

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

**Manchester Airport**

3 and 4 September 2007

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

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# Overview

More than 22 million passengers a year pass through Manchester Airport's three terminals, which operate 24 hours a day. The residential short-term holding facility, known as Manchester detention centre, also operated around the clock, although it was not specifically an airport facility. Only a quarter of its occupants arrived from the airport. The great majority arrived from other places of detention, underwent sometimes time-consuming checks to be admitted airside, and a couple of days later were transferred again to another centre.

There had been improvements since our previous visit and further improvements were planned. In particular, detainees being escorted to and from the detention centre, through public areas, were no longer routinely handcuffed. However, men and women still shared the accommodation, though no children were admitted. In the previous two months 415 detainees had passed through, of which 18% were women. The average period spent in detention in the previous seven weeks was 43 hours. In the past month, five detainees had been held for five days.

Plans had been drawn up, but not yet finalised, to expand the facility, which currently had 16 beds in four dormitories. The expanded accommodation would have direct landside access for vehicles into a secure vehicle yard alongside the facility. There was a pressing need to make sure the inadequacies of the present facility were addressed in rebuilding, to include separation of men and women, in a more respectful environment, and to allow staff and detainees access to fresh air and daylight. Currently people were detained for a few days with neither, sometimes following detention in a similarly poor environment in a police station. This was unacceptable.

Only a minority of occupants of the detention centre were Manchester Airport cases and oversight by immigration staff at the airport was limited. No designated senior immigration officer had responsibility and duty chief immigration officers did not routinely visit to check that all was well. As a result of negotiation between Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) and the National Council of the Independent Monitoring Boards, recruitment of a board to visit the detention centre was underway.

During the inspection up to 11 detainees, all male, were present and we were able to conduct structured interviews with six of them. We also conducted separate interviews with seven detainees about their recent experience of escorted journeys, published in a separate report. Group 4 Securicor (G4S) was also BIA's principal escort contractor.

Manchester detention centre was located airside in Terminal 2, which had also recently opened a second short-term holding facility within its secondary examination area. This non-residential facility was used mainly by the airport immigration staff and logs for the previous two months showed that 190 detainees had been held there. Both facilities were managed on behalf of BIA by G4S, and were subject to similar policies and procedures. The same team of detainee custody officers, male and female, supervised both holding rooms and escorted detainees around the airport.

**Manchester Detention Centre, contracted to Group 4 Securicor**

Inspected: 3-4 September 2007

Last inspected: 17 August 2005 (published in *Report on the unannounced follow-up inspections of three residential short-term holding facilities at Manchester Airport, Harwich International Port and Port of Dover*, August 2005 – February 2006)

**Inspectors**

Hindpal Singh Bhui

Eileen Bye

Sherelle Parke (researcher)

# Healthy establishment summary

- 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 judicial processes.

## Safety

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- HE.3 Detainees arriving from Belfast complained of being handcuffed getting on and off the ferry, but handcuffs were no longer used when detainees were inside the airport. For detainees arriving from police stations, there was often minimal information about risk or other issues. Some detainees were subject to frequent and short notice moves around the country, causing distress and obstructing visits. There was no private space for reception interviews. Detainees were not offered a free telephone call on arrival, but staff were willing to make a call to ask people to ring the incoming phone.
- HE.4 Most detainees reported feeling safe at Manchester detention centre and staff provided a good overall level of care and supervision. The centre only accepted people who were considered low risk. There was little use of force or other recorded incidents, but incident reports were kept on site and were checked by a manager. There was minimal Border & Immigration Agency (BIA) oversight. There was no independent monitoring board, though one was being formed.
- HE.5 Instances of self-harm at the centre were rare and the nurse who visited every morning saw any vulnerable detainees. There were self-harm and food refusal policies, but staff had not received refresher training. There was still no separation of men and women and the latter had reported feeling uncomfortable as a result.
- HE.6 While the residential detention centre did not accept children, the new holding room within the Terminal 2 secondary examination area had 25 children (13% of those held) passing through it during the previous two months. Staff were vetted to Criminal Records Bureau

enhanced level and G4S had a generic child protection policy in place. There was a stock of baby food and nappies.

