

Detainees under escort:
Inspection of escort and removals to

Nigeria and Ghana

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

31 July–1 August 2018

Glossary of terms

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Fact page

Departure airport

Birmingham

Destination countries

Nigeria and Ghana

Destination airports

Lagos and Accra

Escort contractor

Mitie Care and Custody

Number of detainees escorted

28

Number of escort staff

86

Health care staff

Five (two on the flight)

Length of journey

19 hours (maximum)

Introduction

Operation Majestic is a regular removal flight to Nigeria and Ghana. We previously inspected the flight in April 2011, November 2013 and July 2015.

We saw some improvements on this flight compared to other recent inspections, including more proportionate use of force and more considered application of waist restraint belts, although we still identified several cases where they were not justified and kept on for too long. Staff's contribution to the smooth running of the operation at immigration removal centres should not be underestimated and we were impressed with some of the dialogue and the strength of relationships we observed, which helped calm and reassure detainees and assisted escort staff.

We saw fewer improvements in other areas of recurrent concern, including in the very lengthy waits on coaches and avoidably long journeys, which contributed to detainees' stress during removals. While escort staff generally interacted positively with detainees, they became frustrated when dealing with some demanding situations, and responded unprofessionally on occasion. Matters of simple decency, including detainees being able to go to the toilet in private and access facilities, such as pillows and blankets on an overnight flight, endured.

Disembarkation in Nigeria was far more orderly and swift now that the Nigerian authorities had facilities to process new arrivals in the airport building, rather than on the aircraft.

Overall this operation was completed reasonably efficiently and we saw some improvements, which were likely to be a result of management's focus on charter removals since our recent critical reports. However, there is still more to do to ensure that these operations are consistently well conducted and that standards are improved.

Peter Clarke CVO OBE QPM
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

September 2018

Section 1. Summary

- I.1** Eighty-six escorts removed 25 detainees to Nigeria and three to Ghana. Sixteen removals from an initial detainee manifest of 44 were cancelled, mostly because of late legal interventions. Some improvements were evident compared to recent escort operations that we inspected. The operation was conducted well overall, although some concerns were identified.
- I.2** The briefing at Spectrum House (Mitie Care and Custody's head office, near Gatwick Airport) was more organised than during previous inspections and covered security concerns adequately but paid little attention to detainees' care or potential welfare needs. During the discharge process, coach commanders welcomed all detainees, told them what was going to happen and informed them that they were being filmed for safety and security reasons.
- I.3** Searching was reasonably sensitive and careful but was not always conducted in private, and in some cases more staff than were needed were present. We saw no unnecessary guiding holds when detainees were escorted onto coaches. However, we observed very few staff informing detainees that they would be both filmed and physically guided onto the aircraft, even though generic person escort record (PER) entries suggested this had happened. Doors were still held open while detainees used the toilet on coaches, on the aircraft and in one case in the immigration removal centre (IRC) reception area.
- I.4** Escort risk assessments that we reviewed did not provide sufficient detail on individual risks or potential vulnerability. Waist restraint belts were applied on nine detainees during the operation. In a number of instances, the use of restraints continued to be authorised in borderline cases and measures were precautionary and pre-emptive. On some occasions, restraints continued to be applied for too long. However, we also saw escort and IRC staff undertake good de-escalation work, which in some cases prevented the use of restraints and in others allowed for restraints to be removed during journeys. Techniques were applied correctly and the level of force used was proportionate to the individual circumstances. Three detainees were carried onto the aircraft due to active resistance. In all cases, escort staff acted appropriately and the moves were carried out safely. The positioning and number of escort staff during the immigration surgery continued to create an intimidating atmosphere, and one PER indicated that a detainee had been refused the opportunity to speak to the chief immigration officer. All detainees could make phone calls on the coaches, which escort staff actively promoted.
- I.5** Escort staff generally treated detainees courteously. Staff remained calm and professional while dealing with some very challenging detainees, but at times appeared to lose patience, and we heard some shouting and inappropriate comments. Many escort staff tried to interact with detainees and build a rapport, but this was not consistently the case. We observed mostly good interactions between detainees and escort staff, although some staff continued to talk among themselves without considering the stress and anxiety of detainees in their care. The paramedics at the IRCs read all confidential medical notes, but some discussed medical matters within earshot of others.
- I.6** Home Office charter flight information leaflets were available for detainees at some centres and on some coaches. While they were not specifically tailored to removals to Nigeria or Ghana, they provided some useful information, such as on how to make a complaint to the Home Office. We saw no documentation on how to make a complaint about escort staff. There was a supply of Home Office complaint forms on some coaches, but we had to ask for the forms and detainees were not routinely informed of their availability.

