

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

# **Becket House**

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

**6 January 2015**

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# Fact page

**Task of the establishment**

To hold immigration detainees prior to transfer to an immigration removal centre.

**Location**

60-68 St Thomas Street, London SE1 3QU

**Name of contractor**

Tascor

**Last inspection**

14 December 2009

**Escort provider**

Tascor

# Overview

Becket House is one of the Home Office's busiest reporting centres with around 1,000 people visiting it each day to comply with the conditions of their temporary admission to the UK. Becket House is also used by immigration enforcement teams and Home Office caseworkers to interview asylum seekers about their asylum claims.

Of the 1,000 people who report to the centre each day, around four are detained in the short-term holding facility (STHF) on the ground floor of the building. In addition, enforcement teams bring to the facility a similar number of detainees who have been picked up in the community each day.

As well as the STHF, the building contains a secondary search area (SSA) - a single room with seating for nine people (see photograph, Appendix III). The SSA holds a mix of people reporting to the centre, asylum seekers and people who have been picked up by enforcement teams. As individuals are locked into the SSA and cannot freely leave, it is a *de facto* place of detention. A single Home Office security guard had responsibility for those in the SSA but was not accredited or trained to take custody of detainees.

During our inspection, 31 adults and one child were held in the SSA. The governance of the SSA was weak and the conditions poor. The Independent Monitoring Board did not visit Becket House.

Conditions in the STHF were better than the SSA but were cramped for the numbers held. Detainees spent too long waiting in vans in the SSA and in the STHF itself. The average length of stay in the STHF was three hours and 49 minutes.

Overall, more work was required to improve the treatment of detainees at Becket House.

# About this inspection and report

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent, statutory organisation which reports on the treatment and conditions of those detained in prisons, young offender institutions, immigration detention facilities and police custody.

All inspections carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

All Inspectorate of Prisons reports carry a summary of the conditions and treatment of detainees, based on the four tests of a healthy prison that were first introduced in this inspectorate's thematic review *Suicide is everyone's concern*, published in 1999. The tests have been modified to fit the inspection of short-term holding facilities, both residential and non-residential. The tests for short-term holding facilities are:

**Safety** – that detainees are held in safety and with due regard to the insecurity of their position

**Respect** – that detainees are treated with respect for their human dignity and the circumstances of their detention

**Activities** – that the centre encourages activities and provides facilities to preserve and promote the mental and physical well-being of detainees

**Preparation for removal and release** – that detainees are able to maintain contact with family, friends, support groups, legal representatives and advisers, access information about their country of origin and be prepared for their release, transfer or removal. Detainees are able to retain or recover their property.

Inspectors kept fully in mind that detainees were not held because they had been charged with a criminal offence and had not been detained through normal judicial processes.

# Summary

## Safety

- S1 At our inspection in 2009, we made 22 recommendations in relation to this healthy establishment test, 11 of which were achieved, one partially achieved, eight not achieved and two were no longer relevant.
- S2 Some detainees spent too long in caged immigration enforcement vans. Tascor and immigration enforcement both provided vans that were clean, but those run by the latter did not carry bottled water. Some immigration enforcement officers held detainees arms lightly as they were escorted inside the building, which was disproportionate.
- S3 It took too long to book and induct new arrivals into the short-term holding facility (STHF), which resulted in detainees waiting too long in the secondary search area (SSA) or on vans. Detainees were searched too often. Men and women could be held apart in the STHF but not in the SSA. The security guard in the SSA was not trained in self-harm and suicide prevention. Detainees had their belts and watches routinely removed which was unnecessary. Not all staff carried an anti-ligature knife.
- S4 The Home Office and Tascor did not have adult safeguarding policies. Children were held in the SSA but not in the STHF. A child's presence during our inspection was not recorded in SSA log. The SSA was an unsuitable place to hold children.
- S5 Use of force was rare but the relevant documentation assured us it was used appropriately.
- S6 Detainees could keep in touch with their lawyers by telephone but could not freely send faxes. The authority to detainee form (IS91) in the STHF was completed correctly but detainees were not given written reasons for detention in their own language. IS91s were not issued when detainees were held in the SSA, even though it was a de facto place of detention and some were held there for over five hours. In the previous three months, the average length of detention in the STHF was three hours and 49 minutes, with the longest held for 10 hours and 15 minutes.

## Respect

- S7 At our inspection in 2009, we made 14 recommendations in relation to this healthy establishment test, six of which were achieved, one partially achieved, four not achieved and three were no longer relevant.
- S8 The SSA was unwelcoming and grubby and an inappropriate place to hold people. The two holding rooms in the STHF had been refurbished since our last inspection and were in a reasonable state of repair. The holding rooms felt cramped during our inspection when 15 detainees were held.
- S9 Reporting centre managers rarely visited the holding rooms, and on the rare occasions that they did, they did not check on detainees' welfare. Detainee custody officer (DCOs) were helpful and polite to detainees but did not have enough time to respond adequately to their requests.

