

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

Loughborough, East Midlands

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

18 April 2017

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. Summary of recommendations and good practice	14
Section 3. Appendices	16
Appendix I: Inspection team	16
Appendix II: Progress on recommendations from the last report	17
Appendix III: Facility log analysis	19
Appendix IV: Photographs	20

Fact page

Task of the establishment

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

Location

10 South Street, Loughborough LE11 3EY

Name of contractor

Tascor

Last inspection

28 August 2013

Escort provider

Tascor

Introduction

The small short-term holding facility at Loughborough is located in the Home Office East Midlands Reporting Centre. People subject to immigration reporting restrictions attend the reporting centre each day. The facility is used to hold detainees who have attended the reporting centre or have been arrested in the community by immigration enforcement teams before they are transferred to an immigration removal centre or residential short-term holding facility.

The facility comprises a staff office and single holding room where men and women are held together. It is open from 9am to 5pm three days a week, and on an ad hoc basis for specific enforcement operations. The facility is run on behalf of the Home Office by the private contractor Tascor, which is also contracted to escort detainees to and from the facility.

During our inspection, no detainees were held but 47 had been held in the previous three months for an average of four hours 20 minutes. The facility was only suitable for short periods of detention. No children had been held since the last inspection. The Independent Monitoring Board regularly visited the facility and were visiting at the time of our inspection.

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 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 will therefore report any notable issues concerning activities in the accommodation and facilities section.

Summary

- S1 At our inspection in 2013, we made 10 recommendations, four of which we found at this inspection were achieved, one was partially achieved and five not achieved.
- S2 Detainees were still routinely handcuffed for the very short distance from vans into and out of the facility, without regard to individual risk. Although risk factors were entered on to person escort records, some lacked detail. Staff reported that most detainees arrived following arrest in the community, and that they would only hold detainees after written authority to detain (IS91) had been issued.
- S3 A male and a female officer were on duty at the time of inspection and both carried anti-ligature knives. No children had been held at the facility since the last inspection, but men and women were still held in the same room. As at the last inspection, there was no safeguarding adults policy. Use of force was low, but we were concerned at the use of the waist restraint belt to prevent self-harm.
- S4 Detainees could retain their legal documents and communicate with their solicitors. Notices advised detainees how to complain about poor immigration advice they might have previously received. In the previous three months, 47 detainees had been held. The average length of detention was four hours 20 minutes; the longest single period of detention was eight hours 40 minutes. Staff said that delays in onward transfer to immigration removal centres had prolonged the time detainees were held at the facility.
- S5 The facility was only suitable for short periods of detention. The single holding room was in a reasonable state of repair and was clean, with some natural light. However, the toilet had no seat.
- S6 Detainee custody officers spoke of their concern for detainee welfare and were aware of their duty of care. Although they wore name badges these were not clearly visible. Detainees could practise their religion and make written complaints. Staff said they had received equality training within the last year. They were aware of the telephone interpreting service and said they would use it when required, although the logs we examined did not support this. Food was adequate and snacks were available in the holding room.
- S7 Detainees had no access to time in the fresh air. Detainees who smoked were unable to do so and no nicotine replacements were available.
- S8 Staff said that in exceptional circumstances detainees could receive visits, if approved by the Home Office. However, all detainees could have friends and family hand property into the facility. Detainees could make telephone calls and had access to a fax, but had no access to emails or the internet.

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. Family accommodation is suitable.