- I.7** During the flight, some escorts tried to interact with detainees to reassure them and remained alert. However, a few escort staff fell asleep while detainees were under their supervision. Disembarkation at Nigeria and Ghana was swift and orderly.

Section 2. Background

- 2.1** 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 monitors the treatment of and conditions for detainees. Escorts are included in this remit. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.
- 2.2** This was the fourth charter flight to Nigeria and Ghana that we inspected. The aircraft was chartered by the Home Office directorate general of immigration enforcement, and Mitie Care and Custody was the escort contractor, having recently taken over the contract from Tascor. Detainees were collected from four immigration removal centres (IRCs): Colnbrook, Harmondsworth, Yarl's Wood and Campsfield House.
- 2.3** There were 28 detainees on the flight from the UK, fewer than the 44 expected. Twenty-five were being removed to Nigeria and three to Ghana. Most cancellations were the result of late legal interventions. The entire process was inspected, from the point at which detainees were collected from IRCs to arrival in Nigeria and Ghana. Inspectors attended Colnbrook, Yarl's Wood and Campsfield House IRCs before escort teams arrived. Another inspector attended the initial escort staff briefing and accompanied staff to Harmondsworth IRC.
- 2.4** This operation was conducted jointly with the Irish authorities. Eleven more detainees were collected from Dublin before proceeding to Nigeria and 31 Irish police officers acted as escorts for them. The inspection covered only the UK element of the operation.
- 2.5** Two inspectors travelled on the flight, which took off from Birmingham airport at approximately 12.47am¹ on 1 August 2018. It landed in Dublin at approximately 1.26am, Lagos at approximately 9.35am and Accra at approximately 11.38am (10.38am local time). The longest journey time from boarding a coach at the IRC to alighting in Ghana was at least 18 hours 43 minutes. Depending on when detainees boarded their respective coaches, this maximum journey time could have extended to a maximum of 20 hours 58 minutes².
- 2.6** The records for the previous three flights to Nigeria and Ghana were examined as part of this report. Those removals took place on 27–28 February 2018, 28–29 March 2018 and 30–31 May 2018. The number of detainees on those flights was, respectively, 31, 33 and 35.

¹ All timings are British Summer Time (BST) unless stated otherwise.

² The difference of two hours 15 minutes represents the length of time between the first detainee and the last detainee to board the coach departing from Colnbrook IRC.

Section 3. Safety

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are escorted in safety and due regard is given to individual needs and risks. Removals are conducted in accordance with law. Security and good order are maintained through proportional operational arrangements and force is only used as a last resort.

Preparation and departure from removal centres

- 3.1 The operation started with a staff briefing at Spectrum House, delivered mainly by the senior security officer in charge of the operation. The briefing was more organised than those we saw previously. The room was adequate for the number of staff and when managers did not think people were listening carefully enough, the briefing was interrupted and staff were instructed to be quiet and pay attention.
- 3.2 The briefing was adequate, although limited in scope. Security and matters focusing on efficiency were discussed. Risks were not overstated and there was a helpful reminder to non-supervising staff that they should relieve colleagues who were tired or at risk of falling asleep on the plane. However, the individual welfare and care of detainees and the possible stress and anxiety they were likely to be under were not mentioned. Escort staff now wore a uniform comprised of dark trousers and polo shirts, which was an improvement on the clothing previously seen, which often included military-style camouflage trousers.
- 3.3 Most detainees had been at their immigration removal centres (IRCs) for at least two nights before the flight. However, the manifest indicated that seven detainees who were scheduled to fly had made journeys to their departing IRC the previous day, usually from prisons.
- 3.4 At Colnbrook and Harmondsworth IRCs, detainees due to be removed usually remained in normal accommodation. One detainee was separated at Harmondsworth IRC, which was justified because he had recently assaulted staff. At Campsfield House, detainees were routinely relocated to the induction unit a few days before departure and could move around freely outside the unit until 11pm the night before their scheduled departure. At Yarl's Wood, they were taken to a relatively open and comfortable separation unit (the Nightingale unit) a day before departure following intelligence about a possible protest.
- 3.5 IRC staff brought detainees to the discharge areas – the process was managed effectively and with very little use of force, even though many detainees did not know when they would be flying until they were collected from their rooms. Force was used only in one instance, at Colnbrook IRC, when a detainee would not move to the discharge area. We saw excellent de-escalation at Harmondsworth IRC. Two experienced residential managers were in charge of bringing detainees to the discharge area. In several cases, they spoke to detainees at length in their cells, listening to their concerns and explaining what had to happen next. The managers were confident, clear and supportive, and managed to calm the detainees down.
- 3.6 Most detainees had only been given notice of a three-month removal window and the lack of notice was problematic for many. At Campsfield House, two detainees were brought to reception and advised by onsite Home Office staff that their final representations had been rejected. As they were still processing this news, they were informed by the coach commander (the officer in charge of each coach) that they were being taken to be removed. This came as a shock to the detainees and in the case of one, led to the use of a waist restraint belt. Another detainee had a visit about to commence, which he was told had been cancelled as he was required to depart so he could be removed.

