

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

Dallas Court, Salford

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

23 March 2016

Glossary of terms

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Contents

Fact page	4
Introduction	5
About this inspection and report	6
Summary	7
Section 1. Safety	8
Respect	11
Preparation for removal and release	13
Section 2. Recommendations	14
Section 3. Appendices	16
Appendix I: Inspection team	16
Appendix II: Progress on recommendations from the last report	17
Appendix III: Photograph	19

Fact page

Task of the establishment

To hold immigration detainees following arrest or reporting and before transfer to residential detention

Location

Dallas Court, Salford

Name of contractor

Tascor

Last inspection

28 April 2010

Escort provider

Tascor

Introduction

The Home Office immigration operations for Greater Manchester are based at Dallas Court, Salford. The building houses an immigration compliance and enforcement (ICE) team, UK Visas and Immigration caseworkers, and a reporting centre which foreign nationals attend under the conditions of their temporary admission to the UK. Each week around 185 individuals report to the centre.

There are two places of detention in Dallas Court: the short-term holding facility and the transit lounge. The transit lounge was closed for refurbishment during our inspection and we were unable to inspect it. It was usually used for brief stays when detainees were transferred between two Tascor escort vans or after a family had been arrested by an ICE team and transferred into the custody of Tascor. Record keeping at the facility remained poor and we were unable to quantify the use of the transit lounge for all detainees. However, after the inspection the Home Office confirmed that during the period April 2015 to March 2016, three families had been held in the transit lounge. The detentions were short: 80, 50 and 10 minutes.

The short-term holding facility has an office for detainee custody officers (DCOs) and two holding rooms. Detainees enter the facility after reporting or on arrest in the community. During the previous three months, 74 detainees had been held in the holding room for an average of three hours 26 minutes. Three detainees were held at the time of our inspection. The facility is staffed by two DCOs. The Independent Monitoring Board visits the facility regularly.

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. Our reports are usually based on the 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 detention¹

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 although these were custodial facilities, detainees were not held because they had been charged with a criminal offence and had not been detained through normal judicial processes.

¹ Non-residential STHFs are unsuitable for long stays and detainees should not be held in them for more than a few hours. This limits what activities can or need to be provided. We therefore report any notable issues concerning activities in the accommodation and facilities section.

Summary

- S1 At our inspection in 2010, we made 20 recommendations, seven of which were achieved, 11 were not achieved and two we were unable to inspect due to the refurbishment of the transit lounge.
- S2 Detainees arriving in the facility after arrest were not normally handcuffed. The escort van we inspected was clean and properly equipped. Detainees were given a rub-down search on arrival but had their cash removed unnecessarily. The quality of DCO induction interviews was variable. Detainees with no resources were offered a free telephone call but not always in private. Immigration Enforcement officers handled a detainee's induction poorly.
- S3 There was no safeguarding adults policy. Bullying between detainees was rare. Male and female detainees could be held separately. Previous incidents of self-harm had been handled appropriately. DCOs carried anti-ligature knives. In the previous six months, there were no records of use of force.
- S4 Detainees had good access to phones but could not always make calls in private. Detainees could generally maintain contact with their legal representatives but there were delays in providing one detainee with his mobile phone to contact his solicitor. Detainees were held with the appropriate documentation authorising their detention. During the previous three months, 74 detainees had been held for an average of five hours 11 minutes.
- S5 The holding rooms were narrow and cramped. Food provision was adequate, but there was less choice for vegetarians than we normally see. Detainees could not go out into the fresh air or watch television.
- S6 DCOs were polite and respectful with detainees but Immigration Enforcement officers less so. Detainees could make written complaints and practise their religion. Good use was made of telephone interpreting.
- S7 Detainees were given information about where they were going on leaving the facility. Friends and family could bring detainees' possessions to Dallas Court and have them passed to detainees.

Section 1. Safety

Arrival

Expected outcomes:

Detainees under escort are treated safely, decently and efficiently. Detainees taken into detention are treated with respect, have the correct documentation, and are held in safe and decent conditions.

