



A thematic review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons

Transfers and escorts within the criminal justice system

December 2014



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within the criminal justice system

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Glossary of terms

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Introduction

The sight of a large, white prison van or 'sweat box' moving through the traffic on its way to or from court is a familiar one. But most of us know little about who is inside or what is happening to them. This thematic report is the fourth this inspectorate has produced since 2004 that attempts to describe just that and makes a number of recommendations for improvement in this important part of the custody process. For the first time, this escort thematic is able to draw on the findings of our police, court and secure training centre (STC) inspections, as well as our inspections of prisons and young offender institutions (YOIs), and we have analysed data provided to us by escort services.

There are over 820,000 of these journeys a year: between October 2013 and September 2014 there were 818,168 escorted journeys of men, women and children provided by Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) at a cost of £128.2 million, and 3,962 escorts of younger or more vulnerable children to or from STCs, provided by Secure Escort Services for Children and Young People (SESCYP) in a four year contract costing £9.1 million. PECS are currently provided by GEOAmey and Serco Wincanton and SESCYP by Serco.

We collected details from PECS and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) on the 195,811 escort journeys undertaken between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014. Of these journeys, 79% involved adult men, 8% women, 10% young adults and 3% children. The great majority of journeys were to and from court.

PECS escort vans may carry a mixture of men, women and children, sometimes all three together. A screen should separate the different groups. This was not always in place and in any case, from the accounts we heard, it did not stop shouted abuse. Typically there are around 14 cells in a vehicle. Each cell on the vehicle has a moulded bench and a window. There are no seat belts – we were told to prevent the risk of self-harm or harm to staff – and detainees (and one of our researchers who undertook a trial trip) complained of being thrown around the van as it travelled. Two-thirds of the adult prisoners we surveyed told us the vans they travelled in were clean, but we saw some that were dirty and covered in graffiti. Adult prisoners on longer journeys were usually offered food and drink but few were offered a 'comfort break' to use a toilet. Instead prisoners were offered a liquid absorbing gel-bag to use in their tiny cell while the van was on the move. The same arrangements applied to men, women and children travelling in PECS escort vans. Adult detainees were routinely cuffed on and off the vehicle, regardless of risk, and even children were routinely handcuffed on and off vehicles at court, although not on arrival to STCs or YOIs. The disproportionate use of restraints was a particular concern on hospital escorts.

Only about two-thirds of adult prisoners said they were told where they were being taken – sometimes this was for valid security reasons but there was often no good reason for not providing this information. The average PECS journey was less than 20 miles but a small number were much longer, including many journeys to court, and for those travelling to/from STCs the average journey was 68 miles. However, for what was frequently a short court appearance, adult prisoners and children often arrived in court custody early in the day and then faced a long wait after their hearing to be collected. Because there are fewer women's prisons, YOIs and STCs, women and children travelled longer distances than men. Where women and boys travelled with adult men, men were routinely dropped off first because men's prisons 'lock out' but women's prisons and YOIs for those under 18 do not. If escort delays mean that a man cannot be taken to a prison before it 'locks out' he will have to spend the night in police custody; we found 754 cases where this appeared to have occurred in the three-month period we analysed. Adult prisoners could have long waits in a van even after it had arrived at a prison if this was during a period when the reception was closed. At the height of summer we found adult prisoners left outside prison receptions over lunchtime in dangerously stifling and hot vans for up to two hours with no air conditioning. Prisoners should be able to take their possessions with them stored in large lockers below the van, but while the majority of adult prisoners said their property arrived with them, we frequently came across

examples where luggage did not travel with the prisoners and went missing or was damaged in transit.

Adult detainees generally reported that escort staff treated them well, although those from minority groups were less positive. However, boys at YOIs reported more negatively than adults about their treatment by escort staff and boys from minority groups reported more negatively still. Prisoners' and boys' perceptions of safety were affected by the lack of seat belts and concerns about being trapped in their cells in the event of an accident. In the 12 months to October 2014 there were 36 incidents of self-harm during PECS escort journeys. We continued to be concerned that the Person Escort Records that should accompany all escorted detainees and identify their risks on the journey and at their destination were poorly completed. Escort providers had their own complaints procedures but these were poorly publicised.

Most children were escorted under the same contract as adults and so had a similar experience, although they were likely to have longer journeys. This will worsen as the number of juvenile establishments reduces in response to the falling population. We were concerned to find that, in some cases, children were returned to police custody when the court closed at the end of the day until an escort was available to take them to an STC. Children moving to or from STCs were escorted under the YJB-commissioned SESCYP contract. Escorts provided by SESCYP were often by taxi and children moved in this way reported a better experience. We were pleased to see that children were routinely asked about their escort experience when they arrived at their STC and sometimes at YOIs.

The use of virtual courts where hearings are conducted by video link is increasing and these obviate the need for escort journeys for both adults and children. This development is very welcome but there is still work for the agencies involved to do to better coordinate their efforts so the best use can be made of this facility.

Escorts are a critical part of the custodial process – for detainees new to custody and in particular for those, like children, who might be particularly vulnerable, the effectiveness with which the process is managed may allay or inflame tensions and fears. The two most important measures to improve this process are an end to the transport of men, women and children in the same vehicles and the better use of virtual courts. For good reason, great efforts are made to keep children, women and men separate in custody and it is wholly inappropriate that they are transported in the same vehicles. However they are organised, the escort experience is likely to be expensive and detrimental for the detainee. Much more should be done to increase the well-managed use of virtual courts and make the escort experience we describe here a much less frequent event.

Nick Hardwick
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

December 2014

Section 1. Executive summary and recommendations

- 1.1** This thematic report collates findings across the places of detention we inspect to provide a comprehensive overview of adults and young adults, and children's treatment and experiences during escorts and transfers in England and Wales.
- 1.2** The findings in this report come from four main sources: inspection reports for police custody, court custody, prisons, young adult young offender institutions (YOIs), children's YOIs, and secure training centres (STCs) published between April 2012 and August 2014; data from prisoner surveys between April 2012 and January 2014, alongside data from YOI surveys and STC surveys collected between April 2013 and March 2014; an escort journey undertaken by an HM Inspectorate of Prisons researcher; and data provided by Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) detailing escort journeys carried out between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014. HM Inspectorate of Prisons has previously reported on escorts and related topics in 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2012.
- 1.3** The section of the report that details the experience of children under escort was commissioned by the Youth Justice Board.

Adult and young adult detainees

- 1.4** Detainees are transported in vehicles containing cellular compartments by escort staff employed by the escort contractor. They are searched prior to boarding the vehicle, handcuffed and taken on board, then locked in their assigned cell with the cuffs taken off. The 'escort' will sit in the back of the vehicle throughout the journey to check on detainees, with the driver in the front.
- 1.5** Men and women may be transported in the same van, separated by a screen.

Number and type of escorts

- 1.6** There were 818,168 PECS escort journeys between October 2013 and September 2014, including 23,585 escorts of children, and the total cost of the contracts was £128.2 million. PECS provided us with details on all escorts undertaken between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014. During this period there were 189,069 adult and young adult escorts, made up of 154,822 adult men, 19,431 young adult men, 13,777 adult women, and 1,039 young adult women.

Information sharing

- 1.7** Person escort record (PER) forms, which were used across criminal justice agencies to record and share any known risks that a detainee posed to themselves or others, were not always filled in to an appropriate standard.

Court production

- 1.8** Most cellular vehicle journeys undertaken in the three months for which we received data were to or from courts. Detainees often spent long periods in court cells because they arrived early for their hearing and/or there were delays in being picked up after the hearing.
- 1.9** Prison inspection report findings pointed towards a good or increasing use of video link, but this was less so in women's prisons. However, police inspection reports found barriers to the use of video link which resulted in those remanded to prison custody being held for longer than necessary in police cells; this required a multi-agency response. Some court inspections found that multi-agency work to address barriers had begun to increase the use of video link.

Conditions in vans

- 1.10** Most vans were clean, though examples of dirty vans were found. On recent court inspections we found that daily cleans of the vans were not always taking place.

Seat belts

- 1.11** There is currently no legal requirement for seat belts for detainees in custody vans and PECS had not carried out an independent review to balance the health and safety implications of having, or not having, seat belts in cellular vehicles.
- 1.12** We were informed that seat belts are not used as detainees may use them to self-harm or harm staff. However, prisoners frequently raised the lack of seat belts in escort vans as a safety concern, with the slippery plastic of the seats a compounding factor. The experience of our researcher matched that of the comments regularly received from prisoners that they were therefore knocked around the cell because of the van's movement.
- 1.13** In the 12 months to October 2014, there were 36 road traffic accidents involving the escort vehicle during escort journeys.

Information on destination

- 1.14** Detainees should understand where they are going and what to expect when they arrive. Sixty-three per cent of prisoners in our survey said that they were told where they were going, and 12% that they received written information.
- 1.15** Late notification of transfer was reported as an issue across functional types, but particularly at local prisons. Some prisoners were informed of transfer on the morning they were moved and some had arrived at a new prison without knowing where they were.

Journey length

- 1.16** While PECS collected data about distance travelled, one escort provider did not collect data on the time spent under escort in vans, which was an omission.
- 1.17** Inspection reports identified that women detainees were dropped off later than men in the same vehicle because men's prisons had evening 'lock out' times, after which they would not receive prisoners, whereas women's prisons would receive a detainee at any time. Women

also, on average, travelled further than men generally and for transfers between establishments.

- I.18** From PECS data, the average distance travelled by adults and young adults on escort was 16.59 miles, ranging from one to 282 miles.
- I.19** One per cent of adult and young adult men, and 2% of women travelled a distance of 100 miles or more. For half of these women and 57% of young adult men, the long journeys were to/from court. Overall, the average inter-prison journey distance was much higher than the average escort journey at 46.94 miles.
- I.20** Detainees sometimes travelled longer distances between police stations and courts due to recent court streamlining processes.
- I.21** In our prisoner survey, just over a third (37%) of adult prisoners said they had spent more than two hours in the van, with large variations between functional types.
- I.22** At a number of inspections over the summer months, detainees were held in vans for up to two hours in dangerously hot and stifling conditions with no air conditioning while prison receptions were closed over lunch.
- I.23** Inspection reports highlighted that those transferring to open prisons and arriving after 4.30pm or 5pm sometimes had to spend the night at a nearby closed prison as the reception at the open prison had closed by the time they arrived.
- I.24** In the three months of PECS data we reviewed there were 754 cases of adults and young adults travelling from a court to a police station; most of these would have been 'lock outs' as a result of which the detainee was required to spend an additional night in police custody. The unexpected rise in the prison population in the autumn of 2013 had made it more difficult to avoid late returns and lock outs.