- I.1** No detainees arrived at or left the facility during the inspection and there was no escort van to inspect. A detainee custody officer (DCO) told us that most journeys from the facility took less than two hours. Unrelated male and female detainees were transported separately, and there were separate transport arrangements for pregnant women and children. Escort vehicles were parked in an insecure area immediately outside the facility. Staff routinely handcuffed detainees in and out of the facility without regard to individual risks.
- I.2** Person escort records (PERs) were completed correctly but some lacked detail. As at the last inspection, risk sections were not always completed in full. For example, some records stated there was a risk but just entered 'see IS91'².
- I.3** DCOs said that they would not accept a detainee into their custody without written authority to detain (IS91). A male and female DCO were on duty during the inspection and we were told that this gender balance was usual. Detainees were searched discreetly in a separate room, and staff were aware of cultural and gender considerations when searching.
- I.4** Newly arrived detainees were given a brief induction and offered a basic meal, drink and free telephone call. A generic information booklet was available in the holding room in English and a range of other languages.
- I.5** Detainees were not permitted to keep their own telephone if it had a camera or internet access. Mobile phones without these functions were available for detainees to use with their SIM cards. Detainees who did not have a SIM card could use the staff telephone through a hatch into the staff office, and they could also receive incoming calls on the payphone in the holding room.

Recommendations

- I.6 Detainees should only be handcuffed following an individualised written risk assessment.** (Repeated recommendation I.3)
- I.7 Detainee risk factors should be fully described in all escort documentation.**

² The authority to detain notification.

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.³ Force is only used as a last resort and for legitimate reasons.

- 1.8** DCOs were aware of the Tascor suicide and self-harm prevention policy and said they had received training in this in the last 12 months. They were aware of the relevant guidance to ensure detainee safety, which was displayed on the holding room walls. Both DCOs carried anti-ligature knives, and there were two additional anti-ligature knives in the staff office for other staff assisting at the facility.
- 1.9** DCOs told us that tension and intimidation between detainees in the holding room were rare, but that if this did happen they would intervene and speak to those involved. However, they were not aware of the anti-bullying policy. Detainees were supervised at all times and could summon help if required. DCOs monitored detainees through a large window between the staff office and the holding room. Blind spots were covered by CCTV, which could be viewed in the staff office. Unrelated men and women were held together, even though Tascor policy was that this should only happen in exceptional circumstances. In the previous three months, 13 women had been held at the facility. There was no separate family room but no children had been held at the facility since the last inspection. (See paragraph 1.15.)
- 1.10** There was still no formal procedure for safeguarding adults or liaising with the local authority. Detainees were usually held for short periods and staff said that vulnerable adults would receive appropriate attention. However, lack of detail on PERs (see paragraph 1.2) could have hindered the identification of vulnerabilities. Detention staff were security cleared to enhanced level.
- 1.11** Use of force was low. However, in February 2017 a waist restraint belt was used to prevent self-harm when a detainee banged his head on the holding room walls. The paperwork we reviewed, although detailed, contained inaccuracies about the date, time and length of incident. We were concerned at the use of the waist restraint belt to prevent self-harm. DCOs received annual control and restraint training.

Recommendations

- 1.12 Unrelated male and female detainees should not be held in the same holding room.** (Repeated recommendation 1.9)
- 1.13 There should be a formal procedure for and liaison with the local authority to safeguard vulnerable adults.**
- 1.14 Waist restraint belts should not be used solely to prevent self-harm.**

³ 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).

Safeguarding children

Expected outcomes:

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

- I.15** The facility could hold children, although none had been held since the last inspection. A baby changing unit, nappies, wipes and bottles were available but there were limited activities for children. Staff said that they completed care plans for children, and there were pictorial feedback forms for children in the holding room. The Tascor child protection and safeguarding policy was displayed in the staff office.

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 could retain their legal documents, and those with a solicitor could contact them by telephone and fax. However, they still did not have email access to contact their solicitor. The holding room displayed a notice advising detainees how to obtain free legal advice, and two posters informed detainees how to complain if they had received poor immigration advice.
- I.17** In the previous three months up to 30 March 2017, 47 detainees from 22 countries had been held, including from India (19%), Iraq (17%), Iran (9%), Nigeria (9%), Afghanistan (6%) and Albania (6%). The average detention was four hours 20 minutes, with the longest at eight hours 40 minutes. However, we found a recent case from April 2017 where two detainees waited nine hours 45 minutes before transferring to an immigration removal centre (IRC). In this case, the two detainees along with five others were transferred at 10pm. A member of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) told us that delays were common. Home Office staff maintained oversight of the facility through daily visits, which were recorded in a log, and Tascor staff told us they attended the Home Officer briefing each morning.