- S10 Tascor staff on duty had not received equality and diversity refresher training. Detainees could practise their religion in the STHF but facilities for religious observance in the SSA were poor.
- S11 Detainees could not submit complaints in the SSA. The complaints box in the STHF had not been emptied for several weeks and the key had been lost.
- S12 Other than a water fountain, detainees could not help themselves to snacks or hot drinks in the SSA. Detainees were offered microwave meals, sandwiches and hot drinks in the STHF but there were no suitable facilities to eat hot meals.

## Activities

- S13 At our inspection in 2009, we made three recommendations in relation to this healthy establishment test, one of which was achieved, one not achieved and one no longer relevant.
- S14 There were no activities to occupy detainees in the SSA. Activities in the STHF were sufficient for those held for short periods but detainees could not go out into the fresh air. The holding room DVD players were not working.

## Preparation for removal and release

- S15 At our inspection in 2009, we made three recommendations in relation to this healthy establishment test, one of which was achieved and two not achieved.
- S16 DCOs advised detainees as soon as practicable where they were being transferred to. Detainees waited too long in the STHF before transfer to an immigration removal centre. Some detainees had remained in the facility till as late as 2am in July 2014. Detainees could not receive visitors. There was no formal process for detainees to receive property but staff were helpful in individual cases.

## Main recommendation

- S17 Concern: The secondary search area was a de facto place of detention; those held there could not leave freely. It had none of the safeguards we would expect to see in a short-term holding facility. Detainees were held without written legal authority (IS91) and by a security officer who lacked relevant accreditation.

**Recommendation: The secondary search area should not be used as a place of detention.**



# Section 1. Safety

## Escort vehicles and transfers

### Expected outcomes:

**Detainees under escort are treated safely, decently and efficiently.**

- I.1 Detainees arrived either after reporting at the centre or after arrest in the community, with most passing through the secondary search area (SSA). Detainees brought in by arrest teams said that immigration enforcement officers treated them courteously during the journey. Some detainees had been held for long periods in caged vans after their arrest. One man had been placed in a van at 7.30am but did not disembark until 11am.
- I.2 Immigration enforcement vans were clean, and male and female detainees were transported separately unless they were related to each other. Not all the immigration enforcement vans carried bottled water. The escort contractor, Tascor, used separate, more suitable vans to transfer detainees to immigration removal centres (IRCs). The Tascor van we checked was clean, had adequate space for detainees' belongings and was stocked with refreshments and water. Detainees arrested at home were given the opportunity to gather a few belongings.
- I.3 Detainees were not routinely handcuffed from vans into Becket House, but some immigration enforcement officers lightly held detainees arms as they escorted them inside the building, which was unnecessary.

### Recommendation

- I.4 **Immigration enforcement officers should not hold detainees by their arms inside Becket House unless justified by individual risk assessment.**

### Housekeeping point

- I.5 Immigration enforcement vans should carry bottled water.

## Arrival

### Expected outcomes:

**Detainees taken into detention are treated with respect, have the correct documentation, and are held in safe and decent conditions. Family accommodation is suitable.**

- I.6 Although immigration enforcement arrest teams and reporting centre officers informed detainee custody officer (DCOs) of who was arriving, detainees were not processed quickly and there were long delays in their admission to the short-term holding facility (STHF). Some detainees were placed in the SSA directly from vans rather than the STHF because of the delays.
- I.7 Detainees were searched too often – on arrival in the reporting centre, the SSA and the STHF, when they were picked up by escorts and on arrival at an IRC. This meant that some detainees could be searched five times in one day, which was disproportionate.

- I.8** The DCOs' office was used to book in detainees. It was congested and did not allow for private conversations between staff and detainees. Detainee induction into the facility was brief but adequate.

## Recommendations

- I.9** Detainees should be taken off Immigration Enforcement vans and booked into the STHF promptly.
- I.10** Detainees should not be subjected to repeated searches inside Becket House.

## Bullying and personal safety

### Expected outcomes:

**Detainees feel and are safe from bullying and victimisation.**

- I.11** Men and women were held together in the SSA. A single security guard was responsible for their care but he had not received custodial training and, unlike DCOs, was not accredited to hold the detainees<sup>1</sup>. The security guard sat at a desk in the SSA and could see and hear clearly what was happening in the area, but it was unclear what, if any, action he would take to protect detainees from harassment.
- I.12** In the STHF, DCOs had reasonably good views into the male holding room, but the design of the women's room meant that not all could see the whole room from their office. Blind spots were covered by CCTV, which could be monitored from the DCOs' office. As there were two rooms, in theory, male and female detainees could be held separately. During our inspection, DCOs allowed men to join their partners in the women's holding room. Given the proximity of the DCOs to the detainees, this was pragmatic and reasonable.
- I.13** DCOs said it was very rare to witness hostility between detainees. A DCO told us of one occasion when there was some apparent tension between two detainees because one was speaking loudly on the telephone; the DCO decided to hold the two men separately, with one in the male room and the other in the female room.