- 3.7** At all IRCs, the coach commanders introduced themselves to detainees, provided a brief explanation of what was to follow and informed them that they were being filmed 'for safety and security' reasons and/or to ensure that staff 'did their jobs properly'. Staff were generally diligent in asking detainees if they had any phone numbers they needed to note down, as they had to leave centre phones behind and SIM cards had to be stored in their property.
- 3.8** A member of Home Office staff was present at Yarl's Wood IRC for the duration of the discharge process to answer detainees' questions, which was helpful to them and to escorts. Home Office staff were not present in any other IRC discharge areas and detainees were instead told they could only see them on the plane.

Recommendation

- 3.9** **Detainees should be given sufficient notice of their removal to allow them to prepare adequately.**

Good practice

- 3.10** *At Harmondsworth IRC, experienced residential managers spoke to detainees at length, listened to their concerns and explained what had to happen next. As a result, detainees who were upset and worried and those showing signs of resistance, calmed down. No force was used in any of these cases.*
- 3.11** *A member of Home Office staff who was present at Yarl's Wood IRC for the duration of the discharge process enabled detainees to have any last-minute questions answered, and supported escort staff with the Home Office removals policy.*

Safeguarding adults and personal safety

- 3.12** The staff-detainee ratio for the operation had been set at two to one, but it was slightly lower because of the non-attendance of some escort staff on the day of the removal operation. As detainees were withdrawn from the flight, staff stood down accordingly. Staff were generally confident and understood the process. They had received training in the *Home Office Manual for Escorting Safely*, and the Home Office confirmed that all staff were certified as detainee custody officers under part 8 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- 3.13** Searching was reasonably sensitive and careful, although in some centres the areas used were not private. At Yarl's Wood women were searched in full view of a corridor, with a male medic present throughout. At Campsfield House, a side room with a glass-fronted door and windows was used, offering limited privacy.
- 3.14** Unless they were in a waist restraint belt, detainees were now allowed to walk from centre discharge areas onto coaches without unnecessary guiding holds (holding the detainee's hand and elbow). Detainees continued to be physically guided while boarding the plane, where the use of closer escorting could be justified based on the area being high risk. However, male staff sometimes carried out this role with female detainees, which was inappropriate. Detainees were also filmed while boarding the plane. In many cases person escort records (PERs) indicated that detainees had been told they would be guided and filmed, but we only observed this information being given to detainees verbally in a very small number of instances. The generic briefing provided by coach commanders at the IRCs did not specifically mention this aspect of the process.