Recommendation

- I.18** **Detainees should be held for the minimum time. Onward transportation from the facility should be arranged speedily.** (Repeated recommendation I.22)

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

- I.19** The single holding room was suitable for only short periods of detention. As at the last inspection, it contained 10 seats - four fixed padded seats around a table and metal hard seats for six people. The room was clean with some natural light but was cold; staff said they could not control the temperature and had to ask Home Office staff working in the building to adjust this. The radiator was obstructed by a wooden cover stacked with books. There was only one toilet, with no seat, for both men and women, which opened directly on to the holding room. Sanitary items were provided. (See also photographs, Appendix III.)
- I.20** The holding room had copies of a generic information booklet translated into several languages. Notices were displayed around the holding room, and there were leaflets and a list of embassies.
- I.21** Basic microwave meals were available, and a selection of snacks and some fruit was freely available to detainees in the holding room, along with drinking water. Staff provided hot drinks. Staff had access to petty cash to buy food for detainees with special dietary needs.
- I.22** The television in the holding room could only play DVDs. There was a stock of books for detainees but most were in English. Detainees could not spend time in the fresh air as the available area was insecure. Detainees were unable to smoke in the facility, and no nicotine replacement was available.

Recommendations

- I.23** **The toilet in the holding room should have a seat, and be adapted for use by people with disabilities.**
- I.24** **The holding room should have a working television.**
- I.25** **Detainees should have access to time in the fresh air, and nicotine replacement should be available to those who require it.**

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.26** We were not able to observe interactions between DCOs and detainees, but staff gave a thorough account of how they would attend to detainee welfare and put them at ease. A member of the IMB arrived during our inspection and spoke highly of the staff and their treatment of detainees. DCOs still did not wear clearly identifiable name badges.
- I.27** Staff told us that they were aware of and regularly used the telephone interpreting services. However, logs showed that telephone interpreting had only been used once in the past 12 months.
- I.28** Staff had completed recent training in equality. Detainees could practise their religion, and religious books, prayer mats and a compass were freely available in the holding room. Staff said they completed care plans for detainees with disabilities. The holding room toilet was still unsuitable for detainees with disabilities (see recommendation I.23).
- I.29** Detainees could make written complaints, and complaint forms in English and other languages were available in the holding room, along with a secure complaints box and pens. The box was emptied by a Home Office manager during the daily checks of the facility, and this was logged in the staff office. Child-friendly complaint forms and feedback forms were available in English and other languages. We were unable to obtain complaints data.

Recommendations

- I.30 Staff should wear visible name badges.**
- I.31 Telephone interpretation should be used to communicate with non-English speakers.** (Repeated recommendation I.31)

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.32** Staff said that detainees could have visitors if the Home Office approved this in exceptional circumstances. There was a declaration form for visitors to consent to a search and also to being in the holding room with the detainee and others. However, staff said this rarely happened. Friends and family of detainees could take in property and documents to the facility. Detainees could use telephones and a fax machine, but they had no access to emails or the internet.

Recommendation

- I.33** **Detainees should have access to emails and the internet.** (Repeated recommendation I.37)

Section 2. Summary of recommendations and good practice

Recommendation

To the Home Office

Preparation for removal and release

- 2.1 Detainees should have access to emails and the internet. (1.33, repeated recommendation 1.37)

Recommendations

To the Home Office and contractor

Keeping detainees safe

- 2.2 Unrelated male and female detainees should not be held in the same holding room. (1.12, repeated recommendation 1.9)

Legal rights and casework

- 2.3 Detainees should be held for the minimum time. Onward transportation from the facility should be arranged speedily. (1.18, repeated recommendation 1.22)