## Self-harm and suicide prevention

### Expected outcomes:

**The facility provides a safe and secure environment which reduces the risk of self-harm and suicide.**

- I.14** The security guard in the SSA had not been trained in self-harm and suicide prevention or first aid, was not aware of any suicide prevention procedures and did not carry an anti-ligature knife. All detainees entering the SSA had their belts and watches routinely removed, regardless of risk. We were told that watches were removed because detainees could harm themselves with the buckle. This was a disproportionate response. Watches and belts were not returned to detainees on entry to the STHF.

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<sup>1</sup> Under section 154 of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act, the Home Secretary can certify that a detainee custody officer is a fit and proper person and has received appropriate training. Section 155 states that only certified detainee custody officers can discharge custodial functions.

- I.15** We were not assured that all staff clearly understood emergency procedures. A woman in the SSA collapsed during our inspection. A member of staff trained in first aid was called before it was decided to call an ambulance. The staff who called the ambulance did not know the postcode for Becket House, which we had to tell them.
- I.16** In the previous three months, one detainee had self-harmed in Becket House. Incident reports showed that staff had to use force to prevent him from banging his head against a wall. A struggle ensued and the detainee was put in handcuffs. The documentation assured us that the force was necessary and used proportionately. DCOs received training on self-harm and suicide prevention during their initial training but no refresher courses. Only one of the two DCOs on duty carried an anti-ligature knife; the other had been redeployed from an escorting team and did not carry one. A second anti-ligature knife was kept in the DCOs' office.

## Recommendations

- I.17** **Clothing and other items should be removed from detainees only on the basis of individual risk assessment.** (Repeated recommendation I.17)
- I.18** **All staff should understand and follow emergency protocols.**
- I.19** **All detainee custody officers (DCOs) should carry anti-ligature knives.** (Repeated recommendation I.26)

## Safeguarding (protection of adults at risk)

### Expected outcomes:

**The centre promotes the welfare of all detainees, particularly adults at risk, and protects them from all kinds of harm and neglect.<sup>2</sup>**

- I.20** Tascor and the Home Office had yet to publish policies for the care of adults at risk due to disability or illness. There was no provision for at-risk adults, although staff said they would open a care plan for detainees with disabilities.

### Recommendation

- I.21** **Tascor and the Home Office should develop a national safeguarding adults policy, and all relevant staff should be aware of this.**

## Safeguarding children

### Expected outcomes:

**The facility promotes the welfare of children and protects them from all kinds of harm and neglect.**

- I.22** Children were no longer held in the STHF but were held in the SSA. Although immigration staff advised individuals who were reporting not to bring children with them, some people

<sup>2</sup> We define an adult at risk as a person aged 18 years or over, 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. 'No secrets' definition (Department of Health 2000).

did. During our inspection, an elderly couple brought their infant grandchild with them. When they entered the SSA at 1.25pm, immigration enforcement staff asked the couple to arrange for someone to pick the child up. A relative arrived two hours later and took the child. The child's details were not recorded on the SSA log so it was not possible for managers to know how many children were held.

- I.23** The SSA was not a suitable place to hold children, even for a short time. There were no games, toys, books or other activities to occupy them. The Home Office security guard had not received child protection training (see main recommendation S17). Some immigration enforcement officers had received training on tiers one and two of the Home Office's 'Keeping children safe' course.

## Use of force

### Expected outcomes:

**Force is only used as a last resort and for legitimate reasons.**

- I.24** The two DCOs on duty were up to date with their control and restraint training. Force had been used once in the previous three months (see paragraph I.16).

## Legal rights

### Expected outcomes:

**Detainees are fully aware of and understand their detention. Detainees are supported by the facility staff to exercise their legal rights freely.**

- I.25** Many detainees who entered the STHF after reporting had an immigration lawyer. DCOs helped detainees make telephone calls on arrival. Some detainees chose to use this opportunity to contact their lawyer. Notices in a variety of languages in both holding rooms promoted the Civil Legal Advice helpline, which signposted detainees to legal aid immigration lawyers. All detainees were transferred to IRCs where they could have been able to see duty advice lawyers, although this was not guaranteed.
- I.26** Unlike in many other facilities, detainees were not given a substitute mobile telephone if their own mobile had a camera (see paragraph I.38). Detainee could not freely send faxes from the fax machine in the DCOs' office. Instead DCOs had to request permission of the immigration enforcement officers.
- I.27** All detainees had the appropriate written authority to detain form (IS91), and custody staff said they would not accept a detainee into custody without this. Written reasons for detention were in English only. We saw one immigration officer interpret these for a detainee whose language she spoke. Detainees were given a bail application form and a form that explained the reasons for detention (IS91R), but this information was also in English only.
- I.28** The governance of holding people in the SSA was at best unclear and at worst unlawful. Immigration enforcement officers did not issue any written authority to detainee, such as an IS91, before holding people in the area. The Home Office security guard logged detainees' names and nationality together with the time they entered and left the area (see main recommendation S17).