- 3.15** Detainees were still only permitted to use toilets on the coach and aircraft with the door left ajar and in some cases wedged with a handcuff. This blanket practice was an unnecessary intrusion on privacy. We observed the same practice in one IRC discharge area with a detainee who wanted to go to the toilet, who had been entirely compliant and was chatting amicably with IRC and escort staff.
- 3.16** The risk sections in several PERs contained general comments such as ‘Disruptive behaviour on transfer’ and ‘Criminal activity’ without specifying the exact nature of the threats that these detainees posed to others or to the removal operation. In several cases, PERs flagged detainees who had also been assessed to be adults at risk, including some at level 2, indicating professional evidence of vulnerability. However, they provided no further information about their risks.
- 3.17** Nine detainees were placed in waist restraint belts, eight before departing from their IRC and one when they were required to disembark from the coach at the airport. Five were transferred to the airport individually in a separate ‘chase van’, rather than the coach. All other detainees who were not placed in the belts remained broadly compliant throughout the operation.
- 3.18** We saw a better assessment of risks before detainees were placed in waist restraint belts than during other recent operations. We also saw escort and IRC staff undertake good de-escalation work, which in some cases prevented the use of restraints and in others allowed for restraints to be removed during journeys.
- 3.19** However, in three cases, the application of the belt was not justified. Two detainees had been placed in a belt – one because he had expressed a desire to kill himself, the other because he was on constant supervision having made previous threats to harm himself. There was no indication of the specific risks that could not be managed without using a restraint belt. In the third case, a waist restraint belt was applied on a detainee simply because he said he was not happy with his removal, despite complying with staff instructions. In all three cases the belts were applied in the restricted position (where a person can move their arms reasonably freely) but moved to the secure position (where their arms are pinned to their sides so they cannot move them) when boarding the aircraft.
- 3.20** Belts were removed in three cases as soon as staff were notified that the detainees’ removals had been cancelled, one following a Home Office decision to cancel removal directions after the detainee had been carried onto the plane. In a further five cases, belts were removed on the flight within an hour of its departure from Dublin at 3.11am. There was a presumption by many staff that restraints would remain in place until the aircraft had taken off and some did not feel they had any discretion to make a dynamic risk assessment and remove the belts at the earliest opportunity. For example, one PER stated the detainee was ‘calm and asleep’ at 2am, but their waist restraint belt was not removed until 3.20am. In another case, restraints were removed at 4am, but PER comments from as early as 23.11pm stated ‘No issues’ and indicated general compliance.
- 3.21** However, we were pleased to see some dynamic risk assessments taking place: waist restraint belts were removed from two detainees who had been aggressive on the journey to the airport and on boarding the flight. These decisions were based on the detainees’ improved behaviour and a balanced assessment of the risks presented.
- 3.22** The ninth belt was removed when the detainee was handed over to the Ghanaian authorities in Accra. There was evidence that risks had to be managed in this case. He had repeatedly told staff that he had blades secreted on his person and had stated that he wished for the restraints to remain on. His unpredictable nature made it difficult for staff to test his compliance or to de-escalate the situation significantly. During the flight his wrists were checked by medical staff and the belt was placed in the restricted position when he needed

to eat, drink or use the toilet. His PER did not accurately record his poor ongoing behaviour or his repeated threats, which justified the continued use of restraint.

- 3.23** One incident involving the use of the waist restraint belt took place at Yarl's Wood IRC. Although the detainee was difficult to manage, the situation was not handled well – staff raised their voices and showed a lack of empathy.
- 3.24** Three detainees were carried onto the aircraft due to active resistance. In all cases escort staff acted professionally and the procedure was carried out safely. Three detainees had handcuffs applied at some point while they were being moved, two of whom also had leg restraints applied.
- 3.25** Use of force techniques were applied correctly and the level of force used was proportionate to the individual circumstances. Use of force documentation we reviewed was complete, but insufficiently detailed in some cases, particularly regarding the reasons for applying leg restraints and handcuffs and how long they were used.
- 3.26** Records from the previous three removal operations to Nigeria and Ghana indicated 11 uses of force in total. Similar examples in incident reports and PER entries suggested that restraints could have been removed earlier.
- 3.27** The Home Office chief immigration officer (CIO) held a surgery to answer detainees' questions. However, security measures continued to be disproportionate and at least seven officers surrounded the detainee, without specific regard to the risks posed, while the CIO leant over the seat in front to speak to them. We were concerned to read in one PER that a detainee had not been permitted to speak to the CIO because he was in a waist restraint belt.
- 3.28** One detainee on the flight was subject to the assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT) process, however ACDT paperwork and PER entries did not reflect the efforts made to interact with the detainee.