Comfort stops

- I.25** In our surveys, only 10% of those who had spent more than two hours in the van said they had had a toilet break.
- I.26** Toilet bags containing a liquid-absorbing pouch, designed to hold either urine or vomit (not faeces) were provided as an alternative. These were kept in the detainee's cell once used. We felt that the design of these bags would make them difficult to use on a moving vehicle and in such a confined space, especially for women. During our researcher's journey on an escort van, she identified that the presence of windows in cell doors made it seem possible that other detainees in the van would be able to see a detainee using a toilet bag.

Food and drink

- I.27** Inspection reports found that detainees were usually offered refreshments and about three-fifths of prisoners in our survey who had spent more than two hours in the van said that they had been offered something to eat or drink.

Treatment by escort staff

- I.28** In our survey, almost three-quarters of adult prisoners said that they had been treated well or very well by escort staff on their most recent journey to the prison. This varied between functional types. Inspectors observed friendly and courteous interactions between staff and detainees across all of our custodial inspections.

Perceptions of safety

- I.29** In our survey, four-fifths of prisoners said that they had felt safe on their most recent journey to the prison. For those travelling to foreign national prisons this figure was lower.
- I.30** Prisoners consistently raised concerns about their safety due to the lack of seat belts and being locked in small cells.
- I.31** Women were frequently transported with men. Escort staff were not always clear on when to use partitions, and when they were used we were told there was a safety concern as they blocked staff sightlines.
- I.32** Vulnerable detainees were often transported with non-vulnerable detainees.

Health/welfare needs

- I.33** In the 12 months to October 2014, there were 36 self-harm incidents during escort journeys.
- I.34** It is not known whether adapted vehicles were always used for detainees with disabilities, those with claustrophobia, and pregnant women, but generally prisoners who considered themselves to have a disability reported a poorer experience than those who did not across most escort survey questions. Inspectors witnessed an adapted vehicle being used for a detainee with severe back problems.
- I.35** Cancellation or delays in attending hospital appointments sometimes occurred due to escort staff not being available.

Disembarkation and restraint

- I.36** Insufficient protection from public view while disembarking was a common problem in court inspections. Detainees were routinely handcuffed on and off escort vehicles rather than on a risk-assessed basis. Our researcher's experience supported this.
- I.37** At some prisons, all detainees were handcuffed between the van and reception, and prisoners were still sometimes handcuffed during hospital appointments. In the majority of natural deaths in custody investigations analysed (conducted by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman for deaths between 2007 and October 2012), prisoners were restrained while in hospital, with a number of restraints considered to be inappropriate. Our inspectors observed some prisoners refusing to go to hospital as they did not want to be handcuffed during appointments.

Complaints process

- I.38** Escort providers have their own complaints system and forms were available at courts. However, the complaints procedures were not well promoted and inspectors did not find these complaint forms available in prisons.

Property

- I.39** Property was stored in large lockers in the escort vehicle; most prisoners' property arrived with them at the prison. Some prisoners complained that there was not enough space for all their property or that their property was damaged in transit.

Children

- I.40** Children transported under the PECS contract travelled in the same cellular vehicles as adult detainees. Children travelling to or from STCs were transported separately, normally in unmarked cars, under the SESCYP contract.

Number and type of escorts

- I.41** There were 23,585 PECS escort journeys for children between October 2013 and September 2014 and 3,982 SESCYP escorts.
- I.42** In the three month period (1 November 2013 to 31 January 2014) for which we collected escort details, there were 5,998 children's escorts under the PECS contract, made up of 5,682 boys and 316 girls. There were also 744 STC escorts.

Information sharing

- I.43** PER forms did not always accompany children to the receiving establishment.

Court production

- I.44** Almost all (99%) cellular vehicle journeys undertaken in the three months for which we received data were to or from courts. This was similar for escort journeys to or from STCs.
- I.45** Children often experienced long waits in court custody after their hearing and this, as well as lengthy journeys, meant arrival times at YOIs could be very late, which adversely impacted on first night procedures. At STCs late arrival times were less common.
- I.46** There was some use of video link in YOIs, but some did not have the necessary facilities.

Conditions in vans

- I.47** Inspectors found most vans to be clean, but some dirty vans were found. A lack of seat belts was a common issue among children, making them fear for their safety. Children in STCs usually travelled in taxis and most reported a positive experience.

Information on destination

- I.48** Children should be told where they are going before they depart for their destination and be given information to help them to prepare for arrival at their new establishment. However, only 15% of boys in YOIs said that they had been given this information; this was higher for those who were in custody for the first time. Some children were not informed of their transfer until the morning it took place.

Journey length

- I.49** Inspectors frequently found that boys had had long journeys to their receiving establishment, and survey data showed that 8% of boys at YOIs said that they had spent more than four hours in the van. This was due to the increasing size of catchment areas as a result of YOI closures.
- I.50** Boys were often dropped off later than men and young adults in the same vehicle because adult male prisons had reception cut off times whereas YOIs holding those under 18 did not.
- I.51** From PECS data, the average distance travelled by children on escort was 18.98 miles, ranging from one to 198 miles. Two per cent of children travelled a distance of 100 miles or more. The average inter-prison/YOI journey distance was much higher than for adult men and even women, at 89.55 miles.
- I.52** The average distance travelled by children at STCs was 68 miles, ranging from 0.2 to 298 miles. One hundred and fifty (21%) of these children travelled a distance of 100 miles or more and the majority were journeys to or from court.
- I.53** Thirty-nine children in our three month period were transported by PECS from court to a police station. These were children waiting to travel to an STC (managed under the separate SESCYP contract) who were moved from court custody to await their transfer so the court could close.

Comfort stops

- I.54** Toilet break availability was found by inspectors to be reasonable, however in our surveys, only 15% of boys at YOIs who said they had spent more than two hours in the van said that they had been offered a toilet break. Toilet bags were offered as an alternative, as for adults.

Food and drink

- I.55** Only about two-fifths of children in YOIs who had a journey of over two hours said they had been offered something to eat or drink on their journey. Inspectors noted that children were not always aware that they could request food or drinks during their escort journey.
- I.56** Inspectors were satisfied with the availability of refreshments provided on journeys to STCs.

Treatment by escort staff

- I.57** Only half (51%) of the boys in YOIs said that they had been treated well or very well by the escort staff, and this was lower for Muslim boys. Variations were also found across the YOIs.

I.58 In contrast, 95% of those travelling to STCs felt that staff had looked after them.

Perceptions of safety

I.59 From survey data, four-fifths of boys said that they had felt safe on their most recent journey to the YOI.

I.60 Compared with their respective counterparts, fewer black and minority ethnic boys (76% compared with 86%), Muslim boys (75% compared with 83%) and unsentenced boys (69% compared with 84%) said that they had felt safe during the journey.

I.61 The lack of seat belts was frequently commented cited by children as a key safety concern.

I.62 Almost two-fifths (38%) of boys in YOIs said that they had travelled with either adult men or women. Partitions were meant to be used to separate adults and children; however escort staff were not always clear when the partition needed to be used and struggled if they were transporting adult men, women and boys together. Screens only prevented detainees from seeing each other; they could still communicate with each other.

I.63 Children at STCs were transported separately but may also have experienced travelling with adults on previous transfers, such as from police to court custody.

Disembarkation and restraints

I.64 Children were often handcuffed on and off escort vans at court, but this was appropriately not routinely done on arrival at STCs or YOIs.

Complaints process

I.65 Children being transported under PECS had access to the same complaints process as adult detainees. At inspections of STCs, there was evidence that children were routinely asked about their journey on arrival at the centre and were able to make complaints if needed.

Recommendations

Our Expectations for individual custody settings are set out in the relevant inspection criteria. We also make below the following national recommendations.

To Ministers

All women should be transported in separate vehicles to men.

To the YJB

- All children should be transported in separate vehicles to adults.
- Arrangements should be made to ensure children are not 'parked' in police custody because escorts are not available to take them from court to an STC before the court closes.

- The practice of children being asked about their escort experience on arrival to YOIs/STCs should be routinely done for all arrivals.

To HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS)

- There should be increased use of video-enabled court hearings, when appropriate, while ensuring there are no adverse consequences for the detainee or criminal justice procedures. Safeguards should ensure that the detainee is able to appropriately consult with their solicitor prior to their hearing.
- Information on how to make a complaint about escorts should be visibly available in court custody areas.

To PECS with HMCTS, local police forces, National Offender Management service (NOMS) and the YJB

PECS should lead multi-agency work in new or existing forums to ensure:

- detainees do not spend unnecessary time in police or court custody due to escort service availability or procedures
- those remanded or returning to prison/YOI custody are processed and collected in time to prevent them being 'locked out' or arriving any later than 7pm
- detainees have suitable access to secure toilet breaks, particularly where it is known that a detainee will be experiencing a long journey
- detainees are given appropriate information on where they are going prior to their transfer
- all relevant staff are trained in completing PER forms, including how information will be used by other criminal justice agencies. The working group should discuss and address any cross agency issues in the quality of PER forms.

To PECS

- Information on how to make a complaint about escorts should be visibly available in escort vehicles.
- As previously recommended, PECS should commission and publish the findings of independent research to determine the health and safety implications of installing seatbelts in cellular vehicles.
- PECS should ensure better coordination between escort contractors and prisons/YOIs to prevent lengthy waits to disembark on arrival to a prison.

To NOMS and the YJB

- In addition to what is already recorded, monitoring of individual escort journeys should include full details of the waiting time for collection; time of departure and arrival; waiting time to disembark; and for journeys to court, the time a detainee arrived and the time they were required by the court. Recording by contractors should be subject to robust quality assurance.
- Information on how to make a complaint about escorts should be visibly available in prison/YOI/STC reception areas and included in induction materials.