- 1.1 Most escorts were provided by Tascor, while detainees arrested in the community were brought to the facility by Immigration Enforcement officers. A door in the staff area opened on to a secure car park where escort vehicles could park adjacent to the facility. Detainees were not usually handcuffed or otherwise restrained, unless a risk assessment indicated otherwise.
- 1.2 The van we inspected was clean and adequately equipped. One of the escorts had difficulty locating an anti-ligature knife in the escort vehicle when we requested it.
- 1.3 Tascor used person escort records to document transfers to and from the facility.
- 1.4 Two detainee custody officers (DCOs), one male and one female, staffed the facility from 9am to 5pm. If a detainee needed to be detained beyond 5pm, the DCOs stayed late or Tascor escort staff supervised the facility.
- 1.5 In one of the two cases that we observed, the detention and reception process was unsatisfactory. Immigration staff neglected to serve legal documentation (see paragraph 1.16) until over an hour after the detainee's arrival and they left the detainee's belongings in the van, including his mobile phone with contact details, which prevented him from making prompt calls to his solicitor and friends.
- 1.6 After explaining the reasons for detention, Immigration Enforcement officers handed detainees over to the custody of the DCOs. Detainees were given a rub-down search on arrival. Property was tagged in front of detainees and bags were left in the DCOs' office. They were not allowed to retain their own money, which was unnecessary.
- 1.7 A DCO gave new arrivals a brief induction and asked them basic questions from a checklist. The first interview that we observed was rushed, although staff were not busy. Not all the areas on the list were covered in the two interviews that we observed. However, DCOs were accessible to detainees throughout their stay and were mostly attentive to their needs.
- 1.8 Only detainees who did not have enough credit on their SIM card were offered a free telephone call to family, friends or solicitors (see paragraph 1.35). Calls were taken at the desk in the staff area and could be overheard by staff.

Recommendations

- 1.9 **Detainees should be able to make a free telephone call in private promptly after they arrive in the facility.**
- 1.10 **Immigration Enforcement officers should induct detainees fully and promptly after arrival at the facility; possessions and money should be handed over promptly.**

Keeping detainees safe

Expected outcomes:

Detainees feel and are safe from bullying and victimisation. The facility provides a safe and secure environment which reduces the risk of self-harm and suicide. The centre promotes the welfare of all detainees, particularly adults at risk, and protects them from all kinds of harm and neglect. Force is only used as a last resort and for legitimate reasons.²

- I.11 DCOs had good oversight of the two holding rooms through windows in their office. Two CCTV cameras covered each holding room and footage could be viewed in the DCOs' office. DCOs had not witnessed detainees bullying or harassing each other but said they would move a detainee to another holding room if it was free. Unrelated male and female detainees were held separately. During the previous three months, 82% of detainees were male and 18% female. Detainees in the facility during the inspection told us they felt safe.
- I.12 During the period September 2015 to February 2016, two detainees had tried to harm themselves, one by scratching her arm and another by banging his head against the wall. Records showed appropriate intervention by DCOs who used minimal force and talked to the detainees to settle and reassure them. Suicide and self-harm warning forms were opened. DCOs carried anti-ligature knives.
- I.13 Force had not been used in the previous six months. Only one DCO could remember using force in the holding room, more than a year before the inspection. Both officers had been trained in the Home Office Manual for Escorting Training and received refresher training every six months. Waist and leg restraints were kept in the office but the DCOs had not used them.
- I.14 DCOs were unaware of any Tascor policy on the safeguarding of adults. If an adult was at risk they informed Immigration Enforcement and Tascor managers. Disability care plans were opened for detainees with a disability. The facility did not hold children, although both DCOs had been trained in safeguarding children.

Recommendation

- I.15 **There should be an effective policy and procedures for managing at-risk detainees safely, with which staff should be familiar.**

Legal rights and casework

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are fully aware of and understand their detention. Detainees are supported by the facility staff to exercise their legal rights freely. Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated. Detention is for the minimum period necessary.

- I.16 Detainees who had a solicitor when they entered the facility could contact them by fax and telephone, although delays in passing one detainee his mobile phone prevented this.