Recommendations

- 3.29 Searching in the IRC should take place in privacy.** (Repeated recommendation 3.16)
- 3.30 All detainees should be told that they will be filmed and physically escorted onto the aircraft, and informed of the reasons why.**
- 3.31 Female staff should escort women detainees, especially where close contact is required. Male staff should not touch women detainees other than in exceptional circumstances.**
- 3.32 Unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise, detainees should be able to use the toilet in complete privacy.** (Repeated recommendation 3.12)
- 3.33 Escort documentation should clearly identify and explain the specific risk factors that need to be managed.**
- 3.34 Escort staff should always remain professional and respond to difficult or potentially volatile situations calmly to allow for effective communication with detainees.**

- 3.35** Restraints should only be applied in response to specific risks and only for the minimum amount of time. PER and use of force documentation should provide accurate justification for the application of restraints, including leg restraints and handcuffs, and note how long they were used.
- 3.36** Only the minimum number of staff required for security and safety should be around a detainee during the chief immigration officer's surgery.
- 3.37** All detainees who wish to do so should be able to see the chief immigration officer during their on-board surgery.

Legal rights

- 3.38** Detainees were advised during their discharge from IRCs that they would be given access to a mobile phone on the coach so they could call legal advisers or family and friends. Access to phones on coaches was good and detainees could make calls right up to being moved to the aircraft (see paragraph 4.4). Coach commanders also assured detainees that if a legal representation was received, they would stop the removal. Detainees were informed in most instances that they could speak to an immigration officer on the plane.
- 3.39** Detainees could keep key legal documents with them throughout the journey. Some were uncertain what, if anything, their solicitors were doing on their behalf. We saw escort staff providing active support to detainees with concerns about the legal status of the removal. At Harmondsworth IRC, one man started crying and said he wanted to apply for asylum. The coach commander acted quickly, asking him to write down his asylum request, which reception staff immediately faxed to the Home Office. Escort staff were sensitive and kind to him. At Colnbrook IRC, the coach commander established that a detainee's removal documentation contained incorrect and misleading information. Following consultation with Home Office officials, the detainee was removed from the flight.
- 3.40** Three asylum caseworkers were available at Birmingham Airport to speak to detainees who had raised issues about their safety on return, which was helpful and reassured detainees. Five detainees were removed from the flight following phone conversations between the caseworkers and the Home Office so that claims for international protection could be considered.
- 3.41** One PER we reviewed noted that a detainee was advised at 8.10pm that his removal directions had been cancelled and he would be returning to his IRC, only to be told at 8.34pm that they had been reinstated. This was likely to have been traumatic for the detainee and the facts should have been confirmed before he was informed of the first decision.
- 3.42** On the flight, detainees were asked if they wished to speak with the CIO. Each detainee was taken in turn to a seat at the rear of the front section of the aircraft. The CIO dealt thoroughly and courteously with all the questions raised, spending a good deal of time with each person and giving them as much information and advice as possible. (See also paragraph 3.27.)
- 3.43** In several cases, the CIO undertook to contact the Home Office when the flight landed, to check on the status of any last minute legal interventions. In all cases, interventions were unsuccessful. Detainees were only given very brief details about why no reprieve had been granted when they were brought to the exit of the aircraft, which was unsatisfactory.

Good practice

- 3.44** *The asylum casework team at Birmingham Airport reassured detainees about their safety on their return to Nigeria and Ghana and demonstrated that their concerns were taken seriously.*

Section 4. Respect

Expected outcomes:

**Detainees are escorted in decent physical conditions and individual needs are addressed.
Detainees are treated with humanity and respect.**