Section 2. Background to the report

Aim of this report

- 2.1** HM Inspectorate of Prisons' 'Expectations' for adult prisons and Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) both set out expectations for 'courts, escorts and transfers'¹. In recent years HM Inspectorate of Prisons' remit has expanded to include the inspection of police custody (conducted jointly with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary) and, from the 2012–13 business year, court custody and secure training centres (the latter conducted jointly with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission). Inspection criteria² for each of these types of custody also include detainee and child escorts and transfers. Our inspections contribute to the delivery of the UK's international obligations arising from its status as a party to the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires States Parties to establish a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) to carry out preventive inspections of all places of detention, which includes detainee escorts. The NPM should make recommendations aimed at preventing ill-treatment based on their findings. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of the bodies that makes up the UK's National Preventive Mechanism.
- 2.2** Inspections across the settings we inspect have separately identified some areas of concerns with escort services. This thematic report collates these findings to provide a national and comprehensive overview of detainee and children's treatment and experiences during escorts and transfers in England and Wales.

Background

Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS)

- 2.3** Most detainee and child escorts are provided by PECS which is a part of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). PECS covers a range of services, including the escorting of detainees between police stations, courts and prisons/YOIs, transfers to and from hospital and inter-prison transfers. The first generation of PECS contracts ran from 1999, the second from 2004 and the third generation began in 2011. The latter was expected to save £261 million over the seven-year contract.
- 2.4** The contracts are organised into four areas, with GEOAmey running the South-West/South-East, East Midlands/Yorkshire/Humberside/North-East, and the North-West/West Midlands/Wales, while the fourth area (London and the East) is run by Serco Wincanton. The 'Service Specification for External Movements and Appearances' defines the service to be provided and sets out national minimum outputs that are mandatory for all providers.
- 2.5** The Prison Service continues to manage category A³ prisoner transportation but the PECS contracts include all other inter-prison transfer.

¹ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2012) *Expectations: Criteria for Assessing the Treatment of Prisoners and Conditions in Prisons*, and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2012) *Expectations: Criteria for assessing the treatment of children and young people and conditions in prisons*

² Available at <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/about-our-inspections/inspection-criteria/>

³ Prisoners receive a security categorisation on arrival to prison. Category A prisoners are those whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public.

- 2.6** Between October 2013 and September 2014 818,168 escorts were provided by PECS, and this included 23,585 children. The total cost of the contracts with GEOAmev and Serco Wincanton is £128.2 million. This includes the transport of children, which is commissioned to PECS by the YJB at a cost of £4.5 million.
- 2.7** Detainees are transported in cellular vehicles that can contain between two and 14 small, cellular compartments in which detainees are locked for the duration of the journey. They contain a moulded bench and have a window that cannot be seen through from outside the vehicle.
- 2.8** During the transfer there will always be two members of staff; one nominated as the driver and one as the 'escort'. The escort should remain on the vehicle at all times when there are detainees on board and if they need to disembark the driver should act as the escort in the interim.
- 2.9** Detainees are routinely escorted on and off the vehicles by a mix of escort staff and court custody and/or prison staff, depending on where they are being transferred from. Escort staff and court custody staff acting as escorts also help to escort detainees who are being transported from police custody on to vans as police officers/detention officers are not involved in the loading process. Escort staff will search detainees prior to accepting them; the detainee is then routinely double-cuffed to the front (hands cuffed together and then cuffed to the escort) before being taken to the vehicle. The escort will lead the detainee up the steps onto the vehicle and the detainee steps into the cellular compartment. The door is chained while allowing the detainee room to put their hands out, and the handcuffs are removed. The cell door is then closed and locked.
- 2.10** During the journey the escort sits in the back of the vehicle but is in contact with the driver through an intercom and, in most cases, also via mobile phone. Some newer vans have CCTV in the rear so the escort sits in the front alongside the driver but can still move through to the rear to check on detainees if needed. The escort can also move up and down the vehicle when it is in transit to check on detainees and hand out water, food or toilet bags.
- 2.11** Men, women and children may travel in the same vehicle and should be separated by a screen. The cells nearest the escort at the front of the vehicle are used for women and children and individuals with vulnerabilities.

Secure Escort Service for Children and Young People (SESCYP)

- 2.12** The escort and transfer of children to or from secure training centres (STCs) and secure children's homes are contracted separately by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). Serco was awarded the contract to provide the SESCYP in 2012.
- 2.13** There were 3,962 escorts carried out by Serco between October 2013 and September 2014. The cost of the four year contract with Serco, which commenced in 2012, is £9.1 million.
- 2.14** Children are usually transported securely to or from STCs in unmarked cars, some resembling a black London cab and others ordinary cars, with staff. Only one child is transported in each car. If risk assessed as necessary, a child may be transported in a one cell cellular vehicle.

Adult prisons: previous thematic findings

Three previous thematic reports on detainees under escort have been published, in 2004⁴, 2005⁵ (joint with HM Inspectorate of Court Administration) and 2008⁶, as well as a 2012 thematic on the use of Person Escort Records (PER)⁷, a form used by all criminal justice agencies when transferring a detainee to record any known risks they pose.

Journey times

- 2.15** The 2004 thematic report found that the average journey time to court was one hour and 24 minutes; this decreased to one hour and 11 minutes in the 2008 report. There were significant differences between regions and functional types of prison in the length of journey times – probably as a result of differences in proximity to courts and other prisons.
- 2.16** Although an overall decrease in journey length was described in the 2008 report, in some areas and types of prison the length of journey had increased by 43 minutes.
- 2.17** Journeys to court were shorter than inter-prison transfers but the 2004 thematic report highlighted concerns that detainees attending court on consecutive days received no exercise and inadequate meals.
- 2.18** Women and young adult detainees had longer journey times than adult men. No information was collected by courts or escort staff on the distances travelled in escort vehicles to judge the scale of this problem or examine the impact of attempts to reduce the journey length.

Length of day

- 2.19** The overall length of the day (from leaving prison in the morning to returning that night) had decreased on average in the 2008 report from the 2004 findings. However, it was subject to more variation and it was still common for detainees to spend a longer time in court cells than was necessary for their court appearance. Although, in the 2004 report, 90% of prisoners arrived back at the prison before 7pm, some arrived much later, impacting on risk assessments and first night procedures. Some had experienced 'lock outs', arriving back at the prison too late to be received, and had to spend the night in a police cell.

Experiences

- 2.20** Escort vans were described in the 2004 report as having uncomfortable seats, lacking in space and being dirty, and prisoners were still critical of the comfort and cleanliness of vans in 2008.
- 2.21** The number of comfort breaks was also identified as a concern, as prisoners were often told that these would extend the journey and were not offered them. There was no change between 2004 and 2008 in the average number of prisoners rating the frequency of comfort breaks as good or very good; these perceptions remained poor, with only 15% saying that

⁴ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2004) *Prisoners under escort*

⁵ HM Inspectorate of Court Administration and HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2005) *The joint inspection of prisoner escort and court custody in England and Wales*

⁶ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2008) *Prisoners under escort: A short follow-up thematic review*

⁷ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2012) *The use of the person escort record with detainees at risk of self-harm*

they were good or very good. They were also often not told about the toilet bags available until they asked for comfort breaks, and reported finding the use of these bags humiliating.

- 2.22** Most prisoners felt that they were treated well or very well by escort staff in both 2004 and 2008, and slightly more prisoners reported feeling safe in 2008 – 60% rated safety as good or very good, compared with 58% in 2004. However, the lack of provision of seat belts in vans was a concern in both reports, as prisoners reported feeling vulnerable as a result. Research into balancing the safety benefits of seatbelts with the potential risk of their use in self-harm incidents was recommended as a result of this finding.
- 2.23** In both the 2004 and 2008 research, women prisoners reported issues with segregation on escort vehicles, as they were not properly separated from men on the same van and could be subject to abuse and harassment as a result.
- 2.24** Our 2012 PER thematic reported that PER forms were sometimes illegible, and that 18% of those inspected had not been fully completed. Of the PERs that had identified a risk of self-harm, less than a third specified details of relevant incidents. Information about risk across police custody records and PERs was worryingly inconsistent. The report described the concerning situation in which PERs were used as a bureaucratic process for minimising liability in the event of a death in custody, rather than a tool for planning and delivering care. It also found that staff often did not understand what information they should provide as they had no knowledge of how it was to be used at the receiving establishment.

Children in YOIs

- 2.25** Children in YOIs reported many similar experiences to adult prisoners in the 2004, 2005 and 2008 thematic reports. In 2008, only 11% said that they had received enough comfort breaks, but about three out of five said they had felt safe in the van (61%) and that they had been treated well or very well by escort staff (62%).
- 2.26** However, in some areas children had very different experiences to adults – most children said that vans were unclean, which conflicts with the adult data, which showed that 52% rated the cleanliness of vans as good or very good.
- 2.27** Only 7% of children in the 2008 thematic report said that the escort vans were comfortable, and they had significantly longer journeys than adult detainees, owing to the location of YOIs for children. These journeys also involved more pick-ups and drop-offs as a result, taking more circuitous routes in order to fill the van.

Previous inspection and Lay Observers' findings

- 2.28** Our 2005 escort thematic reported issues with the embedding of the second generation 2004 PECS contract. Our 2011–12 annual report⁸ found similar issues with the initial implementation of the third-generation contracts, with late arrivals to court and prisons, the latter leading to some detainees being 'locked out' of prisons and being diverted to other prisons or having to be inappropriately held overnight at police custody suites.
- 2.29** Although this has improved over time, our 2013–14 annual report⁹ repeated concerns about unnecessary long days at court as well as women and children being transported in the same

⁸ HMI Prisons (2012) *HM Chief Inspectors of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2011–12*

⁹ HMI Prisons (2014) *HM Chief Inspectors of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2013–14*

vans as adult men. Removable partitions were in place to manage the latter situation, but were not effective and meant that staff were less able to supervise all detainees.

- 2.30** Lay Observers are independent volunteers who look at how detainees are treated in court custody and during escort. The Lay Observer's 2012–13 annual report¹⁰ highlighted similar issues with PERs, stating that they needed to be completed more consistently, and also reported that escort vehicles were not sufficiently clean, and that in some cases short-staffing at prisons and courts meant that detainees had to wait outside in the van for up to an hour until they could be received.

¹⁰ Lay Observers (2013) *Escort and Court Custody National Annual Report: September 2012 – August 2013*

Section 3. Methodology

- 3.1** This report looked at detainee escorts within the criminal justice system. It is based on data collected during our routine inspection programme and received from Prisoner Escort and Custody Services (PECS) and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) as follows.