- HE.7 Legal advice was a significant problem and only one of the advertised advice lines was valid. Immigration staff knew little about most of the people passing through the detention centre, and detainees were not provided with sufficient information.

## Respect

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- HE.8 The centre was clean, but in need of redecoration. There were useful notices in the corridor, but they were in English only; however, G4S's detainee information booklet was in 15 languages. The four dormitory style rooms were bare apart from beds and cupboards that could not be locked. As at the previous two inspections, men and women detainees did not have separate living areas. The centre had occasional extremes of temperature. We were told that the imminent new build would allow staff to control the temperature, but that there would still not be separated living quarters for women and it was uncertain if there would be any natural light.
- HE.9 There were separate male and female showers and toilets. There was no restriction on the use of showers. Some clothes were available for detainees in need, but there was no laundry facility.
- HE.10 An experienced nurse visited the facility every morning for three hours and saw all new arrivals for a health screening, and all detainees we met had been seen within 24 hours of arrival.
- HE.11 Staff-detainee relationships were respectful, and all of the interviewed detainees reported positively on their treatment by DCOs. Staff had received initial training in diversity and race relations, but there was no refresher training. Detainees had made no complaints, but forms were not freely available. No diversity impact assessments had been done and there was no disabilities officer. Religious books and artefacts were available and the airport chaplaincy team provided a valuable service.
- HE.12 Detainees were satisfied with the food provided, which incorporated three main meals a day and an additional evening snack. They could have free hot and cold drinks, crisps and sometimes fruit at any time. Sanitary supplies were stocked for women detainees, with some samples left in the women's toilet. Basic hygiene items were supplied free.
- HE.13 The new short-term holding room offered a range of sandwiches, stored in a fridge, baby foods, hot and cold drinks. The only hot food available was pot noodles. Sanitary supplies were available.

## Activities

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- HE.14 Although detainees could be held for a few days at the detention centre, there was no access to fresh air, and nowhere for detainees to smoke. Televisions, DVDs, computer games, some newspapers and books in different languages provided some distraction.

HE.15 The new holding room in Terminal 2 had a television, a well-stocked bookcase, a daily supply of newspapers, and activities for children, but no access to fresh air or exercise.

## Preparation for release

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HE.16 All detainees spoken to said that they were offered the opportunity to contact their family and friends and general visiting arrangements were good. About 30 visitors had attended the facility in the previous fortnight and were allowed to bring in property for detainees. Visiting arrangements were clearly explained to detainees. Some visitors were unable to provide suitable identification to get to the airside detention facility, but the new build would have direct landside access.

HE.17 There were no internet or email facilities, but reasonable access to phones, with two payphones and two incoming phones. Detainees could keep their mobile phones if they had no camera, but few had such mobiles. Some suitable phones were provided by the voluntary visitors group. Along with the chaplaincy team, it provided a useful independent welfare perspective and much needed support to detainees.



# Section 1: Manchester airport

## Escorts, vans and transfers

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### *Expected outcomes:*

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

- 1.1 Manchester detention centre was often used as a staging post for detainees being transferred from one place of detention to another. During the inspection, detainees were transferred to Oakington, Harmondsworth and Tinsley House IRCs. A number of detainees arrived from police stations and others came from immigration removal centres or short-term holding facilities. During the inspection six detainees arrived from Belfast, where they had been held in a police station, most of them on the way to flights from Heathrow or Gatwick airports, and expecting short stops at other centres beforehand. These detainees would normally have gone to Dungavel IRC, which was temporarily closed to new admissions as a result of an outbreak of mumps. They were handcuffed going on to the ferry and coming off it, which detainees we spoke to described as humiliating. Detainees were no longer handcuffed once inside the airport.
- 1.2 IS91 detention authorities were received with all detainees, and most were completed properly. However, for detainees arriving from police stations, there was often minimal risk or other information (see also Manchester escort inspection report). Most detainees we interviewed had come to Manchester from either another detention centre or a police station and had experienced detention totalling between two and five days in all facilities. One had been in detention for a total of between five and seven days.
- 1.3 The reception was open 24 hours a day, and previous records showed some detainees arriving between 10pm and 2.33am, although they came not from the airport, but from police stations. Records from the preceding month (August 2007) showed that 23% arrived from police stations as far away as Scotland. Detainees were sometimes subject to many disorientating moves around the detention estate within a short space of time and at short notice, causing them distress and potentially obstructing family visits (see case example in suicide and self harm section).