Physical conditions and property

- 4.1 The coaches were generally suitable, although the air conditioning was not effective in some and meant it was too warm. A toilet door came off its hinge in one coach and staff had to make a temporary fix. DVDs were shown on some coaches. On the coach escorting female detainees, a box containing sanitary products was placed at the front of the vehicle rather than in the toilet area, which would have been more private.
- 4.2 Detainees continued to spend a long time waiting on coaches at immigration removal centres (IRCs) before the start of their journeys, nearly three hours in some cases. There were particularly long delays at Harmondsworth IRC where, for no obvious reason, coaches left nearly two hours later than their scheduled departure times.
- 4.3 Most detainees remained on the coach until boarding the aircraft, although some were taken off for an interview with the asylum case working team (see paragraph 3.40). Boarding began at 10.20pm by which time some detainees would have been on the coach or escort vans for over seven hours.
- 4.4 Detainees received water, sandwiches and crisps soon after the coaches began their journeys. They were generally served before staff. Escort staff were more proactive than during our previous inspections in encouraging detainees to make any calls they wished to make during their journeys. We saw escorts going up and down coaches offering detainees phones. Many took up the offer and made multiple calls en route. Detainees could note down key phone numbers from their personal SIM cards before they were temporarily removed from them for the journey.
- 4.5 All coaches stopped at a motorway services station. Hot food was offered to all detainees which many appreciated, although no vegetarian or vegan alternatives were offered. However, the additional stop lengthened the overall journey by over two hours in some cases. During the stop made by the coach from Campsfield House we observed staff retrieve a detainee's SIM card from his property as he had forgotten to note down one number before leaving the centre. This was considerate and he appreciated it.
- 4.6 The aircraft was clean and warm. Hot food and drinks were provided on the flight at regular intervals and meals were suitably balanced and diverse to meet the detainees' needs. However, detainees could not use the toilets in private, no sanitary products were available in the toilets and detainees were not offered blankets or pillows.
- 4.7 There were no issues with missing property and we observed escort staff reassuring detainees that they would depart with all their property. IRC staff were equally helpful in chasing up property that remained in detainees' rooms or that had been stored locally. Detainees could wear their belts and keep paper money with them.

Recommendations

- 4.8** The time spent by detainees on a coach should be monitored, and alternatives found to holding them for long periods on a vehicle. (Repeated recommendation 3.7)
- 4.9** Sanitary products should be available in toilets in all coaches and on the aircraft.
- 4.10** Detainees should be given pillows and blankets during the flight subject to an individual risk assessment.

Respectful treatment

- 4.11** The daytime removal operation appeared more relaxed than recent night-time operations that we observed. The relationship between IRC staff and their detainees was generally good and particularly impressive at Harmondsworth IRC and Campsfield House. Managers used staff who knew their detainees and had good interpersonal skills to move detainees to discharge areas. This helped reduce tension and anxiety, potentially avoiding the need for force to be used, and generally ensuring the discharge process ran smoothly.
- 4.12** Escort staff generally treated detainees courteously and were supportive and informative in most cases. This helped offset the lack of preparation for the flight that some detainees reported. Coach commanders reminded escort staff to offer detainees toilet breaks, which we observed taking place on many occasions.
- 4.13** Staff interactions with detainees on some coaches was limited, but in most cases, it was appropriate as some detainees did not appear interested in having conversations at that point and wished to reflect quietly. On other coaches, the atmosphere was livelier. Many escort staff tried to interact with detainees and build a rapport, but this was not consistently the case. Towards the end of the coach journeys, a few became less attentive and spoke to each other in loud voices over detainees' heads. There were further examples of this on the flight.
- 4.14** A small number of detainees were aggressive and abusive and were particularly difficult to manage. Staff mostly handled the challenging behaviour very well, but at times, they responded poorly. In one case, a member of staff shouted at a detainee: 'You need to stop spitting, that's disgusting. You're not an animal. You need to keep still, it's not a difficult concept'. In another instance, a male member of staff shouted at a detainee: 'Grow up'. While on the plane and out of the earshot of detainees, an officer referred to one difficult detainee as 'the raving lunatic'. Regardless of staff frustrations during difficult experiences with detainees, such comments were inappropriate and unprofessional.
- 4.15** All detainees appeared to speak English confidently. Staff said they would use telephone interpretation if a detainee could not speak English, although, of course, it would not have been available on the aircraft.
- 4.16** Home Office charter flight information leaflets were only provided to detainees at some centres and on some coaches. While they were not specifically tailored for removals to Nigeria and Ghana, they provided some useful information, such as on how to make a complaint to the Home Office. We saw no documentation on how to make a complaint about escort staff. Home Office complaint forms were available on some coaches, but we had to ask for them and detainees were not routinely informed of their availability.
- 4.17** Detainees were seated appropriately throughout the plane. Those in waist restraint belts were positioned discreetly towards the rear of the plane in the centre seats with a member

of escort staff on either side. Other detainees were seated in a window seat or in the centre of the plane with a member of escort staff next to them. The treatment of women was better than at the last inspection. They were boarded via a different door at the front of the plane and did not have to walk past male detainees.