Inspection report findings

- 3.2** An analysis of inspection reports was conducted based on findings from reports published between April 2012 and August 2014,¹¹ including:
- 22 police custody inspections, conducted jointly with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary
 - five court custody inspections
 - 96 adult prison inspections, including seven women's prisons
 - six young adult (18–21-year-olds) young offender institutions (YOIs)
 - inspections of seven¹² YOIs holding children (15–18-year-olds)
 - inspections of all four secure training centres (STCs), conducted jointly with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- 3.3** The analysis looked at detainees' treatment during their journey, including any diversity or welfare issues; length of journeys; conditions of the van; and the use of the Person Escort Record (PER) to transfer information between criminal justice agencies. It also looked at the length of time that detainees spent at court and the use of video-enabled courts.

Survey data

- 3.4** We carried out an analysis of survey data on transfers and escorts collected during our routine inspections of prisons and YOIs holding 18–21-year-olds or, for YOIs and STCs holding under-18-year-olds, as part of our annual survey of the children's estate on behalf of the YJB.

Survey methodology

- 3.5** Separate surveys are used in adult/young adult prisons, YOIs holding 15–18-year-olds and STCs as they are tailored to support the different inspection criteria used for each setting. The methodology is also tailored for the age group being surveyed, as detailed below.

Adult prisons and YOIs holding 18–21-year-olds

- 3.6** At the adult and young adult prisons, a representative sample of the prison population was sampled. The sample size was calculated using a robust statistical formula provided by a government department statistician to ensure that our survey findings reflected the

¹¹ When more than one inspection had taken place at an establishment/custodial facility, only the most recent inspection report was included.

¹² HMYOI Warren Hill was included, although from early 2014 it no longer held boys.

experiences of the entire population of the prison.¹³ Respondents were then randomly selected from a P-Nomis (electronic case notes) prisoner population printout, using a stratified systematic sampling method.

- 3.7** Every attempt was made to distribute the questionnaires to respondents individually. This gave researchers an opportunity to explain the purpose of the survey and that the survey was confidential and anonymous. In order to ensure confidentiality, respondents were asked to seal their completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and either hand it back to a member of the research team at a specified time or leave it in their room for collection.
- 3.8** The questionnaire was available in a number of different languages and via a telephone translation service for respondents who did not read English. Respondents with literacy difficulties were offered the option of an interview.

Children in custody

- 3.9** All children, in each STC and YOI at the time of the surveys, were invited to complete a questionnaire. Every effort was made to speak to each child individually in order to explain the purpose and confidentiality of the survey and the independence of the Inspectorate. At STCs, interviews were offered to all children and were conducted with all those who wanted an interview; at YOIs, interviews were conducted with any children who said that they needed help to complete the survey owing to literacy or language difficulties. Alternatively, self-completed questionnaires were placed in sealed envelopes and collected by members of the inspection team.

Analysis conducted

Adult prisoners

- 3.10** An analysis was conducted of adult detainee survey data on transfers and escorts, collected from inspection reports published from April 2012 to January 2014.¹⁴ Details are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of adult establishments surveyed

Type of prison	Number of prisons	Number of respondents
Adult male prisons	71	11,708
Women's prisons	6	811
18–21 YOIs	3	472
Total	80	12,991

- 3.11** The following analysis was conducted:
- a breakdown by functional type (see Appendix I)
 - a comparison of responses received from all 12,991 adults and young adults between (see Appendix II):

¹³ Ninety-five per cent confidence interval with a sampling error of 3%. The formula assumes an 80% response rate (70% in open establishments) and we routinely 'over sample' to ensure that we achieve the minimum number of responses required.

¹⁴ When more than one survey has been conducted at an establishment during this period, only the most recent survey data were included.

- black and minority ethnic prisoners and white prisoners
- foreign national prisoners and British national prisoners
- Muslim and non-Muslim prisoners
- prisoners who considered themselves to be Gypsy, Romany or Traveller and those who did not
- prisoners who considered themselves to have a disability and those who did not
- gay/bisexual prisoners and straight prisoners.

Children in custody

3.12 An analysis of survey data collected from children on transfers and escorts collected between April 2013 and March 2014 was conducted. This timeframe was selected to match our 'Children in custody 2013–14' annual survey reporting period¹⁵. This included data from all YOIs holding 15–18-year-olds and STCs, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Details of children's establishments surveyed

Type of establishment	Number of establishments	Number of respondents
YOIs (15–18-year-olds)	8 ¹⁶	729
STCs	4	231

3.13 As different surveys are used for STCs and YOIs holding 15–18-year-olds, all analysis was conducted separately for the two types of establishment. A summary of responses received on escorts and transfers at each establishment and overall for YOIs and STCs can be found in Appendix III and V respectively. The following diversity analyses were also conducted.

- A comparison of responses received from all 729 boys in YOIs between (see Appendix IV):
 - white boys and those from a black and minority ethnic group
 - Muslim boys and non-Muslim boys
 - boys who considered themselves to have a disability and those who did not
 - boys who had been in local authority care and those who had not
 - boys who were sentenced and boys who were unsentenced
 - boys aged 17 or 18 and those who were under 17 years old
 - boys who said it was their first time in custody and those who said it was not.
- A comparison of responses received from all 231 children in STCs between (see Appendix VI):
 - boys and girls
 - children aged under 16 years old and those aged 16–18
 - black and minority ethnic children and white children
 - Muslim and non-Muslim children
 - children who considered themselves to be Gypsy, Romany or Traveller and those who did not
 - children who considered themselves to have a disability and those who did not.

¹⁵ HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Youth Justice Board (2014) *Children in Custody 2013–14: An analysis of 12–18-year-olds' perceptions of their experience in secure training centres and young offender institutions*

¹⁶ Eight YOI surveys were included in our *Children in Custody 2013–14* report, as the Keppel Unit at HMYOI Wetherby was sampled separately and HMYOI Warren Hill was surveyed, although this YOI no longer holds boys.

Treatment of data

- 3.14** All survey data within this report are weighted to mimic the whole population at each centre, YOI or prison; therefore, the overall responses reflect the whole population in each establishment at the time of the survey.
- 3.15** Missing data, where respondents have not answered a question, have been excluded from the analysis. This means that percentages may have been calculated from different totals where there are different response rates across questions.
- 3.16** The majority of figures quoted in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Some figures quoted may not match those previously published in inspection reports as they have been analysed differently for the purposes of this report.

Inspectorate escort journey

- 3.17** On 26 June 2014, an HM Inspectorate of Prisons researcher undertook a journey in an escort van between one of the van depots and a court. The researcher was held in a cell for the duration of the journey, as a detainee on escort or transfer would be. The insights and observations gleaned from this have been presented throughout this report.

Data provided by PECS and the YJB

- 3.18** An analysis of data requested from PECS, detailing escort journeys undertaken between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014, was undertaken. This included data on region, date, distance, start point, destination, and the age and gender of the detainees.
- 3.19** Data was also requested from the YJB on escorts to and from STCs for the same three month period.

Section 4. Adult and young adult detainees

This section reports on findings from our inspections of adult prisons (including women's prisons) and YOIs holding 18–21-year-olds. Relevant findings from our police custody (conducted with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary) and court custody inspections are also included.

Our Expectations

Detainees are held in cellular vehicles for the minimum possible period of time. They are treated safely and decently during transfer, with any diversity or welfare issues being identified and met. Detainees understand where they are going and what to expect when they arrive. Any relevant information about risk, vulnerability or safeguarding is communicated between relevant agencies.

Number and type of escorts

- 4.1** Cellular vehicles are used to transport people who have been detained within the criminal justice system securely. From data received from PECS, between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014, there were 189,069 adult and young adult (aged 18–21) escorts. The majority of journeys involved adult men (82%), with 10% involving young adult men, 7% adult women and 1% young adult women. In addition, PECS was responsible for escorting 5,998 children under the age of 18 in this period. A detailed breakdown by type of adult journey is provided in Table 3 and by type of children's journey in Table 6.

Table 3: Number of adult escorts by type

Escort type	Adult men	Young adult men	Adult women	Young adult women	Total (%)
Total transfers to police stations	832 (1%)	74 (0%)	61 (0%)	9 (1%)	976 (1%)
Courts to police stations	640	60	47	7	754 (0%)
Transfers between police stations	98	12	13	2	125 (0%)
Prisons/YOIs to police stations	91	2	1	/	94 (0%)
Hospitals to police stations	3	/	/	/	3 (0%)
Total transfers to courts	81,313 (53%)	10,203 (53%)	8,449 (61%)	686 (66%)	100,651 (53%)
Prisons/YOIs to courts	37,134	4,904	2,839	199	45,076 (24%)
Police stations to courts	43,265	5,131	5,442	477	54,315 (29%)
Transfers between courts	914	168	167	10	1,259 (1%)
Hospitals to courts	/	/	1	/	1 (0%)
Total transfers to prisons/18–21 YOIs	72,660 (47%)	9,153 (47%)	5,266 (38%)	343 (33%)	87,422 (46%)
Courts to prisons/YOIs	55,380	6,942	4,588	310	67,220 (36%)

Inter-prison/YOI transfers	14,474	1,922	485	24	16,905 (9%)
Police stations to prisons/YOIs	2,795	289	191	9	3,284 (2%)
Hospitals to prisons/YOIs	11	/	2	/	13 (0%)
Total transfers to hospital	16 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	19 (0%)
Courts to hospitals	15	1	1	1	18 (0%)
Prisons/YOIs to hospitals	1	/	/	/	1 (0%)
Other – prisons to ferry port	1 (0%)	/	/	/	1 (0%)
TOTAL	154,822	19,431	13,777	1,039	189,069

Information sharing

- 4.2** The number of transfers shown in Table 3 highlights the pressure placed on places of detention that have to process detainees on arrival and discharge them when they leave. This includes the need to complete a person escort record (PER) when detainees are being transferred between places of detention. This form is used across criminal justice agencies to record and share any known risks that a detainee poses to themselves or others. The PER should then travel with the person, and be passed along to the receiving destination. This transfer of information between agencies is crucial in ensuring the safety of detainees and staff, not only during escort, but also throughout the period spent in the criminal justice system.
- 4.3** Police custody inspections have found that PERs were not always filled in to an acceptable standard, with detail lacking and/or illegible writing, and recommendations to quality assure PERs were made to some police forces.