## Recommendation

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- 1.4 Detainees should not be subject to excessive, long-distance moves around the country.

## Arrival and accommodation

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### *Expected outcomes:*

*Detainees taken into custody are treated politely and courteously, given reasons for this course of action in a language they understand and kept in safe and decent conditions.*

- 1.5 From information seen on-site it was not clear how many detainees had been held in recent months. Information subsequently provided by the contractor indicated that during the previous two months (July and August 2007) 415 people had passed through the airport detention centre. The average stay was 43 hours, however, five detainees had been held for five days though not longer. The facility was well staffed. Six detainee custody officers (DCOs) and a supervisor were on duty

during the day, and three plus a supervisor during the night, always including at least one woman. One or more DCOs were almost always available in the living area, either in the dining room or the association/television room, and throughout the inspection the atmosphere in the centre was calm and cooperative.

- 1.6 The small reception area had no private space for reception interviews and detainees were interviewed in the view and hearing of other officers but not in front of other detainees, who were led to the dining area until each individual interview was done. During the reception process, DCOs filled out a basic risk assessment form. Detainees were generally not held at the facility if considered to pose a risk, and the forms completed during the previous month revealed little information of note. Detainees were shown around the facility by staff.
- 1.7 The centre was clean, though it would have benefited from redecoration. There was space for up to 16 detainees in four rooms, one of which was reserved for women. There were no women in the facility at the time of inspection. As at the previous two inspections, men and women detainees did not have separate living areas. Doors were not locked and all rooms were off a communal corridor along which women had to pass to reach sanitary facilities, dining and association rooms and the telephones. No female detainees were present during the inspection, but staff and visitors confirmed that some women were uncomfortable about mixing with male strangers and would often spend most of the time in their room.
- 1.8 The bedrooms had no natural light and contained only beds and cupboards for each detainee to keep any belongings. The cupboards were not lockable and not much used. Detainees' property was kept in a room just outside the detention area. Detainees could retrieve items from their baggage on request and none reported any problems with this arrangement.
- 1.9 Staff had no control over the air conditioning system, which was linked to the general airport system. They expressed concerns about poor ventilation and occasional extremes of temperature in the facility. We were told that the imminent new build would allow staff to control the temperature, but that there would still not be separate living quarters for women and no certainty of any natural light.
- 1.10 There were separate male and female showers and toilets. All facilities were clean, though the male shower smelt musty and poorly ventilated. There was no restriction on the use of showers and soap was provided. A stock of t-shirts, underwear and shoes was available. However, none of the detainees spoken to had made use of this provision, as they had access to their own clothes. There was no laundry in the centre; none of the detainees spoken to had been at the centre for long enough to require this facility.
- 1.11 Detainees were not automatically provided with a hygiene pack on arrival, but all those spoken to had their own toiletries. One detainee had run out of toothpaste and this was purchased for him by staff. We were told that anyone without means would be provided with such items free of charge.
- 1.12 An experienced nurse visited the facility every morning for three hours and saw all new arrivals for a health screening. All the detainees we met had been seen within 24 hours of arrival. Staff were able to call on airport paramedics in the event of any health emergencies, and also had access to the telephone triage service available to all G4S-run facilities.
- 1.13 There were a number of useful notices in the corridor. G4S's detainee information booklet was in

15 languages, but the rest were in English only. Other notices included information on complaints procedures, a list of available materials for religious worship, telephone numbers for legal services providers (see legal rights section) and numbers for various immigration removal centres to which detainees could be transferred.

- 1.14 There were two incoming phones and two payphones along the corridor that also accepted telephone cards which were available for purchase from staff. Detainees were allowed to keep their own mobile phones if they had no camera. Although staff were willing to make calls on detainees' behalf to advise people to call the centre on the incoming phone, the lack of a routinely offered free phone call was still problematic for detainees without means (see also preparation for release section).