## Recommendations

- I.29 Detainees should be able to fax documents to legal representatives on request from the fax machine in the holding area, reducing unnecessary delays and anxiety.** (Repeated recommendation I.37)
- I.30 Standard information on the IS91R reasons for detention form should be in a range of languages.** (Repeated recommendation I.41)

## Casework

### Expected outcomes:

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

- I.31** Some detainees spent too long in the SSA. On the day of our inspection, 31 adults and one child were held in the SSA for an average of one hour and 56 minutes. Many of these were released and not detained further. Seven detainees were held for over four hours, with the longest held for five hours and 26 minutes. All seven were detained further in the STHF. It was not clear why their cases were not processed quicker. Although the decision to detain had often been made before the detainee arrived at the centre, the IS91 was not served until the detainee entered the STHF. Prompt caseworking would have allowed these detainees to move to a more suitable environment than the SSA. Staff told us that detainees sometimes waited up to seven hours in the SSA.
- I.32** In the previous three months, detainees were held in the STHF for an average of three hours and 49 minutes. The longest period of detention was 10 hours and 15 minutes. In October 2014, 20 detainees had been held in a single day.

# Respect

## Accommodation

### Expected outcomes:

#### **Detainees are held in a safe, clean and decent environment.**

- I.33** The secondary search area (SSA) was grubby and unwelcoming. No information was displayed and the only clock in the room was deliberately hidden from detainees, although they had had their watches removed. The toilet was clean and had sanitary items but was on the other side of the locked exit so detainees had to ask staff to use it. Detainees had their mobile telephones removed if they had a camera and there was no payphone. Detainees had no access to fresh air and the room only contained nine seats – too few for the numbers held.
- I.34** The short-term holding facility (STHF) comprised two holding rooms (male and female) and a detainee custody officer (DCO) office. Each holding room contained fixed seating, a payphone, television, water fountain and toilet. Unlike many other STHFs, the toilets were fully screened and had toilet seats. The holding rooms were clean and well maintained, although austere. Women detainees could close the blinds on the glass partition between the male and female holding rooms. Frosted glass provided some natural light.
- I.35** Detainees in the STHF were not allowed to retain their mobile telephone if it had a camera, and DCOs offered them two free landline telephone calls, but not in a private area. Some detainees had already spent several hours in the SSA and were anxious about not being able to make a call while there. Other detainees had a further wait in the holding room until staff had time to facilitate their call. Detainees were encouraged to give out the facility payphone number, which was clearly displayed. Unlike other STHFs, replacement mobile telephones were not lent to all detainees; although two were available for detainees to use with their own SIM card, staff told us these were rarely issued. There was no privacy in the male holding room for using the telephone. Staff told us they would give detainees a free five-minute international telephone card if they needed to call abroad.
- I.36** Detainees' property was stored in lockers in the DCOs' office. All detainees had their belts, coins and scarves removed, without any assessment of individual risk. This practice was disproportionate as well as inconsistent, as shoelaces were not removed. Detainees could keep cash in notes but had to request coins from staff to use the payphone.
- I.37** There was a small stock of spare clothes and hygiene packs, but this was not communicated clearly to detainees and staff told us they were rarely requested. Sanitary items were available in the female toilets. The holding areas had pillows and blankets, but the pillows were dirty.
- I.38** Staff gave a short verbal briefing to detainees about the facilities in the holding room and pointed out the standard information booklet, which was available in a range of languages in each room.
- I.39** An immigration enforcement manager sometimes made a cursory check of the facility but did not speak to detainees or check that they were being kept informed. A logbook showed that these checks were irregular, with only seven visits in the previous three months.

## Recommendation

- I.40** There should be routine supervision of the facility by senior immigration staff to check that conditions of detention are appropriate, casework is properly progressed and detainees are kept informed. These visits should be recorded. (Repeated recommendation I.3)

## Housekeeping point

- I.41** Clean pillows should be provided.

## Positive relationships

### Expected outcomes:

**Detainees are treated with respect by all staff, with proper regard for the uncertainty of their situation and their cultural backgrounds.**

- I.42** DCOs wore ID badges but the names were too small to read easily. DCOs were courteous and helpful to detainees, but did not have enough time to respond to requests quickly. During our inspection, 15 detainees were held in the STHF, which made the atmosphere cramped.
- I.43** We saw some helpful and reassuring treatment of detainees by immigration enforcement staff. However, one immigration officer spoke to a detainee and passed them papers through the hatch in the holding room door, which was disrespectful. Another failed to reassure an anxious detainee who had spent a considerable period in the SSA that she would be able to make a telephone call.