- 4.18** Medical care was satisfactory. In some cases, an IRC health care staff member in the discharge area provided information, but in most cases envelopes containing medical notes had been prepared. Escort paramedics opened them routinely rather than on the basis of individual risks. If extra information was required, centre health care staff could be consulted.
- 4.19** In the case of one detainee at Campsfield House, there was some confusion about whether he was taking medication to prevent tuberculosis. The paramedic correctly sought to clarify the information, but also discussed the matter with the detainee within earshot of escort and centre staff, which compromised the detainee's confidentiality.
- 4.20** Two staff from IPRS Aeromed (the supplier of travel-related medical services) flew on the plane. They checked on detainees throughout the flight, including those on whom force had been used. On arrival in Lagos and Accra, sealed medical notes and medication were given to each detainee. However, one detainee's medication was only handed over when prompted by a Ghanaian official.
- 4.21** During the flight, some escorts tried to interact with detainees to reassure them, although others appeared to be asleep or were dozing during the flight rather than supervising the detainees. Others remained awake and we observed good communication between staff and detainees in some cases.
- 4.22** Person escort record (PER) entries we viewed lacked detail. Most entries were perfunctory, and few were conversational or descriptive. One PER we viewed was completed particularly unprofessionally and included comments, such as 'Oh what joy! A Burger King feast!', 'Leaving the Emerald Isle' and 'Waltzed off plane' in response to detainees' disembarkation from the aircraft.

Recommendations

- 4.23** Escort staff should use respectful language throughout the removal process.
- 4.24** Detainees should be able to submit complaints about escort, centre and Home Office staff. They should be fully informed of these processes and of the availability of complaint forms.
- 4.25** Staff should not sleep while they are responsible for the personal supervision of a detainee. (Repeated recommendation 3.18)
- 4.26** Person escort records should be completed professionally and provide sufficient descriptive details of the interactions between escort staff and detainees.

Section 5. Preparation for reintegration

Expected outcomes:

**Detainees are prepared for their arrival and early days in the destination country.
Any unacceptable behaviour in destination countries is appropriately challenged.**

- 5.1** Some detainees told us they had little or no connections with the countries to which they were being removed and had lived in the UK for many years. One particularly upset Colnbrook detainee said: 'I'm not going to Nigeria, I have no one there.'
- 5.2** Little specific advance information was given to people being removed to Nigeria or Ghana. Unlike previous inspections, detainees were not routinely given a copy of the booklets *Returning to Nigeria* or *Returning to Ghana*. Some of the booklets on Nigeria were present in the Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) discharge area, but few detainees noticed them or were directed to them.
- 5.3** The fact that the chief immigration officer (CIO) could make emergency grants to help with onward travel was not well advertised, and was not, for example, mentioned in the Home Office information leaflet. In one case at Colnbrook IRC, a detainee received inaccurate advice prior to their removal about the availability of funds for onward travel from the destination airport.
- 5.4** The handover between British and local officials in Nigeria was more efficient and prompt than at the last inspection. The Nigerian authorities now had facilities for processing the arrivals in the airport building, rather than on the aircraft. As at the last inspection, the handover of Ghanaian detainees was efficient. However, while in Ghana the woman detainee was handed over to a female immigration official, the officials in Nigeria were all male.

Recommendation

- 5.5** **Detainees should be given information about their destination country, including the help and support that is available on their arrival. It should be provided in advance of their removal and detainees should receive assistance so they can access sources of support and advice.**

Section 6. Summary of recommendations and good practice

Recommendations

To the Home Office

- 6.1** Detainees should be given sufficient notice of their removal to allow them to prepare adequately. (3.9)
- 6.2** Escort documentation should clearly identify and explain the specific risk factors that need to be managed. (3.33)

Recommendations To the Home Office and Mitie Care and Custody

- 6.3** Searching in the IRC should take place in privacy. (3.29, repeated recommendation 3.16)
- 6.4** Only the minimum number of staff required for security and safety should be around a detainee during the chief immigration officer's surgery. (3.36)
- 6.5** All detainees who wish to do so should be able to see the chief immigration officer during their on-board surgery. (3.37)
- 6.6** The time spent by detainees on a coach should be monitored, and alternatives found to holding them for long periods on a vehicle. (4.8, repeated recommendation 3.7)
- 6.7** Sanitary products should be available in toilets in all coaches and on the aircraft. (4.9)
- 6.8** Detainees should be given pillows and blankets during the flight subject to an individual risk assessment. (4.10)
- 6.9** Detainees should be able to submit complaints about escort, centre and Home Office staff. They should be fully informed of these processes and of the availability of complaint forms. (4.24)
- 6.10** Detainees should be given information about their destination country, including the help and support that is available on their arrival. It should be provided in advance of their removal and detainees should receive assistance so they can access sources of support and advice. (5.5)