## Recommendations

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- 1.15 Women should have separate living areas.
- 1.16 Reception interviews should be conducted in private.
- 1.17 The facility should have natural light and be in a good state of decoration.
- 1.18 The facility should be kept at a comfortable temperature.
- 1.19 Showers should be adequately ventilated.
- 1.20 Detainees' cupboards should be lockable.
- 1.21 Detainees should be able to wash their clothes if they need to.
- 1.22 Detainees should be offered a free telephone call on arrival.

## Duty of care

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*Expected outcomes:*

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

## Bullying

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- 1.23 CCTV covered the central corridor, the dining and association rooms, and was monitored in reception. Most detainees said they felt safe in the centre. The only detainee who said he did not feel safe declined to say why. Manchester detention centre did not normally accept detainees presenting behavioural difficulties, to avoid having to manage them in a confined space, with shared bedrooms, and with men and women accommodated in the same corridor. Custodial staff had a set of generic policies, issued by the contractor, and had received some relevant training during their initial training course. Staff were routinely stationed in the day room and kitchen/dining area, alongside detainees and were likely to detect possible problems. In the past they had sometimes noticed detainees trying to get cigarettes from other detainees, but this no longer happened as the whole airport was non-smoking.

## **Suicide and self-harm**

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- 1.24 Identified self-harmers were unlikely to be accepted at Manchester detention centre and instances of self-harm at the centre were rare. Copies of incident reports, which included incidences of self-harm, were kept on site and included managerial review. One report described someone banging his head on the wall two months previously. An officer dealt with it by taking the detainee's arm and talking to him to calm him down. A year previously someone had cut himself superficially with a razor and needed first aid. When shifts changed over, staff passed on concerns including perceptions of changes in the behaviour of some detainees. The nurse, who visited every morning, saw anyone showing signs of vulnerability.
- 1.25 One of the detainees present had been refusing meals since he arrived the previous day in protest at his detention. He was detained two days before our visit, after some years living with his family in Scotland. He said that the detaining immigration officers had not allowed him to collect documents and clothes from home before his detention in a police station, and that he had not been able to get legal advice. His distress was increased when, following transfer from Scotland to Manchester, he rang his family who were about to visit him, to say that he was moving to Lindholme near Doncaster. As his family changed their plans to travel to Doncaster instead, he was informed that the transfer had been cancelled and it was likely, but not definite, that he would go to Tinsley House near Gatwick; this left his family unsure what to do. The detainee said he had not eaten at the police station where he was first detained, although no police records arrived with him to confirm or disprove this. He was regularly accepting drinks. Staff kept him under observation and on a number of occasions tried to persuade him to eat and advised him that he could ask for a meal anytime he felt like it. The nurse discussed this with him and prepared a confidential report to be passed on when he was transferred. Staff drew up an additional risk assessment to be added to his IS91 detention authority and reported to BIA's detainee escorting and population management unit (DEPMU). The policy provided for further steps to be taken after three days.
- 1.26 At night, routine checks of all rooms were made at least hourly and logged. Observation was increased if staff were concerned about someone. An effort had been made to avoid obvious ligature points in showers, toilets and rooms, but a metal shield over a bedroom alarm could have been used by a determined self-harmer. However, bedroom doors could not be locked from the inside; the rooms were left open during the day and were in shared occupation. Anti-ligature knives were kept in the office and in reception. The generic G4S policies included self-harm and food refusal. Staff had received some initial training but this had not been updated or refreshed.

## **Recommendations**

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- 1.27 When detainees are initially detained in police stations, their police custody records should accompany them on transfer.
- 1.28 Staff should receive regular refresher training in suicide and self-harm prevention.
- 1.29 All rooms should be free of ligature points.

## Childcare and child protection

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### *Expected outcomes:*

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

- 1.30 The residential detention centre did not accept children. Occasionally the new holding room within the Terminal 2 secondary examination area held a family sent to Manchester for removal. Other BIA offices sometimes arranged removal via Manchester airport on flights to Turkey or Pakistan. From the recently computerised logs it was difficult to tell how long they had spent there. However, the contractor sent us additional documents, according to which 25 (13%) of those passing through the new holding room in the previous two months were children. Most children appeared to be with family members but some travelling alone had teenage birthdates. A family with two small children was held overnight for nearly 18 hours. Nearly all minors were granted release. The room was equipped with children's toys and some of their drawings remained displayed on the wall, which softened the environment. Staff had a stock of baby food and nappies; the toilets included a baby change shelf.
- 1.31 Custodial staff were vetted to Criminal Records Bureau enhanced level. G4S had a generic child protection policy and were in the process of approving procedures with regional children safeguarding authorities.