Court production

- 4.4** From the data received from PECS (see Table 3), 89% of cellular vehicle journeys undertaken in the three months for which we received data were to or from courts. This included:
- 112,296 transfers between courts and prisons/YOIs, averaging about 1,200 a day. These included new arrests remanded by the court to prison custody, and those already remanded in prison custody being brought to their court hearing – if they were found innocent or received a non-custodial sentence, they were released directly from court; if not, or if their trial was ongoing, they were returned to prison custody.
 - 55,069 transfers between police stations and courts, averaging about 600 a day. This included new arrestees being taken to court, having been charged by the police and refused bail.
- 4.5** However, the number of transfers from police station to courts is likely to be higher than detailed in Table 3 as several of our police custody inspection reports noted that the police transported detainees in police vehicles when cellular vehicles were not available – usually if transport was required in the afternoon for a late hearing. This had an adverse impact on police time. It saved the detainee from waiting in police custody for a prolonged period of time for an escort van to become available but contractors should ensure availability for transport throughout the day.

- 4.6** Our prison inspections have found detainees being escorted to court from prisons were often transported early in the morning, even if their hearing was scheduled for the afternoon. This, in addition to delays in being collected by a van after the hearing, meant that many detainees ended up being held in court custody for an unnecessarily long period. One pregnant woman told us:

'I was heavily pregnant and had to wait three hours for transport.'

- 4.7** An alternative to a detainee attending court in person is the use of a 'virtual court', where they attend their hearing via a video link from the police station (for a detainee's first hearing) or prison at which they are being held, rather than in person. The use of a video link from police custody aims to reduce the time between being charged and appearing at court for a first hearing. Using video link from a prison reduces the number and costs of escorts required, which is especially desirable if the detainee is only needed by the court for a short period or is being held at a prison a long way from the court; it also avoids the security risk inevitably incurred when transferring a detainee – in 2013–14 there were nine escapes from contractor escorts¹⁷. It is not always an option as it is dependent on both the place of custody and the court having video link facilities, and it is not always appropriate for the detainee not to attend in person; however, this facility should be used when possible.
- 4.8** Our prison inspections report a good or increasing use of video link, although there was less use reported in inspections at women's prisons. At one inspection we noted that low use had been due to women's preference to attend their hearing in person.
- 4.9** However, other inspections reported barriers to the use of video link which required a multi-agency response. Analysis of police inspection reports found that, at the three inspections which reported use of the virtual court system, those remanded to prison custody had remained in police custody and been held longer than necessary, sometimes overnight, before transfer to prison. This was a burden on police resources and meant detainees were unable to access their entitlements as remand prisoners. For at least one inspection this was caused by the late timing of the virtual court appearance, which meant there was no prisoner transport available.
- 4.10** Virtual courts require coordination between the court and the detainee's place of custody and this is sometimes difficult to arrange. However, court inspections in Merseyside and Cheshire found that multi-agency work had begun to address these issues and increase the use of video link.

Conditions in vans

- 4.11** Cellular vehicles can contain between two and 14 small, cellular compartments with plastic seats in which detainees are locked for the duration of the journey.

¹⁷ NOMS (2014) National Offender Management Service Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14

Figure 1: Inside a cellular escort van

- 4.12** In our prisoner survey, almost two-thirds (64%) said that the van had been clean on their most recent journey. During inspections, most of the vans we saw were clean. However, we have seen some concerning examples of vans that were dirty, had graffiti on the walls and etched onto the windows, and, in small number of instances, had broken steps or no handrails. Prisoner survey comments regularly mentioned concerning descriptions about the cleanliness of vans, such as that they were *'dirty and sticky'*, with *'spit and rubbish on the walls and floor'* and *'blood in the cells'*.
- 4.13** Escort staff told us that they are meant to pick up any debris from around the van (for example, snack wrappers) but that a full clean, to remove anything other than solid rubbish, would not be conducted until the van returned to the depot. However, recent court inspections have found that this daily clean does not always take place, with escort staff at a number of court inspections confirming that they were only required to sweep vans. We have come across examples where deep cleans occurred infrequently, such as once a month. At one depot, no deep clean was taking place when we inspected as the cleaner whose job it was to complete this task had left and not been replaced.
- 4.14** The temperature in escort vans is important as detainees can spend several hours travelling in them, and have a possible further delay waiting to disembark. At inspections that took place over the summer months in 2013 at Risley, Parc and Brixton, inspectors were concerned to find prisoners waiting for up to two hours to disembark from vehicle cells in hot, stifling conditions because the prisons' receptions were closed for lunch. As engines were switched off there was no air conditioning and we found prisoners in distress and potentially at risk of heat stroke.

Figure 2: Examples of cells inside an escort van cell**Researcher's experience**

The van in which I completed my journey had not been in use that day and therefore was clean, to the extent that the smell of cleaning products filled the van. I was told that it had been thoroughly cleaned on its return to the depot the prior evening as usual. Although my experience of the cleanliness was positive, staff said they were only told to pick up solid rubbish, so it was easy to see that after the van had been in use for several hours, some detainees may have had a very different experience.

Seat belts

- 4.15** There is no legal requirement for seat belts for detainees in custody vans. Our previous joint thematic report recommended that PECS commissions and publishes the findings of independent research to determine the health and safety implications of installing seatbelts in cellular vehicles. Although internal reviews have been conducted and concluded that seat belts would not be provided as they could be used to self-harm or harm staff, no independent review has been carried out.
- 4.16** In our prisoner survey, the lack of seat belts was the most frequent issue of concern raised by prisoners about their escort journey. Prisoners themselves reported this as a key reason for feeling unsafe during transfer:

'I felt very unsafe with no seat belt on. I have been in many vans when the brakes have been slammed on and in the back you can't see so you don't know what is coming. It can be very scary when you are just thrown against the wall in front of you.'

'I felt unsafe because there were no seat belts in the vans. There are seat belts for the escort staff, so why are there none for prisoners?'

'The vans are unsafe and the drivers are very reckless; we are in a small space with no seat belt. I received several injuries due to this: bump on head, neck pain, knee injury.'

- 4.17** From data received from PECS, in the 12 months to October 2014, there were 36 road traffic accidents involving the escort vehicle during escort journeys – 30 of these were in the London and the East area.
- 4.18** The lack of seat belts is compounded by the fact that the seats on which prisoners sit during their journey are made from plastic, and prisoners often report that this causes them to be slippery, with little grip to keep them in place when the van brakes or turns corners.

Researcher's experience

Even with my driver under strict instruction to 'keep me safe' and brake as carefully as possible (an indication that staff were very aware of the issue a lack of seat belts causes), the journey was not a smooth one. Every time the van slowed down or stopped, I found myself sliding forward on the plastic seat, a few times banging my knees on the wall in front. When the van turned a corner, I was thrown to one side, and if I leant my head back on the hard plastic headrest it banged against it continuously. I was told that many detainees choose to take off their jumper, if they are wearing one, to use as a headrest. I was on the van for 1.5 hours. The seat, although initially satisfactory, became uncomfortable after about an hour – in our prisoner survey 37% said they had spent more than two hours in the van, although this varied by functional type (see paragraph 4.29). Add to this the fact that I could not comfortably lean back and that I had to right myself and prepare to brace frequently, the last half hour of my journey became very uncomfortable.

Information on destination

- 4.19** Unless there are clear security reasons not to, we expect detainees to be told where they are going before they depart for their destination, but only 63% of prisoners said that this had happened. The percentage was highest for those travelling to open prisons, at 78%.
- 4.20** Detainees can also receive written information about where they are going, although only 12% of prisoners said that they had received this. This was lowest at local prisons, with only 4% reporting this, despite local prisons being the first point of entry to the prison system.
- 4.21** When a prisoner is being transferred to another prison, we expect them to receive notification of this in reasonable time and to be able to contact family and/or a legal adviser before the transfer takes place, unless there are evidenced security reasons for them not to be told (for example, high risk category A prisoners often will not be told where they are going for security reasons). Prisoners often told us that they had not been given enough notice of transfer and consequently could not inform their family of the planned move. This could adversely impact on their family/friends, particularly if they had arranged to visit on the day of the transfer. One prisoner told us:
- 'I could have been told that I was moving prisons with notice so I could pack my personal things and stop my family travelling up to the wrong prison [for a visit].'*
- 4.22** This was not a unique case. Late notification of transfer was reported as an issue across functional types, but particularly at local prisons.
- 4.23** At many prisons, inspectors found that prisoners were not informed of their transfer until the morning it was to take place, in some cases less than an hour before their transfer – despite there being no particular security reason for this. There were also instances in which prisoners had arrived at their new prison not knowing where they were, as they had not been informed of where they were going.

Journey length¹⁸

- 4.24** The data received from PECS provided the distance travelled for each escort journey. We also requested information on the time that detainees had spent in the van but this had not been collected by one of the contract providers and therefore only distance is reported on in this section. Although distance is useful, this does not capture potentially long periods spent in the van as a result of dropping off other detainees along the way or due to delays in being taken off the van on arrival.
- 4.25** This was a particular issue for women because, as well as there being only a small number of women's prisons, when they were travelling with men, the men were usually dropped off first. For example, at our Bronzefield (2013) and Holloway (2013) inspections we found several women returning late from court for this reason which adversely impacted on reception and first night procedures. Women's prisons, unlike men's prisons, do not have an evening 'lock out' time (a time after which a prison will not accept prisoners) which meant that dropping off men was prioritised. If a male prisoner is 'locked-out' of prison they will spend the night in police custody, which is not appropriate, and the escort contractor is fined if this is due to their own shortcomings.
- 4.26** From the data provided by PECS, the overall average distance travelled by adults and young adults on escort was 16.59 miles, ranging from one to 282 miles. Women travelled the furthest, on average, followed by young adult men, with adult men generally travelling shorter distances.
- 4.27** One per cent (2,514) of all adults and young adults travelled a distance of 100 miles or more, although this figure was 2% among women. A breakdown by gender and age is provided in Table 4.
- 4.28** Of the journeys of 100 miles or more, most were transfers between establishments (58%), but two-fifths (40%) were journeys to or from court. This varied by age and gender: for adult men 37% of journeys of 100 miles or more were to court; whereas this was 57% for young adults and 51% for women (adult and young adult women). In recent police and court inspections, inspectors found that detainees were having to travel longer distances between police stations and courts due to current court streamlining processes whereby some courts only sit on certain days. At Dyfed Powys police custody inspection (2013), several local courts had ceased operation and PECS contractors struggled to provide transport for afternoon court sittings due to the distances of available courts. At the Northumbria police custody inspection (2014), inspectors saw a detainee being taken from a police station to a magistrates' court approximately 55 miles away, even though there was a magistrates' court across the road from the police station.