Recommendations

To the escort contractor

Arrival

- 2.4 Detainees should only be handcuffed following an individualised written risk assessment. (1.6, repeated recommendation 1.3)
- 2.5 Detainee risk factors should be fully described in all escort documentation. (1.7)

Recommendations

To the facility contractor

Keeping detainees safe

- 2.6 There should be a formal procedure for and liaison with the local authority to safeguard vulnerable adults. (1.13)
- 2.7 Waist restraint belts should not be used solely to prevent self-harm. (1.14)

Accommodation and facilities

- 2.8** The toilet in the holding room should have a seat, and be adapted for use by people with disabilities. (I.23)
- 2.9** The holding room should have a working television. (I.24)
- 2.10** Detainees should have access to time in the fresh air, and nicotine replacement should be available to those who require it. (I.25)

Respectful treatment

- 2.11** Staff should wear visible name badges. (I.30)
- 2.12** Telephone interpretation should be used to communicate with non-English speakers. (I.31, repeated recommendation I.31)

Section 3. Appendices

Appendix I: Inspection team

Tamara Pattinson
Laura Green

Inspector
Researcher

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

Detainees should only be handcuffed following an individualised written risk assessment. (1.3)
Not achieved (repeated recommendation, 1.6)

Unrelated male and female detainees and families should not be held in the same holding room. (1.9)
Not achieved (repeated recommendation, 1.12)

Detainees should be held for the minimum time. Onward transportation from the facility should be arranged speedily. (1.22)
Not achieved (repeated recommendation, 1.18)

Staff should receive regular refresher training in anti-bullying and suicide prevention. (1.12)
Achieved

All staff should carry anti-ligature knives. (1.13)
Achieved

DCOs should not use language that can escalate already tense situations. (1.19)
Achieved

Respect

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

Recommendations

The toilet should be adequately screened and should have a seat. (1.25)
Partially achieved

All staff should receive refresher diversity training. (1.30)
Achieved

Telephone interpretation should be used to communicate with non-English speakers. (1.31)
Not achieved (repeated recommendation, 1.31)

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

Detainees should have access to emails and the internet. (I.37)

Not achieved (repeated recommendation, I.33)

Appendix III: Facility log analysis

Short-term holding facility logs for Loughborough RCHR 1 January 2017 – 31 March 2017

We used individual-level RECOS data provided by Tascor Services to assess the characteristics and experiences of detainees held at Loughborough RCHR over a three-month period.

Overview	
Total number of detainees held at the facility during this three-month period	47⁴
Proportion of detainees who were male	72%
Average (mean) age of detainees	34⁵
Proportion of detainees who were travelling individually	98%
Number of different countries detainees originated from	22
Most common countries of origin	India (19%) Iraq (17%) Iran (9%) Nigeria (9%) Afghanistan (6%) Albania (6%)
Average (mean) length of detention	4 hours 20 minutes⁶
Longest single period of detention	8 hours 40 minutes
Proportion of detainees held for over 12 hours during a single period of detention	0%⁷
Proportion of detainees held for over 24 hours during a single period of detention	0%⁸
Proportion of detainees held at the facility more than once	0%
Average (mean) cumulative length of detention for those held more than once	N/A
Proportion of cases with a departure outcome recorded	92%

Unaccompanied children

Total number of unaccompanied children held	None
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Accompanied children

Total number of unaccompanied children held	None
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⁴ Individual detainees within the dataset were identified using a port reference number (PRN). From the 52 detention events recorded between 1 January and 31 March 2017, details of the PRN were available in 47 cases.

⁵ With ages ranging from 18 to 77 years (median age 31) (N=47).

⁶ The median time for the detention events logged was 4 hours 25 minutes (N=47).

⁷ N=47.

⁸ N=47.

Appendix IV: Photographs

Holding room



Books and items for religious prayer



Toilet in holding room