## Recommendation

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- 1.32 The logs held in the non-residential facility should permit monitoring of the number of detainees held there, including the number of children and the duration of stay.

## Legal rights

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### *Expected outcomes:*

*Detainees are able to obtain expert legal advice and representation from within the facility. They can communicate with legal representatives without difficulty to progress their cases efficiently.*

- 1.33 Getting legal advice was a significant problem, as reported by detainees, staff and others visiting the holding room. Immigration staff said they did not get involved in suggesting sources of legal advice and understood some telephone numbers were available in the holding room. The notice boards had numbers for three voluntary sector advice organisations: the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU), the Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) and the Refugee Legal Centre (RLC). We rang all three. The first, a small law centre, said that because of legal aid cuts it was reluctantly no longer able to advise detainees. Advice previously given over the telephone had not been funded anyway, and it could no longer provide this free service. No one answered the 0800 number on the notice board, although we left a message and were rung back to be told they could not help. The second, the IAS, told us that it could not advise detainees on the telephone advice line. Only the third, RLC, was able to provide advice to detainees. The RLC line was very busy, but they were unsure whether it could be maintained because of funding insecurity, including further legal aid restrictions.
- 1.34 One detainee's case illustrated the problems caused by lack of legal advice. He had recently arrived, with incorrect documents, from another European country, and had been returned to that

country by the immigration authorities. That country then sent him back and he had ended up in Manchester Airport two days previously. Further removal directions had been fixed for a different airport in that country. He said he did not wish to go, was considering applying for asylum and asked for legal advice. Immigration officers warned him robustly that, if he did not accept the second set of removal directions, he would be prosecuted for travelling with a false document and sent to prison. After a prison sentence, he would then be removed. He did not accept the removal directions and when the police arrived, he again asked if he could have legal advice. He was at this stage cautioned, arrested, handcuffed and taken away. During the two days we were present, we noted he had asked repeatedly for legal advice without success, although a custody officer tried to help him ring one of the posted advice line numbers to no avail. Immigration officers offered no constructive help on getting legal advice at the time he was threatened with prosecution or when he was arrested, other than to say that he could ask for it, following arrest, when he got to the police station. The police told us that arrestees could get advice about criminal law and procedure from the duty solicitor, but not specialist immigration advice. However, prosecution for this immigration offence was bound up with immigration status and options. The threat of prosecution had been applied as leverage in order to get him to cooperate with removal and immigration staff told us that they generally only prosecuted people who were difficult to remove. The recent arrests in the holding room files, including Chinese, Iranian and Zimbabwean detainees, seemed to confirm this. It was possible that had this individual been able to get independent legal advice about his situation, any options and their likely consequences, he would have had a clearer idea of the limitations of his circumstances and might have complied with removal directions, as indeed he had in the first instance. This might have obviated his diversion into the criminal justice system.

- 1.35 If someone did have a legal representative and wished to send a copy of documents, staff were prepared to fax them to solicitors. Legal visits were possible, although uncommon, in an immigration interview room. Representatives were required to supply a letterhead to confirm their status when booking a visit.

## Recommendations

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- 1.36 BIA staff contemplating prosecution of a detainee for an immigration offence should take steps to ensure that the individual has access to independent specialist legal advice at the earliest possible stage.
- 1.37 Following consultation with the Legal Services Commission up to date notices describing a number of sources of specialist legal advice should be displayed in the facility.