¹⁸ The 12,925 journeys recorded as being a distance of 0 miles have been excluded from the PECS data used to calculate average distances travelled in this section.

Table 4: Average journey distance and number of journeys of over 100 miles

Detainees	Average distance of all escort journeys (miles)	Average inter-prison journey distance (miles)	Number (%) of journeys of 100 miles or more
Adult men	15.82	46.30	2,078 (1%)
Young adult men	18.44	44.69	147 (1%)
Women	22.32	73.45	289 (2%)
OVERALL	16.59	46.94	2,514 (1%)

- 4.29** The average distance travelled on transfer between prisons or YOIs was much higher than the average escort journey distance at 46.94 miles. Again, women travelled the furthest, on average, with adult men and young adult men travelling much smaller distances.
- 4.30** In our survey, we asked prisoners roughly how long they spent in the van on their most recent journey (see Table 5 for a breakdown of responses by functional type). Overall, 37% of adult prisoners said that they had spent more than two hours in the van. Other than at male local prisons, where only 20% of prisoners said that they had spent more than two hours in the van, this ranged from 39% of women prisoners to 64% of those at high security prisons.

Table 5: Survey responses: length of time spent in the van

Functional type	Over two hours in van
High secure	64%
Category C	48%
Open	47%
Foreign national	46%
Young adult	45%
Category B	42%
Women's prisons	39%
Local	20%

- 4.31** In addition, inspections have found numerous examples of detainees being held for long periods in the van on arrival at their destination, waiting to disembark. As many prison receptions close over the lunch period, prisoners can be left in the van for up to an hour after arriving at the prison. At one London prison, prisoners were left in vehicle cells with no air conditioning for up to two hours after arriving at the prison on a hot summer's day. The issue of prison receptions being closed over the lunch period was most regularly reported in category C training prisons and open prisons. One prisoner said:

'When we arrived here, the van engine was switched off in the sterile area and we were made to sit for an hour and a half due to the prison routine. We were also given dinner in the van.'

- 4.32** Those transferring to open prisons and arriving after 4.30pm or 5pm sometimes had to spend the night at a nearby closed prison as the reception at the open prison had closed by the time they arrived.
- 4.33** Within our three month time period there were 754 cases of adults and young adults travelling from a court to a police station; most of these will have been lock outs, due to a failure to get the detainee to prison before the establishment's reception closed, which meant that they had to spend the night in police custody.
- 4.34** We were told by PECS that the unexpected increase in the prison population in the autumn of 2013, and the pressure this had caused, had led to an increase number of redirections of prisoners due to insufficient availability in local prisons. This had made it more difficult to avoid late returns to prisons and lock outs.

Comfort breaks

- 4.35** Overall, of those who had spent more than two hours in the van, only one in 10 said that they had been offered a toilet break. Inspection report findings were slightly more positive than the survey data, but still found that, more often than not, toilet breaks were not offered. A toilet break must be carried out at a secure location such as a court, prison or police station. Prisoners are often handcuffed on a long chain to a member of the escort staff, who can then stand on the other side of the toilet cubicle door.
- 4.36** Due to the difficulty of finding an appropriate secure location for toilet breaks, and the extra time that this adds to journeys, detainees are often provided with toilet bags to use in the van (see Figure 3). These contain a liquid-absorbing pouch which turns liquid into gel, and are designed to hold either urine or vomit. No provision is available for faeces.

Figure 3: Toilet bag provided on escort vans



- 4.37** Vans do not stop when these bags are used, so prisoners use them within a small cell on a moving vehicle. Used toilet bags are kept in the cell with the detainee until the van reaches its destination and are then disposed of. During one inspection inspectors found that used toilet bags were contributing to a foul smell inside the vans. The bags are re-sealable and should not leak. One woman said of this experience:

'I was offered a bag (like a nappy) to go to the toilet in... it was humiliating.'

- 4.38** Some prisoners have also said that they have been told to go to the toilet on the floor, or that they have ended up wetting themselves in the van owing to a lack of toilet breaks.
- 4.39** Escort vans should carry feminine hygiene products at all times, and these can be requested by any woman on board. However, it would be difficult to use these products in a small space within a moving vehicle, and there is nowhere on the van to dispose of used sanitary products. In addition, the presence of windows in the door of each cell (see 'researcher's experience' below) could be an issue for privacy.

Researcher's experience

I didn't use a toilet bag in the escort vehicle; however, having been provided with one, I couldn't help but think that the design does not lend itself to be used on a moving vehicle, especially by women. If I was a detainee and had to use one during escort, I would be worried that my fellow detainees might be able to see me – in the escort van I was in there were two windows in each cell door (see figure 4, although this does vary across vans). It felt possible that other detainees in the van would be able to see a detainee using a toilet bag, and even if this is not the case, that feeling alone may stop many from using one. The thought of being in a situation in which I would be required to use this toilet bag on an escort van and with other detainees on board felt degrading.

Figure 4: Outside the escort van including inner cell windows



Food and drink

- 4.40** Of those who had spent over two hours in the van, most (62%) said that they had been offered something to eat or drink. Four-fifths of those travelling to an open prison said that they had been offered refreshments; however, those being taken to a local prison were far less likely to report this, with just 39% saying that they had been offered food or drink.
- 4.41** Inspection report findings generally supported these survey findings, with most inspections finding that food and drink was offered; however, there were examples where this had not happened, including for a prisoner who had travelled for five hours with no refreshments or toilet breaks offered.

Treatment by escort staff

- 4.42** Overall, 71% of adult prisoners said that they had been treated well or very well by escort staff on their most recent journey to the prison. This was lowest for those travelling to a high secure prison, at just 62%, and highest for those travelling to open prisons, at 77%. Foreign national, black and minority ethnic, Traveller and Muslim prisoners, as well as prisoners who considered themselves to have a disability, were all less likely than their comparators to say that they were treated well or very well by escort staff.
- 4.43** Across our custodial inspections, inspectors often observed friendly and courteous interactions between staff and detainees. However, there were some exceptions to this, with some prisoners telling us:

'The escort staff could have communicated with me, but they chose to ignore me throughout the journey to this prison.'

Perception of safety

- 4.44** During the journey, escort staff have a duty of care to keep detainees safe. In our prisoner survey, 79% of adults said that they had felt safe on their most recent journey to the prison. This was lowest for those travelling to foreign national prisons, of whom just 68% said that they had felt safe, and highest for those travelling to a young adult prison, where this figure was 87%. Compared with their respective comparators, fewer foreign nationals (73% compared with 80%), black and minority ethnic prisoners (70% compared with 82%), Travellers (71% compared with 80%), Muslim prisoners (70% compared with 80%) and those who considered themselves to have a disability (72% compared with 81%), said that they had felt safe on their most recent journey to the prison.
- 4.45** The lack of seat belts on escort vans (see paragraphs 4.15 to 4.18) was flagged by prisoners as one of the reasons they felt unsafe during their escort journey. In addition, prisoners raised concerns about being locked in a small cell in the event that the vehicle was involved in an accident. From data received from PECS there were 36 road traffic accidents in the 12 months to September 2014.
- 4.46** On the Isle of Wight, prisoners raised concerns about safety and being locked in a van during ferry travel; of the arriving groups of prisoners that inspectors spoke to, only one had received a safety briefing on what to do in the event of an emergency.
- 4.47** Partitioning was available on the larger escort vans (not the smaller ones), if needed, to screen detainees from others – this was intended to be used when transporting women or children with adult men in order to 'separate' them. We expect that women should be

transported separately from boys and men; however, where this does not happen we expect the partition always to be used to keep women separate, to ensure the safety and protection of all parties. However, our court inspections found that escort staff were not always clear about when the partition should be used. There was also a reported safety issue of screens blocking the sightlines of escort staff. Our inspections found that women were often transported in the same van as men and that screens were not always deployed correctly. At the most recent New Hall inspection (2012), some women who had travelled with male prisoners said that they had been harassed by them.

- 4.48** Prisoners who have been identified as ‘vulnerable’ (often because of the nature of their offence but also for any reason that may make them vulnerable if mixed with main population prisoners) often go on escort vans with mainstream detainees. Vulnerable prisoners describe this as an intimidating experience:

‘I am on the VP [vulnerable prisoner] wing and when I go to court on the bus, prisoners of other wings are on the same bus and they shout things out at us and this upsets me.’

Health/welfare needs

- 4.49** From data received from PECS, in the 12 months to October 2014, there were 36 incidents of self-harm during escort journeys.

- 4.50** Detainees with disabilities, those with claustrophobia and pregnant women should be escorted in an adapted escort vehicle which is not cellular. However, it is not known whether these types of vehicle were always used for all detainees who fell within these categories, and some prisoners with self-reported disabilities were negative about their experience:

‘The system does not cater for disabled people. You are forced to go in the 2 x 2 foot box, no seatbelts or protection if a crash happened. The security staff/officers treat you with contempt.’

- 4.51** Generally, prisoners who considered themselves to have a disability reported a poorer experience than those who did not across most escort survey questions. However, inspectors witnessed one case where the escort provider had provided a more suitable vehicle for a prisoner with severe back problems.
- 4.52** At some prison inspections, inspectors noted problems with prisoners attending hospital appointments on time or appointments’ being cancelled. As taxis are often used instead of cellular vans, these cancellations were often due to a lack of spare prison staff to escort the prisoner. We also saw cases where there were sufficient staff arranged to manage scheduled appointments, but an emergency or incident occurred, and routine appointments were cancelled to provide additional staff to deal with the situation.