## Recommendations

- I.44** DCOs should respond to detainees' requests promptly.
- I.45** Immigration enforcement staff should interact with detainees respectfully.

## Housekeeping point

- I.46** Staff should wear legible name badges.

## Equality and diversity

### Expected outcomes:

**There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural backgrounds. The distinct needs of each protected characteristic, including race equality, nationality, religion, disability, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, age and pregnancy, are recognised and addressed.**

- I.47** Staff in the SSA had not received equality or diversity training or training in the experiences of asylum seekers or refugees. There was no provision in the SSA for detainees to practise their religion.

- I.48** DCOs in the STHF had received some diversity training during their initial training course, but no refresher courses. Religious books for a variety of faiths, prayers mats and a kiblah (indicating the direction of Mecca) were available in each room. There was no Braille information or hearing loop, or adapted facilities for wheelchair users. Staff were aware of how to draw up disability care plans and completed them as needed.
- I.49** Staff said they used professional telephone interpreters to communicate with non-English speakers as needed, but we were unable to check the frequency of this as the records were not available.

## Recommendation

- I.50** **Staff should receive regular training in diversity that takes account of the particular experiences of asylum seekers and refugees.** (Repeated recommendation I.47)

## Complaints

### Expected outcomes:

**Effective complaints procedures are in place for detainees which are easy to access and use, in a language they can understand. Responses are timely and can be understood by detainees.**

- I.51** There were no complaints forms available in the SSA.
- I.52** In the STHF, folders in each holding room contained a complaints form in English and 16 other languages. The forms were not easy to read and the English version had a page missing. There were complaints boxes in each room, but staff could not remember the last time they had been emptied, and the key had been lost. We submitted a test complaint but did not receive a response. The last complaint to be submitted by a detainee held at Beckett House was in April 2014. The detainee complained that after leaving Beckett House STHF he was held on a van outside Dover IRC from 10.30pm until 6am with five other detainees and was unable to leave the van. The response to the complaint was dismissive and defensive. The response stated, 'it is clear that you were kept outside for a long period of time'. The investigator accepted that the detainee was not allowed to leave the van. Despite acknowledging the essence of the detainee's complaint, the response concluded, 'there is insufficient evidence to support your complaint' and went on to suggest 'you may wish to take the matter further with Dover IRC. It also suggested contacting the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman but did not provide his contact details.

## Recommendations

- I.53** **Complaints forms should be complete and easy to read.**
- I.54** **The complaints box should be emptied every day by immigration enforcement staff.** (Repeated recommendation I.58)
- I.55** **Responses to complaints should be fair and impartially address the issues raised.**



## Housekeeping point

- I.56** Responses to complaints should contain contact details of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

## Catering

### Expected outcomes:

**Detainees are offered varied meals to meet their individual requirements. Food is prepared and served according to religious, cultural and prevailing food safety and hygiene regulations.**

- I.57** Detainees in the SSA had access to a water fountain, but there was no routine provision of snacks or meals. Staff told us that after three hours detainees would be offered food from the STHF, but this was not recorded.
- I.58** In the STHF, detainees were offered food and drink when they were booked in and at appropriate intervals, and this was recorded. Sandwiches were delivered three times a week but during our inspection there were no vegetarian options. Microwave meals included Halal and one vegetarian option. Staff told us detainees with special dietary needs would be provided with alternative food on request, but we did not observe this explained to detainees. A vending machine had a range of hot and cold drinks. Hot meals were served in the cardboard packaging they were cooked in, with no trays or tables to eat from. Biscuits and crisps were available but no healthy snacks. There was a water fountain in each holding room but weak pressure made it difficult to fill cups.

## Recommendations

- I.59** **Vegetarian sandwiches and healthy snacks should be available, and detainees with special dietary needs should be informed that they can request alternative food.**
- I.60** **Hot food should be served safely on trays or tables.**

## Housekeeping point

- I.61** The water fountains should be of sufficient pressure to fill cups easily.

# Activities

## **Expected outcomes:**

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

- I.62** There were no activities for detainees held in the SSA, although some were held there for over four hours.
- I.63** There were sufficient activities for detainees held for short periods in the short-term holding facility. The male holding room had a small selection of books and magazines in a limited range of languages and the female room had magazines and newspapers, including a few in foreign languages. Detainees could watch television but the DVD player was not working. Detainees did not have access to the open air.

## **Recommendation**

- I.64** **Detainees held for more than a few hours should have access to the open air.**  
(Repeated recommendation I.67)

## **Housekeeping point**

- I.65** The DVD players should be in working order.

