrast to generalisations about 'national characteristics'. (4.35)
- 6.16 Female detainees should be escorted by female staff, and should be addressed with respect at all times. (4.36)
- 6.17 Detainees should be provided with information on how to make a confidential written complaint and submit comments on their experience of removal. UKBA should ensure that detainees know how such information can be submitted after removal. (4.39)
- 6.18 Detainees should be given their medication on arrival at the destination country unless there is a known risk of doing so. (4.43)
- 6.19 The information pack, *Welcome Home: Information on resettlement services in Jamaica*, should be distributed to returning detainees as soon as practicable during the journey. Copies should be held by welfare officers in immigration removal centres. (5.6)

Good practice

- 6.20 There was continuous filming of those stages in the removal where the use of force was most often found to be necessary. (3.35)