² 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).

Immigration Enforcement officers failed to serve the necessary legal documents³ on a detainee until over an hour after he had been detained, including his immigration decision, reasons for his detention and removal directions (see paragraph I.5). The detainee said he was from Sierra Leone while the Home Office claimed he was Nigerian. The detainee was agitated by this but the Immigration Enforcement officer spoke over him in a defensive manner. The second detainee was given his legal documentation at the time of his detention and the proper authority to detain (IS91) was given to the DCOs who confirmed that they would not accept custody without one. During the inspection, DCOs removed from holding room walls notices that promoted the services of the Civil Legal Advice helpline in the mistaken belief that the service was now obsolete. We checked the number which worked correctly.

- I.17** During the period January to March 2016, 74 detainees had been held at the facility for an average of three hours 26 minutes. The longest detention was eight hours. The facility was not fit for such long detentions.

Recommendations

- I.18** Immigration Enforcement officers should serve all legal documentation as soon as detention begins.
- I.19** Details of the Civil Legal Advice helpline should be available.
- I.20** Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air. (Repeated recommendation I.49)

³ Necessary documents are RED.0001 'Notice of liability to removal'; IS98 and IS98A 'Notices regarding bail rights'; and IS91R 'Reasons for detention'.

Respect

Accommodation and facilities

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are held in a safe, clean and decent environment. 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.21 The facility contained two narrow, cramped holding rooms neither of which had any natural light, but they were adequately ventilated and clean. Rooms were sparsely furnished with a table and four chairs fixed to the floor. There were some pillows and blankets, but nowhere to sleep. Attempts had been made to soften the environment with posters, but overall it felt claustrophobic. We alerted staff to offensive graffiti on a poster in one holding room and the DCO scribbled over the graffiti rather than removing the poster.
- I.22 There was a stock of hygiene packs containing socks, soap, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Toilets were clean but lacked seats and lids. There was a four-inch gap at the bottom of the door of each toilet.
- I.23 One holding room was designated for female detainees and the chairs were configured so that only two women could sit comfortably. There were sanitary items and a bin for their disposal in the toilet for this room.
- I.24 Copies of an information leaflet were displayed in each room, translated into 15 languages.
- I.25 If detainees arrived with medication, staff could seek advice from a telephone medical advice and triage service provided by Tascor. In an emergency they would call an ambulance.
- I.26 Immigration staff visited the facility regularly and visits were logged.
- I.27 Detainees were offered food and drinks on arrival and at regular intervals from a selection of sandwiches and ambient microwave meals. There was less choice for vegetarians than we usually see and limited choice for detainees with special diets.
- I.28 Detainees could not go outside. Televisions were not working following building works the day before. There was one current English daily newspaper, but newspapers in other languages were out of date. There were a few books, mostly in English. Board games and two portable DVD players were kept in the staff room. It was not clear if they were used and they were not offered to detainees at the time of our inspection.

Recommendations

- I.29 **Toilets should be fully screened and should have lids and seats.**
- I.30 **Reading material should be available in a range of languages.**

Respectful treatment

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are treated with respect by all staff, with proper regard for the uncertainty of their situation and their cultural backgrounds. 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. 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.31** Three detainees were held in the facility at the time of the inspection. DCOs introduced themselves using their first names. They were polite and interacted respectfully with detainees. The interpersonal skills of some Immigration Enforcement officers were poor in comparison.
- I.32** Complaint forms were available in a range of languages in both holding rooms. Boxes were emptied regularly and a dummy complaint that we submitted was collected the same day. DCOs were not aware of any complaints being submitted in the previous year.
- I.33** DCOs had received equality training during their initial training and one had received follow-up training about two years ago, although no regular refresher training was scheduled. Detainees could practise their religion. There were posters of religious festivals in the two holding rooms. Copies of the Bible and Qur'an were available and there were some prayer mats and a compass. Staff were familiar with the requirements of Ramadan. Good use was made of telephone interpreting during the inspection but invoices showed that it had not been used during the previous three months.