# Preparation for removal and release

## Expected outcomes:

**Detainees are able to maintain contact with the outside world and be prepared for their release, transfer or removal. Detainees are able to retain or recover their property. Families with children and others with specific needs are not detained without items essential to their welfare.**

- I.66** DCOs told detainees where they were being transferred to as soon as they were informed, and provided them with printed cards with immigration removal centre (IRC) contact details. Detainees regularly waited too long in the holding room before escort vans were available.
- I.67** Records for October 2014 showed that five detainees had been held in the STHF until 10pm, including one held for nine hours and 15 minutes. All five were transferred to Dover IRC where they would have gone through reception and not reached their beds until the early hours of the next day. A detainee complained in April 2015 of being held on a van overnight outside Dover IRC after leaving Becket House (see section on complaints).
- I.68** Detainees could not receive visitors. There was no formal procedure for detainees to receive their property. Staff helped the transfer of small items, such as keys and telephones, ad hoc, and we saw them pass a detainee's house key to her sister in the community.

## Recommendations

- I.69** **Detainees should be transferred promptly to removal centres.**
- I.70** **Detainees should be able to receive visitors.** (Repeated recommendation I.72)
- I.71** **Arrangements should be in place to allow detainees to recover or arrange for the disposal of their property and detainees should be informed of this.** (Repeated recommendation I.70)

## Section 2. Recommendations and housekeeping points

### Main recommendation

To Home Office

- 2.1 The secondary search area should not be used as a place of detention. (S17)

### Recommendations

To Home Office and the facility contractor

- 2.2 Clothing and other items should be removed from detainees only on the basis of individual risk assessment. (1.17, repeated recommendation 1.17)
- 2.3 Tascor and the Home Office should develop a national safeguarding adults policy, and all relevant staff should be aware of this. (1.21)

### Recommendations

To the facility contractor

#### Escort vehicles and transfers

- 2.4 Immigration enforcement officers should not hold detainees by their arms inside Becket House unless justified by individual risk assessment. (1.4)

#### Arrival

- 2.5 Detainees should be taken off Immigration Enforcement vans and booked into the STHF promptly. (1.9)
- 2.6 Detainees should not be subjected to repeated searches inside Becket House. (1.10)

#### Self-harm and suicide prevention

- 2.7 All staff should understand and follow emergency protocols. (1.18)
- 2.8 All detainee custody officers (DCOs) should carry anti-ligature knives. (1.19, repeated recommendation 1.26)

#### Legal rights

- 2.9 Detainees should be able to fax documents to legal representatives on request from the fax machine in the holding area, reducing unnecessary delays and anxiety. (1.29, repeated recommendation 1.37)
- 2.10 Standard information on the IS91R reasons for detention form should be in a range of languages. (1.30, repeated recommendation 1.41)

## Accommodation

- 2.11** There should be routine supervision of the facility by senior immigration staff to check that conditions of detention are appropriate, casework is properly progressed and detainees are kept informed. These visits should be recorded. (1.40, repeated recommendation 1.3)

## Positive relationships

- 2.12** DCOs should respond to detainees' requests promptly. (1.44)
- 2.13** Immigration enforcement staff should interact with detainees respectfully. (1.45)

## Equality and diversity

- 2.14** Staff should receive regular training in diversity that takes account of the particular experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. (1.50, repeated recommendation 1.47)

## Complaints

- 2.15** Complaints forms should be complete and easy to read. (1.53)
- 2.16** The complaints box should be emptied every day by immigration enforcement staff. (1.54, repeated recommendation 1.58)
- 2.17** Responses to complaints should be fair and impartially address the issues raised.(1.55)

## Catering

- 2.18** Vegetarian sandwiches and healthy snacks should be available, and detainees with special dietary needs should be informed that they can request alternative food. (1.59)
- 2.19** Hot food should be served safely on trays or tables. (1.60)

## Activities

- 2.20** Detainees held for more than a few hours should have access to the open air. (1.64, repeated recommendation 1.67)

## Preparation for removal and release

- 2.21** Detainees should be transferred promptly to removal centres. (1.69)
- 2.22** Detainees should be able to receive visitors. (1.70, repeated recommendation 1.72)
- 2.23** Arrangements should be in place to allow detainees to recover or arrange for the disposal of their property and detainees should be informed of this. (1.71, repeated recommendation 1.70)

## Housekeeping point

To Home Office

**2.24** Immigration enforcement vans should carry bottled water. (1.5)

## Housekeeping points

To the facility contractor

**2.25** Clean pillows should be provided. (1.41)

**2.26** Staff should wear legible name badges. (1.46)

**2.27** Responses to complaints should contain contact details of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.(1.56)

**2.28** The water fountains should be of sufficient pressure to fill cups easily. (1.61)

**2.29** The DVD players should be in working order. (1.65)

## Section 3. Appendices

### Appendix I: Inspection team

Colin Carroll  
Sarah Cutler

Inspector  
Inspector

## Appendix II: Progress on recommendations from the last report

The following is a list of all the recommendations made in the last report, organised under the four tests of a healthy establishment. The reference numbers at the end of each recommendation refer to the paragraph location in the previous report. If a recommendation has been repeated in the main report, its new paragraph number is also provided.