Disembarkation and restraint

- 4.53** Our court inspections routinely reported issues with insufficient protection from public view on disembarkation from escort vehicles. At some courts, this included detainees disembarking from vehicles in the street outside the court as the larger escort vehicles could not fit into the court’s private, secure docking area. Even when disembarking in secure areas detainees were routinely handcuffed on and off escort vehicles rather than on a risk assessment basis. This often meant them walking to and from the court holding cells handcuffed through areas overlooked by the public. At one court, prisoners were transferred from the van through a busy public area, which was inappropriate.

Researcher's experience

On disembarking the escort vehicle in a secure underground area at a court's reception, the door to my cell was opened slightly, with a security chain across it. I was then handcuffed to a member of court staff, the door was fully opened, and I was marched the 10 or so metres to the booking-in desk, where I was handed my rights and led to a court cell, at which point my handcuffs were taken off and I was subject to a pat-down search before being locked in my cell.

- 4.54** At some prisons, all detainees were handcuffed between the van and reception; we expect this to only be done on the basis of a risk assessment. At Winchester (2014) inspectors found a particularly concerning case of a man with mobility problems severe enough to warrant use of a walking frame being handcuffed from the van until he entered his cell in the health care unit.
- 4.55** A concordat between the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the NHS states that levels of restraint used on prisoners must at all times be proportionate to the perceived security risks and be balanced by consideration of care and decency for the prisoner. However, in an analysis of over 500 Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) investigations into deaths of prisoners from natural causes between 2007 and October 2012¹⁹, the majority of prisoners had been restrained while in hospital and in 51 investigations the level of restraint used was deemed to be inappropriate.
- 4.56** Inspectors also saw evidence of prisoners refusing to go to hospital because they did not want to be cuffed. In addition to privacy concerns, prisoners who were on an escort chain attached to an officer while waiting to be seen in hospital frequently reported to health care inspectors that officers made no attempt to keep the chain discrete (which could be done by covering it with a coat, for example); this could be embarrassing for the prisoner in such a public setting.

Complaints process

- 4.57** Individual escort contractors had their own complaints procedures, and forms were available at courts, although it was not always clear whether detainees were given these, or made aware of their existence. Inspectors did not find these forms available in prisons.

Property

- 4.58** Inside the van, detainee's property was stored in large lockers. Prisoners often complained that the storage space for property was not large enough, which meant either that their property did not travel with them or that it was damaged when other detainees' property was placed on top.
- 4.59** Eighty-six per cent of prisoners in our survey said that their property arrived at the prison at the same time as them on first arrival. This was highest in open prisons at 93% and lowest in high security prisons at 78%.

¹⁹ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (2013) Learning lessons bulletin: Fatal incidents investigations, Issue 2.

Table 6: Survey responses: property on arrival

Functional type	Property arrived with prisoner
Open	93%
Young adult	92%
Category C	89%
Category B	87%
Women's prisons	85%
Foreign national	85%
Local	82%
High secure	78%

Section 5. Children

This section reports on findings from our inspections of Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) holding 15–18-year-old boys, and our joint inspections of secure training centres (STCs), conducted with Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC), which hold both boys and girls. Relevant findings from our police custody (conducted with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary) and court custody inspections are also included. Survey data shown in this section is taken from surveys conducted in YOIs and a shorter survey conducted in STCs, which asks different questions.

Our Expectations

Children are transported in a timely way. They are treated safely and decently during transfer, with any diversity or welfare issues being identified and met. Children understand where they are going and what to expect when they arrive. Any relevant information about risk, vulnerability or safeguarding is communicated between relevant agencies.

Number and type of escorts

- 5.1** As set out in Section 2, the majority of children are escorted by PECS providers, in the same vans used for adult detainees, often alongside adults. However, children being escorted to or from STCs are escorted under the Youth Justice Board (YJB)-commissioned SESCYP, usually in unmarked cars. Data on the number and type of child escorts was therefore received from both PECS and the YJB and is shown in separate tables below.
- 5.2** From data received from PECS, between 1 November 2013 and 31 January 2014, there were 5,998 children's escorts. A detailed breakdown by type of journey is provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Number of PECS escorts of children by type

Escort type	Boys	Girls	Total (%)
Total transfers to police stations	36 (1%)	5 (2%)	41 (1%)
Courts to police stations	36	5	41 (1%)
Total transfers to courts	4,069 (72%)	307 (97%)	4,376 (73%)
YOIs to courts	1,082	/	1,082 (18%)
Police stations to courts	2,936	306	3,242 (54%)
Transfers between courts	51	1	52 (1%)
Total transfers to YOIs	1,576 (28%)	4 (1%)	1,580 (26%)
Courts to YOIs	1,498	2	1,500 (25%)
Inter-YOI transfers	65	2	67 (1%)
Police stations to YOIs	13	/	13 (0%)

Total transfers to hospitals	1 (0%)	/	1 (0%)
Courts to hospitals	1 (0%)	/	1 (0%)
TOTAL	5,682	316	5,998

5.3 Between November 2013 and January 2014, there were 744 STC escorts (see Table 7 for more detail).

Table 7: STC escort types

Escort type	Number of Children
Total transfers to STCs	218 (30%)
Courts to STCs	207 (28%)
Secure children's homes (SCHs) to STCs	6 (1%)
Police stations to STCs	1 (0%)
YOIs to STCs	4 (1%)
Total transfers from STCs	526 (70%)
STCs to courts	496 (67%)
STCs to YOIs	16 (2%)
STCs to hospitals	7 (1%)
STCs to SCHs	5 (1%)
STCs to STCs	2 (0%)

Information sharing

5.4 Inspectors observed that Person Escort Records (PERs) for children sometimes did not accompany them to the receiving establishment. However, at Wetherby, inspectors found that PERs were completed to a high standard.

Court production

5.5 From the data received from PECS (see Table 7), 99% of cellular vehicle journeys undertaken in the three months for which we received data were to or from courts. This included:

- 2,582 transfers between courts and YOIs – averaging about 200 a week
- 3,283 transfers between police stations and courts – averaging about 250 a week.

- 5.6** Similarly, data from the YJB (see Table 7) showed that the majority (94%) of escorts of children in STCs were to and from court.
- 5.7** During inspections of YOIs, inspectors found that, at most establishments, boys complained of long waiting times in court custody. There was evidence of boys waiting for up to seven hours after their hearing and frequently arriving at YOIs after 7pm, with some arriving after 9pm; in one exceptional case at Feltham, a boy arrived at 10.50pm. These late arrival times can have a detrimental effect on the way that the establishment can assess and support the children on arrival.
- 5.8** Late arrivals were rarer at STCs and were reported to the YJB monitor. Where this did happen STCs told us this was due to late court hearings and lengthy journeys to the centre.
- 5.9** As with adults (see paragraph 4.7) an alternative is for a child to have access to a 'virtual court' instead of travelling to court. Inspectors found some use of virtual courts in YOIs; however, some YOIs did not use them as they did not have the necessary facilities, and others used them, but not to their full extent. At the time of the inspection at Hindley in March 2014, the establishment had recently joined a regional working group on increasing the use of video link – a positive step towards fewer escorts.

Conditions in vans

- 5.10** As mentioned in 5.1, children usually travelled in the same cellular vehicles as adults, and therefore had a similar experience of van conditions.
- 5.11** At YOI inspections, inspectors found most vans to be clean, but boys told us that this was not always the case and reported experiences of travelling in dirty vans. Graffiti was sometimes present and during the inspection of Wetherby in October 2013, the vans were poorly ventilated, with a foul smell.
- 5.12** Eighty-one per cent of boys in our YOI surveys said that they had felt safe on their most recent journey. However, as with adult detainees, the lack of seat belts was a common issue reported by children, with many commenting that it made them fear for their safety in the event of an accident.
- 5.13** Children being escorted from STCs normally travelled with staff in a taxi or car, with most reporting a positive experience during transfer. For children in STCs, there was an expectation that they should not travel in vans on which the contractor's name was displayed, as this may have raised concerns about identification. Inspectors found that, on the few occasions at Medway STC when children had been transported in such a vehicle, this had been raised formally with the YJB, which, in turn, had raised it as an issue with the escort contractor.

Information on destination

- 5.14** We expect children to be told where they are going before they depart for their destination. They should also be given information to help them to prepare for arrival at their new establishment, yet only 15% of boys in YOIs said that this had happened. This figure was higher for those in custody for the first time (18%) compared with those who had been in custody before (11%). One boy in a YOI said:

'You are unaware of what establishment you will be staying at until the last minute.'

- 5.15** Boys surveyed at the Keppel unit, a specialist unit for the most challenging and vulnerable boys, were most likely to report knowing where they were being transferred to, but this was still only 28%.

Table 8: Breakdown of boys who said that they had received information to help them to prepare for arrival at their new YOI, by establishment

YOI	Percentage that said they had received information
Keppel unit	28%
Warren Hill	21%
Wetherby	17%
Hindley	15%
Parc	15%
Cookham Wood	14%
Werrington	14%
Feltham	12%
Overall	15%

- 5.16** Inspectors found cases of children not being informed of their transfer until the morning of its occurrence, which was not acceptable practice.

Journey length²⁰

- 5.17** Eight per cent of boys at YOIs said that they had spent more than four hours in the van, and inspectors frequently found that boys had had long journeys to their receiving establishment, often after long waits in court cells.

'Way too long to be locked in such a small space without breaks. Legs felt like they were going to fall off after half an hour.'

- 5.18** With the recent reduction in the number of YOIs, several YOI catchment areas had increased but the journey length was also exacerbated on occasion by adult men being prioritised for drop off owing to the 'lock out' times²¹ of adult prisons. During the inspection at Hindley (2014), a van arrived with one boy and three adults on board, but the escort staff

²⁰ The 618 journeys recorded as being a distance of 0 miles have been excluded from the PECS data used to calculate average distances travelled in this section.

²¹ Prisoners are 'locked out', i.e. not accepted by the prison, if they arrive after the prison's reception has closed and therefore have to spend the night in police custody. Escort contractors are fined if this occurs.

said that it was unusual to have been told to deliver a child first. The practice of delivering children last impacts on first night procedures; this could leave the child at risk, with certain needs or vulnerabilities not identified or addressed until the following day.

Case study

One boy on crutches had finished at court by 1pm but was held in court custody until 6.45pm waiting transfer to a YOI. He was transported in a van with two adult detainees who had to be dropped off on the way at a police station. This lengthened the time his journey took and he did not arrive back at the YOI until 9.20pm – almost eight and a half hours after his court hearing had finished. Records reviewed at the YOI indicated that in the previous six months a third of the children had arrived in reception from court after 7pm.