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.34** Detainees were briefed in advance about where they were going. They were given a small credit-card sized card with the contact details and a map of their next place of detention. Detainees going to the residential facility at Pennine House outside Manchester Airport were reassured that they were not going there for immediate removal from the airport.
- I.35** Detainees had good access to telephones to contact friends, family and their solicitors. They could retain their own phone if it did not have a camera or internet access or borrow a mobile for use with their SIM card. Detainees without enough credit on their SIM card were allowed to make two calls from the DCOs' office, but these could not be made in private. The pay phone in each holding room allowed incoming calls. Detainees could not use the internet or email.
- I.36** Detainees could not receive visitors but family and friends could deliver property. There was a good supply of clothing for detainees who needed it.

Recommendation

- I.37** **Detainees should have access to the internet, including email, social networking sites and Skype, unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise.**

Section 2. Recommendations

Recommendations

To the Home Office

Arrival

- 2.1** Immigration Enforcement officers should induct detainees fully and promptly after arrival at the facility; possessions and money should be handed over promptly. (1.10)

Legal rights and casework

- 2.2** Immigration Enforcement officers should serve all legal documentation as soon as detention begins. (1.18)
- 2.3** Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air. (1.20, repeated recommendation 1.49)

Preparation for removal and release

- 2.4** Detainees should have access to the internet, including email, social networking sites and Skype, unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise. (1.37)

Recommendation

To the Home Office and facility contractor

Accommodation and facilities

- 2.5** Toilets should be fully screened and should have lids and seats. (1.29)

Recommendations

To the facility contractor

Arrival

- 2.6** Detainees should be able to make a free telephone call in private promptly after they arrive in the facility. (1.9)

Keeping detainees safe

- 2.7** There should be an effective policy and procedures for managing at-risk detainees safely, with which staff should be familiar. (1.15)

Legal rights and casework

- 2.8** Details of the Civil Legal Advice helpline should be available. (1.19)

Accommodation and facilities

2.9 Reading material should be available in a range of languages. (1.30)

Section 3. Appendices

Appendix I: Inspection team

Colin Carroll
Deri Hughes-Roberts

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.

There should be regular and recorded immigration oversight of the transit lounge. (1.16)

Unable to inspect

Daily visits by immigration managers should be recorded and a log retained of any concerns or issues. (1.26)

Achieved

The UKBA should negotiate with the Legal Services Commission to offer telephone advice to detainees using an interpretation service similar to that used in its police station telephone immigration advice line. (1.30)

Not achieved

An entry should always be made in the risk assessment section of the IS91. (1.33)

Achieved

A senior member of staff should act as child protection coordinator for the holding room and transit lounge, and all staff should be aware of the identity of this person. (1.42)

Not achieved

Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air. (1.49)

Not achieved (Recommendation repeated, 1.20)

Logs in the transit lounge should record the individual details of detainees held and their length of stay. (1.10)

Not achieved

Details of the Community Legal Advice helpline should be available. (1.29)

Not achieved

Staff should receive refresher training in anti-bullying. (1.36)

Not achieved

Staff should carry an anti-ligature knife with them at all times. (1.37)

Achieved

Staff should be given training on responses to the practical challenges involved in the custody of families and children as part of a child protection training package. (1.43)

Achieved

Respect

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

There should be sufficient seating for the number of detainees held at any one time. (1.12)

Achieved

There should be separate male and female toilets [*in the transit lounge*]. (1.13)

Not achieved

The transit lounge should contain a supply of up-to-date newspapers in a range of languages. (1.11)

Unable to inspect

The toilet area [*in the transit lounge*] should be completely screened from the holding area. (1.14)

Not achieved

The refrigerator in the transit lounge should be fixed. (1.15)

Achieved

Detainees should be able to make a free telephone call in private. (1.25)

Not achieved

Ambient meals should be replaced with a range of frozen meals. (1.55)

Not achieved

Preparation for removal and release

There should be provision for detainees to receive visitors. (1.61)

Not achieved

Clothing should be available for issue to those needing it. (1.62)

Achieved

Appendix III: Photograph

Dallas court holding room