### Safety

#### **Detainees are held in safety and with due regard to the insecurity of their position.**

##### **Recommendations**

When people are taking medication, detaining immigration officers should check and record dosage instructions and whether it might be allowed in-possession, for the benefit of successive custodians as well as detainees. (1.1)

**Achieved**

Custodial staff should ask paramedics attending any incident to record their assessment of a detainee's condition in writing and sign it. This should then be attached to incident reporting documentation. (1.4)

**Not achieved**

Escort vans should be tidied and re-stocked with refreshments and other required items after every journey. (1.7)

**Achieved**

Custodial staff should receive refresher training in anti-bullying and suicide prevention procedures. (1.15)

**Not achieved**

Clothing and other items should be removed from detainees only on the basis of individual risk assessment. (1.17)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.18)

Full risk information should accompany detainees brought into the holding area. (1.24)

**Achieved**

Health assessments should be conducted as soon as possible after a use of force or attempt at self-harm. (1.25)

**Achieved**

All staff should carry ligature knives. (1.26)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.20)

The G4S child protection policy should be agreed with the local safeguarding children board as soon as possible. (1.27)

**Not achieved**



Detainee custody officers should receive regular and evaluated refresher training in child protection. (1.29)

**Achieved**

The effectiveness of the current child protection training delivered to UK Border Agency staff should be evaluated, taking into account the views of frontline practitioners. (1.30)

**Achieved**

Family arrest teams should receive specific training on how to communicate with and manage children in these situations. (1.31)

**No longer relevant**

The UK Border Agency should keep statistics on the cumulative length of detention for children. (1.34)

**No longer relevant**

Detainees should be offered a free telephone call on a suitable telephone that allows for privacy. (1.36)

**Partially achieved**

Detainees should be able to fax documents to legal representatives on request from the fax machine in the holding area, reducing unnecessary delays and anxiety. (1.37)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.29)

Reasons for detention and accompanying information, including the possibility of applying for bail and sources of legal advice, should be explained in full in a language understood by the detainee. (1.38)

**Achieved**

Information on display in the holding room should include a range of possible sources of independent, specialist legal advice. These should be checked and updated regularly. (1.40)

**Achieved**

Standard information on the IS91R reasons for detention form should be in a range of languages. (1.41)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.30)

Detainees subject to control and restraint should be seen by a healthcare practitioner as soon as practicable and the practitioner should record their assessment. (1.52)

**Achieved**

The G4S information sheet should be freely available to detainees. (1.54)

**Achieved**

## Respect

**Detainees are treated with respect for their human dignity and the circumstances of their detention.**

### Recommendations

There should be routine supervision of the facility by senior immigration staff to check that conditions of detention are appropriate, casework is properly progressed and detainees are kept informed. These visits should be recorded. (1.3)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.41)

The doors between the holding room and the toilet should permit privacy. (1.8)

**Achieved**

The uniwash units should be checked regularly to ensure they are in full working order. (1.10)

**Achieved**

The holding rooms should be redecorated and the family room made suitable for children with materials that are durable and can be cleaned. (1.12)

**Achieved**

The family room should be self-contained. (1.13)

**No longer relevant**

The telephone number for incoming calls should be clearly displayed. (1.14)

**Achieved**

Unrelated men and women should be held separately. (1.23)

**Achieved**

Staff should familiarise themselves with basic holding room procedures and policies. (1.45)

**Achieved**

Staff should receive regular training in diversity that takes account of the particular experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. (1.47)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.51)

Religious texts should be available in the family room. (1.49)

**No longer relevant**

Diversity impact assessments should be completed. (1.50)

**No longer relevant**

Multi-lingual complaint forms should be freely available to detainees. (1.55)

**Achieved**

Staff should be trained in the complaints process. (1.56)

**Not achieved**

The complaints box should be emptied every day by UK Border Agency staff. (1.58)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, 1.55)

A supply of snack foods, including healthy options, should be available at all times. (1.62)

**Partially achieved**

Detainees should be able to write complaints or comments on food in their own language and these should be regularly checked by a manager. (1.63)

**Not achieved**

## Activities

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

### Recommendations

A selection of relevant books in a range of languages should be available to detainees. (I.65)

**Achieved**

Detainees held for more than a few hours should have access to the open air. (I.67)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, I.63)

The supply of children's toys should be renewed and regularly refreshed. (I.69)

**No longer relevant**

## Preparation for removal and release

**Detainees are able to maintain contact with the outside world and be prepared for their release, transfer or removal.**

### Recommendations

Arrangements should be in place to allow detainees to recover or arrange for the disposal of their property and detainees should be informed of this. (I.70)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, I.70)

Detainees should be able to receive visits. (I.72)

**Not achieved** (recommendation repeated, I.69)

Spare clothing should be available for issue in case of need. (I.73)