## Casework

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*Expected outcomes:*

*Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated. Detention is for the minimum period necessary.*

- 1.38 A small minority of the detention centre occupants were Manchester Airport cases. Only one of six people present at the beginning of the inspection was an airport detainee. We looked through 124 available detainee records from the last month, of which only a quarter had airport references. Immigration staff on-site monitored and progressed their own casework and shared responsibility for casework emanating from some smaller ports within the region, including John Lennon and

Blackpool airports. However, they knew little about most of the people passing through the detention centre. If people asked to see an immigration officer, for clarification about what was happening to them, they were likely to be referred to their own port. Sometimes staff facilitated a telephone call. This did not meet all the information needs of detainees, whether or not they spoke English, particularly if they had previously been detained in a police station, similarly without information, advice or access to an immigration officer. According to the records we looked at, nearly a quarter of detainees had arrived from police stations around the north of England and Scotland. One of those present had arrived after four days in a nearby police station.

- 1.39 As the number of passengers passing through the airport had increased, airport immigration staff were kept busy meeting flights. Passengers refused leave to enter had to await the next flight back to the port of embarkation, or if no quick decision could be made they had to wait while further enquiries were undertaken. Some passengers held up for a short period were simply asked to sit and wait in the secondary examination area in front of the immigration control desks. If they were likely to be turned around but not immediately, they could be detained in the new short-term holding facility. Airport passengers held for longer periods were transferred to the residential short-term detention centre.
- 1.40 The new holding room in Terminal 2 had held 190 detainees in the previous two months and 86 in the preceding month: 52 men, 27 women and seven children with their families (see childcare and child protection section). Three individuals were listed as having spent between 18 and 24 hours there. The new holding room and the detention centre had separate logs and it was not easy to calculate the total period of detention for the few who passed from one to the other. Overall, the average stay in the STHF was seven-and-a-quarter hours, ranging from 10 minutes to 26 hours 5 minutes. Immigration staff told us that, when they could not remove people quickly and tried to move them from the holding room, they could not always easily get a bed for longer-term detainees, even in the detention centre within the same airport.
- 1.41 Detainees were issued with reasons for detention in a pro forma checklist, IS91R, and with removal directions if removal had been arranged. These documents were in English. Of 124 detainee records seen for August, 73% were transferred to another detention centre, 18% were removed (either from Manchester or from a London airport), eight left when they were arrested, and three were released.

## Recommendations

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- 1.42 There should be routine supervision of the detention centre by senior immigration staff to check that conditions of detention are appropriate, that casework is properly progressed and that detainees are kept informed. These visits should be recorded.
- 1.43 In the case of passengers detained successively in the two holding facilities within Terminal 2, the cumulative period of detention should be logged in the second holding room.
- 1.44 Written reasons for detention should be explained in full by an immigration officer and issued in a language the detainee can understand.

## Positive relationships

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*Expected outcomes:*

*Those detained are treated respectfully by staff, throughout the duration of their stay.*

- 1.45 Staff-detainee relationships were respectful. All of the detainees we interviewed reported positively on their treatment by DCOs and said they had experienced no ill treatment. Staff were knowledgeable about detainees in their care, and were observed spending some time explaining facilities and routines, as well as drawing attention to the helpline telephone numbers on the walls. All detainees present during the inspection were addressed by their first names or by the prefix 'Mr.'

## Diversity

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*Expected outcomes:*

*There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural norms.*

*Detainees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, nationality, gender or religion and there is positive promotion and understanding of diversity.*

- 1.46 Staff had received initial training in diversity and race relations, and remembered a one-day diversity course held the previous year. However, there was no routine refresher training. Detainees could make complaints, including racial complaints, but none had been made. Staff were unaware of any diversity impact assessments. There was no disabilities officer for the facility; DCOs and the nurse told us that no one with identified disabilities had been held.
- 1.47 All detainees interviewed said their religious beliefs were respected while they were in the centre. Religious texts, prayer mats and a qibla (compass) were available on request, and their existence was advertised in the main corridor. A member of the airport chaplaincy team, which included a Muslim chaplain, called in most weeks and whenever asked to visit someone by staff.

## Recommendations

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- 1.48 Custodial staff should receive routine refresher training in race relations and diversity policy and procedures.
- 1.49 Diversity impact assessments should be carried out.
- 1.50 There should be an identified disabilities officer.