- 5.19** As with data received for adults (see paragraph 4.24) one of the PECS providers only recorded the distance of the journey rather than time taken, which can mask lengthy journeys due to drop offs or waiting to disembark. Likewise data from the YJB only provided the journey distance.
- 5.20** From the data provided by PECS, the overall average distance travelled by children on escort was 18.98 miles, ranging from one to 198 miles. Two per cent (80) of children had travelled a distance of 100 miles or more. The average distance travelled by children on transfer between YOIs or prisons was much higher than that of adult men and even women, at 89.55 miles (see Table 9).

Table 9: Average journey distance and number of journeys of over 100 miles

Detainees	Average distance of all escort journeys (miles)	Average inter-prison journey distance (miles)	Number (%) of journeys of 100 miles or more
Boys	19.54	89.31	76 (2%)
Girls	7.96	97.50	4 (2%)
OVERALL	18.98	89.55	80 (2%)

- 5.21** From data provided by the YJB, the average distance travelled by children at STCs was 68 miles, ranging from 0.2 to 298 miles. For 150 – a concerning 21% – of these journeys children travelled a distance of 100 miles or more, of which 89% were journeys to and from court, and 11% were transfers to another establishment.
- 5.22** A total of 39 children within our three month period were escorted from court to a police station. This happened because these children had been remanded to custody in an STC and had to wait for the escort vehicle to arrive, as these transfers were managed under the separate SESCYP. Rather than the court having to remain open while the child was waiting for collection, the child was moved to police custody to await pick up later in the day. More should be done to reduce the delay in collection and prevent the need for the child to be moved to police custody.

Comfort breaks

- 5.23** In inspections of STCs and YOIs, inspectors reported reasonable availability of toilet breaks during the escorts of children to establishments. However in our YOI survey, of the children who said they had spent more than two hours in the van, only 15% said that they had been offered a toilet break. As for adults (see paragraph 4.35), toilet bags were offered as an alternative to toilet breaks.

Food and drink

- 5.24** Thirty-seven per cent of boys in YOIs who had a journey of over two hours said they had been offered something to eat or drink on their journey. YOI inspection findings generally supported this, but inspectors noted that although some escort providers had food and drink available, boys were not necessarily aware of this and were not always offered them. Fewer boys under 17 than those aged 17–18 said that they had been offered food or drink (29% compared with 43%).
- 5.25** At Warren Hill (2013) inspectors found that the monitoring of PERs by the establishment had identified a child who had arrived at 10pm after finishing at court just after midday, with no record of food being offered.
- 5.26** In STCs, although we do not collect survey data about the provision of food and drink, inspectors were satisfied with the availability of refreshments provided on journeys.

Treatment by escort staff

- 5.27** Only half (51%) of the boys in YOIs said that they had been treated well or very well by the escort staff. Fewer Muslim boys than their non-Muslim counterparts said this (45% compared with 54%). However, those who had been in local authority care were more likely than those who had not to say that they had been treated well or very well on their journey (57% compared with 49%).
- 5.28** Across YOIs, there was variation in the percentage of children saying that they had been treated well or very well by escort staff, as detailed in Table 10. Boys travelling to the Keppel Unit, a specialist unit, were most positive as they travelled in taxis with unit staff rather than in cellular vans.

Table 10: Breakdown of boys who said that they had been treated well or very well by escort staff, by establishment

YOI	Treated well or very well
Keppel unit	71%
Parc	60%
Warren Hill	58%
Wetherby	54%
Werrington	52%
Hindley	50%
Cookham Wood	48%
Feltham	45%
Overall	51%

- 5.29** For those travelling to STCs, 95% felt that staff looked after them on their most recent journey to the centre.

Table 11: Breakdown of children who said that they felt staff looked after them during their journey, by establishment

STC	Staff looked after them
Hassockfield	100%
Medway	97%
Rainsbrook	94%
Oakhill	91%
Overall	95%

Perceptions of safety

- 5.30** In our survey, 81% of boys said that they had felt safe on their most recent journey to the YOI. Compared with their respective counterparts, fewer black and minority ethnic boys (76% compared with 86%) and Muslim boys (75% compared with 83%) said that they had felt safe during the journey. Boys who considered themselves to have a disability reported a similar experience of escorts as those who did not. Unsentenced boys were less likely to say they had felt safe during their journey than sentenced boys (69% compared with 84%).

- 5.31** As with adults, the lack of seat belts in vans was often commented on by children as a source of fear:

'I travelled for four hours in a box that I could not even sit down in and if the van was to crash I'm sure I would be seriously injured due to no seat belt.'

'No seat belts in the vans you're surrounded by metal, if they crash you're most likely to die.'

'They need to drive slower because they were driving very quick and I kept flying out of my seat and we nearly crashed.'

- 5.32** Almost two-fifths (38%) of boys in YOIs said that they had travelled with either adult men or women. Although transfers to and from STCs were separate to adult transfers, children who ended up being held at STCs may have experienced this on previous transfers, such as from police to court custody. Travelling with adults made them vulnerable to verbal abuse and at one YOI inspectors received an account of a boy being verbally abused by an adult in such a situation.

- 5.33** Inspectors found that screens were sometimes used in escort vans to separate adults and children, although this was not routine and smaller escort vans did not have screens. As mentioned above (see paragraph 4.46), escort staff were not always clear about when the partition should be used and they particularly struggled if they were transporting adult men, women and boys together. Screens only prevented detainees from seeing each other; they could still speak to each other.

Disembarkation and restraints

- 5.34** Inspectors found that on arrival at an STC or YOI children were not routinely handcuffed from their vehicle to reception. However, children were often handcuffed on and off escort vans at court.

Complaints process

- 5.35** Children being transported under PECS had access to the same complaints process as adult detainees (see paragraph 4.56). At Wetherby, inspectors noted that there was a complaints book to enable boys to comment on their treatment before arriving at the YOI, although this had no entries. At inspections of STCs, there was evidence that children were routinely asked about their journey on arrival at the centre and were able to make complaints if needed.

Section 6. Appendices



Appendix I: Adult prisoner escorts survey responses by functional type

	Local prisons	Category B prisons	Category C prisons	High secure prisons	Young adult prisons	Female prisons	Open prisons	Foreign national prisons	Total
	3,971	1,045	4,735	544	472	811	1,175	238	12,991
SECTION 2: Transfers and escorts									
On your most recent journey here:									
2.1	20%	42%	48%	64%	45%	39%	47%	46%	37%
	Did you spend more than two hours in the van?								
For those who spent two or more hours in the escort van:									
2.2	39%	64%	72%	47%	63%	60%	80%	70%	62%
	Were you offered anything to eat or drink?								
2.3	10%	10%	9%	12%	13%	9%	12%	13%	10%
	Were you offered a toilet break?								
2.4	63%	63%	66%	64%	55%	60%	70%	68%	64%
	Was the van clean?								
2.5	77%	77%	81%	75%	87%	76%	83%	68%	79%
	Did you feel safe?								
2.6	69%	72%	72%	62%	64%	75%	77%	67%	71%
	Were you treated well/very well by the escort staff?								
2.7	66%	62%	61%	49%	67%	71%	78%	39%	63%
	Before you arrived here were you told that you were coming here?								
2.7	4%	17%	18%	5%	13%	11%	16%	34%	12%
	Before you arrived here did you receive any written information about coming here?								
2.8	82%	87%	89%	78%	92%	85%	93%	85%	86%
	When you first arrived here did your property arrive at the same time as you?								



Appendix II: Adult prisoner escorts survey responses: diversity analyses

Prisoner survey responses (missing data have been excluded for each question). Please note: where there are apparently large differences, which are not indicated as statistically significant, this is likely to be due to chance.

Key to tables

	Foreign national prisoners	British national prisoners	Black and minority ethnic prisoners	White prisoners	Traveller prisoners	Traveller prisoners	Non-Traveller prisoners	Muslim prisoners	Non-Muslim prisoners	Homosexual/bisexual prisoners	Heterosexual prisoners	Prisoners who report a disability	Prisoners who do not report a disability	Veteran prisoners	Non-Veteran prisoners	First time in prison	Not first time in prison
Any percentage highlighted in green is significantly better																	
Any percentage highlighted in blue is significantly worse																	
Percentages which are not highlighted show there is no significant difference																	
Number of completed questionnaires returned	1,614	11,143	3,417	9,304	573	11,814	1,553	11,086	626	11,979	2,561	10,192	669	10,712	5,274	7,521	
SECTION 2: Transfers and escorts																	
On your most recent journey here:																	
2.1 Did you spend more than two hours in the van?	40%	37%	43%	35%	39%	37%	36%	43%	36%	42%	37%	38%	37%	44%	38%	40%	36%
For those who spent two or more hours in the escort van:																	
2.2 Were you offered anything to eat or drink?	59%	63%	62%	63%	57%	63%	64%	55%	64%	62%	56%	64%	64%	64%	62%	67%	59%
2.3 Were you offered a toilet break?	13%	9%	8%	10%	11%	10%	10%	9%	10%	12%	9%	10%	12%	12%	9%	11%	9%
2.4 Was the van clean?	64%	64%	57%	67%	61%	64%	66%	54%	66%	66%	63%	65%	68%	80%	79%	69%	61%
2.5 Did you feel safe?	73%	80%	70%	82%	71%	80%	80%	70%	80%	77%	79%	81%	80%	80%	79%	78%	79%
2.6 Were you treated well/very well by the escort staff?	65%	71%	64%	73%	69%	71%	72%	60%	72%	74%	71%	71%	72%	72%	71%	72%	70%
2.7 Before you arrived here were you told that you were coming here?	51%	65%	56%	66%	65%	63%	65%	54%	65%	68%	62%	64%	62%	62%	64%	60%	66%
2.7 Before you arrived here did you receive any written information about coming here?	16%	11%	17%	10%	10%	12%	12%	15%	12%	11%	10%	13%	10%	10%	12%	15%	11%
2.8 When you first arrived here did your property arrive at the same time as you?	79%	87%	82%	87%	79%	86%	80%	80%	87%	83%	84%	86%	84%	87%	86%	85%	86%

HM Inspectorate of Prisons is a member of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism, a group of organisations which independently monitor all places of detention to meet the requirements of international human rights law.