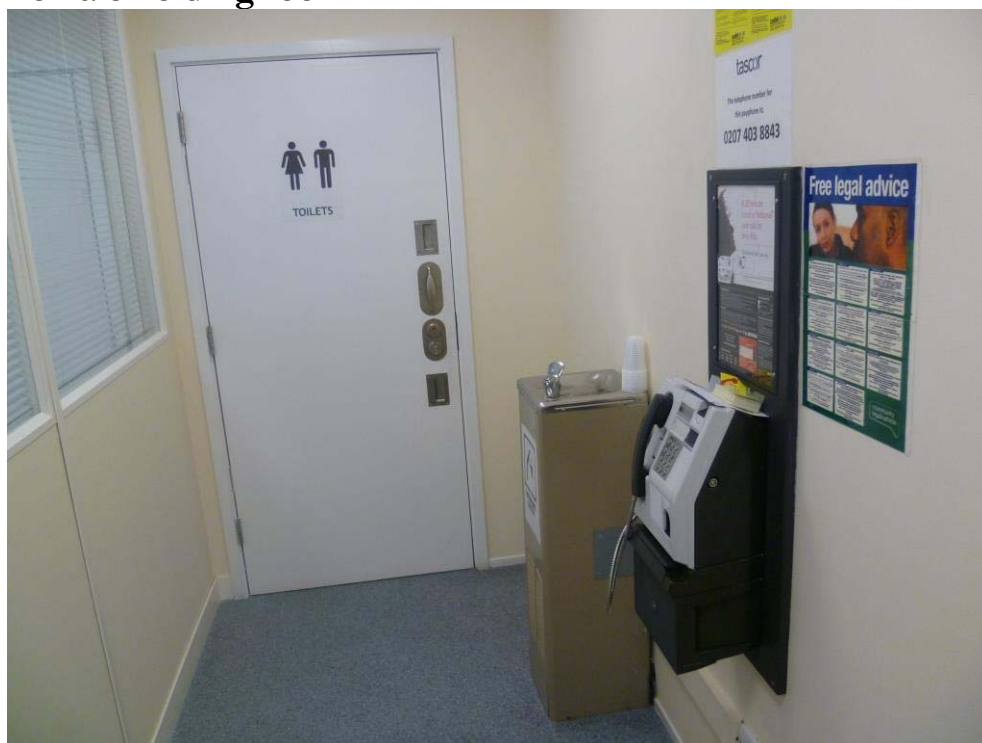
**Achieved**

## Appendix III: Photographs

Male holding room



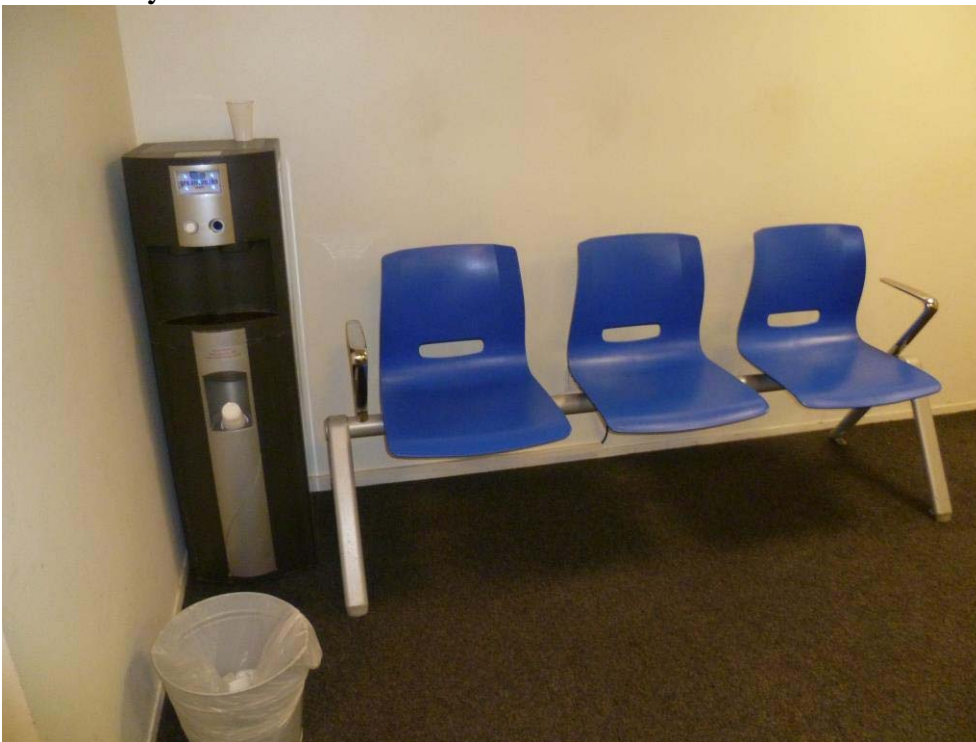
Female holding room



### Female holding room



### Secondary search area



### Secondary search area