## Rules of the facility

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*Expected outcomes:*

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

- 1.51 The rules of the facility were clearly displayed in the central corridor and in reception. Detainees told us that they knew what was expected of them in the facility and that there was a good level of communication with staff. There had been few recorded incidents in the last year, and force was rarely used. Where it was used, the relevant documentation gave some assurance that it was appropriate and used as a last resort. All incident reports had been examined and counter-signed by a senior manager and all were numbered, though reports generally lacked detail.



- 1.52 No written complaints had been received in the previous 12 months. However, while notices about the complaints procedure were in the main corridor, complaints forms were in the reception area only and had to be requested from staff.

## Recommendations

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- 1.53 Incident reports should include detailed accounts.
- 1.54 Complaints forms should be freely available in the detention area.

## Services

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*Expected outcomes:*

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

- 1.55 Detainees were provided with three main meals a day and an additional evening snack. A variety of frozen meals, including vegetarian, vegan and halal, were provided. Detainees chose from a wide range of airline packed meals, which were then heated by staff. All food was checked for temperature. Cereal, fruit, toast and eggs were available for breakfast.
- 1.56 Staff had basic health and hygiene training. Ventilation and temperature control had been improved in the kitchen since our previous inspection. The dining room had fixed tables and chairs, and there was a free hot and cold drinks dispenser. Crisps and some fruit were also available at any time free of charge. Detainees made no complaints to us about food.
- 1.57 Sanitary supplies were stocked for women, with some samples left in the women's toilet. Basic hygiene items were supplied free.
- 1.58 The new short-term holding room offered a range of sandwiches, stored in a fridge, baby foods and hot and cold drinks. Pot noodles were the only hot food on offer. Sanitary supplies were available.

## Recommendation

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- 1.59 Hot meals should be provided to detainees in the non-residential short term holding facility.

## Activities

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*Expected outcomes:*

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

- 1.60 Although detainees could be held for a few days at the detention centre, there was no access to fresh air, and nowhere for people to smoke, which heightened anxiety at an already stressful time. Some had arrived from a police station, where they had also not been able to smoke. The nurse offered nicotine patches to alleviate the anxiety for some smokers, although these were not effective for all.

- 1.61 Both the dining area and the association room had televisions. The reception was poor on some channels and staff told us that they usually played DVDs, some of which were in different languages. Three hand-held electronic games were available. The association room had comfortable chairs and a bookcase containing a few books in different languages, replenished from Manchester libraries' surplus stock sales, as well as various magazines. Three national, a few foreign language, and a pile of local newspapers were delivered daily.
- 1.62 The new holding room in Terminal 2 was similarly equipped with a television, a well-stocked bookcase and daily supply of newspapers, plus activities for children. There too, no access to fresh air or exercise was possible.

## Recommendation

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- 1.63 **Detainees in both the residential and non-residential facilities should have access to fresh air.**

## Preparation for release

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*Expected outcomes:*

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

- 1.64 Visiting arrangements were good. Visitors could attend the facility between 2pm and 9pm every day and the visits log showed that there had been about 30 visitors the previous fortnight. They were allowed to bring in property and suitcases for detainees. Visiting arrangements were explained to detainees when they arrived and posted on the notice board. It was explained too that visitors had to bring adequate identification to get airside, which the airport authority limited to a passport or photo-bearing driving licence. This effectively precluded people who had neither, which included many children. It was another indication of the problems caused by an airside detention centre, which it was hoped the re-built facility with direct landside access would remedy.
- 1.65 In our structured interviews, all detainees reported that they were offered the opportunity to contact their family and friends. One detainee had had a visit since arriving at the facility and another was about to receive a visit at the end of the inspection.
- 1.66 There were two BT payphones, one accepting cards and one taking coins, and two telephones for incoming calls. Staff were able to change money and international tariffs were posted beside the telephones. The BT payphones were available at any time, but incoming calls were barred between midnight and 7.30am to enable people to sleep. There was a payphone in the new holding room.
- 1.67 In common with other short-term holding facilities, Manchester detention centre allowed detainees to keep their mobiles if they had no camera. Unfortunately most mobiles did have a camera. In this case staff usually permitted one urgent call in reception, to inform someone of the detention centre return number. People could take numbers from their mobiles. Some acceptable mobiles had been collected by the voluntary visitors' group, so that people could insert their SIM card and use them. There was no internet access, although email would have provided a cheap and easy means of communication.

- 1.68 Unusually for a short-term holding facility, Manchester had an established voluntary visitors' group, affiliated to the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID), and collaborating with the proactive airport chaplaincy team. Members of the visitors' group called in twice weekly, submitting to the usual time-consuming airside checks and searches. Information about the visitors' group and the chaplaincy team was prominently displayed in the main corridor. The external visitors brought an important independent welfare perspective to the detention centre. Members of these groups confirmed to us the disproportionate value of 30 minutes of their time, in talking through problems with detainees and taking on small but helpful tasks which were outside the remit of custodial staff.

## Recommendation

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- 1.69 Detainees should have access to the internet and email to facilitate contact with family, friends and solicitors.

## Good practice

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- 1.70 *Custody staff had a constructive relationship with the airport chaplaincy and a local volunteer visitors' group, which provided a valuable welfare service to detainees, some of whom had passed through successive STHFs with little human contact.*

## Section 2: Recommendations

The following is a listing of recommendations included in this report. The reference numbers at the end of each refer to the paragraph location in the main report.

### **To the Border and Immigration Agency**

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- 2.1 Detainees should not be subject to excessive, long-distance moves around the country. (1.4)
- 2.2 When detainees are initially detained in police stations, their police custody records should accompany them on transfer. (1.27)

### **To the facility contractor**

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#### **Arrival and accommodation**

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- 2.3 Women should have separate living areas. (1.15)
- 2.4 Reception interviews should be conducted in private. (1.16)
- 2.5 The facility should have natural light and be kept in a good state of decoration. (1.7)
- 2.6 The facility should be kept at a comfortable temperature. (1.18)
- 2.7 Showers should be adequately ventilated. (1.19)
- 2.8 Detainees' cupboards should be lockable. (1.10)
- 2.9 Detainees should be able to wash their clothes if they need to. (1.21)
- 2.10 Detainees should be offered a free telephone call on arrival. (1.22)

#### **Duty of care**

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- 2.11 Staff should receive regular refresher training in suicide and self-harm prevention. (1.28)
- 2.12 All rooms should be free of ligature points. (1.29)

#### **Childcare and child protection**

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- 2.13 The logs held in the non-residential facility should permit monitoring of the number of detainees held there, including the number of children and the duration of stay. (1.32)

## **Legal rights**

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- 2.14 BIA staff contemplating prosecution of a detainee for an immigration offence should take steps to ensure that the individual has access to independent specialist legal advice at the earliest possible stage. (1.36)
- 2.15 Following consultation with the Legal Services Commission up to date notices describing a number of sources of specialist legal advice should be displayed in the facility. (1.37)

## **Casework**

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- 2.16 There should be routine supervision of the detention centre by senior immigration staff to check that conditions of detention are appropriate, that casework is properly progressed and that detainees are kept informed. These visits should be recorded. (1.42)
- 2.17 In the case of passengers detained successively in the two holding facilities within Terminal 2, the cumulative period of detention should be logged in the second holding room. (1.43)
- 2.18 Written reasons for detention should be explained in full by an immigration officer and issued in a language the detainee can understand. (1.44)

## **Diversity**

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- 2.19 Custodial staff should receive routine refresher training in race relations and diversity policy and procedures. (1.48)
- 2.20 Diversity impact assessments should be carried out. (1.49)
- 2.21 There should be an identified disabilities officer. (1.50)

## **Rules of the facility**

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- 2.22 Incident reports should include detailed accounts. (1.53)
- 2.23 Complaints forms should be freely available in the detention area. (1.54)

## **Services**

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- 2.24 Hot meals should be provided to detainees in the non-residential short term holding facility. (1.59)

## **Activities**

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- 2.25 Detainees in both the residential and non-residential facilities should have access to fresh air. (1.63)

## **Preparation for release**

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- 2.26 Detainees should have access to the internet and email to facilitate contact with family, friends and solicitors. (1.69)

## **Good practice**

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- 2.27 *Custody staff had a constructive relationship with the airport chaplaincy and a local volunteer visitors' group, which provided a valuable welfare service to detainees, some of whom had passed through successive STHFs with little human contact.*(1.70)