Recommendations

To Mitie Care and Custody

- 6.11** All detainees should be told that they will be filmed and physically escorted onto the aircraft, and informed of the reasons why. (3.30)
- 6.12** Female staff should escort women detainees, especially where close contact is required. Male staff should not touch women detainees other than in exceptional circumstances. (3.31)
- 6.13** Unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise, detainees should be able to use the toilet in complete privacy. (3.32, repeated recommendation 3.12)

- 6.14** Escort staff should always remain professional and respond to difficult or potentially volatile situations calmly to allow for effective communication with detainees. (3.34)
- 6.15** Restraints should only be applied in response to specific risks and only for the minimum amount of time. PER and use of force documentation should provide accurate justification for the application of restraints, including leg restraints and handcuffs, and note how long they were used. (3.35)
- 6.16** Escort staff should use respectful language throughout the removal process. (4.23)
- 6.17** Staff should not sleep while they are responsible for the personal supervision of a detainee. (4.25, repeated recommendation 3.18)
- 6.18** Person escort records should be completed professionally and provide sufficient descriptive details of the interactions between escort staff and detainees. (4.26)

Good practice

- 6.19** At Harmondsworth IRC, experienced residential managers spoke to detainees at length, listened to their concerns and explained what had to happen next. As a result, detainees who were upset and worried and those showing signs of resistance, calmed down. No force was used in any of these cases. (3.10)
- 6.20** A member of Home Office staff who was present at Yarl's Wood IRC for the duration of the discharge process enabled detainees to have any last-minute questions answered, and supported escort staff with the Home Office removals policy. (3.11)
- 6.21** The asylum casework team at Birmingham Airport reassured detainees about their safety on their return to Nigeria and Ghana and demonstrated that their concerns were taken seriously. (3.44)

Section 7. Appendices

Appendix I: Inspection team

Kam Sarai	Team leader
Deri Hughes-Roberts	Inspector
Gavriella Morris	Inspector
Hindpal Singh Bhui	Inspector
Jonathan Tickner	Inspector

Appendix II: Progress on recommendations from the last report

The following is a summary of the main findings from the last report (30 June–1 July 2015) and a list of all the recommendations made, organised under the three broad tests of healthy detention practice. 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 escorted in safety and due regard is given to individual needs and risks.

Recommendations

Tascor managers should eliminate unnecessary delays in the handover process by improving procedures and training staff. (3.6)

Not achieved

The time spent by detainees on a coach should be monitored, and alternatives found to holding them for long periods on a vehicle. (3.7)

Not achieved (recommendation repeated, 4.8)

Escort documentation should clearly indicate to staff the specific risk factors that need to be managed. (3.8)

Not achieved

Unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise, detainees should be able to use the toilet in complete privacy. (3.12)

Not achieved (recommendation repeated, 3.32)

Searching in the IRC should take place in privacy. (3.16)

Not achieved (recommendation repeated, 3.29)

Only the minimum number of staff for security and safety should be positioned around a detainee, based on individual risk assessment. (3.17)

Not achieved

Staff should not sleep while they are responsible for the personal supervision of a detainee. (3.18)

Not achieved (recommendation repeated, 4.25)

Escorts should not hold detainees' elbows when escorting them through secure areas, and should do so in less secure areas only on the basis of an individual risk assessment. (3.24)

Achieved

Physical restraints should be applied only when necessary to control the detainee, and only for as long as they are needed for safety or to effect removal. (3.25)

Not achieved

Respect

Detainees are escorted in decent physical conditions and individual needs are addressed. Detainees are treated with humanity and respect.

Recommendations

Unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise, detainees should be able to consume hot drinks and obtain pillows and blankets during flights. (4.3)

Partially achieved

Female detainees should be kept separate from unrelated male detainees at all times. (4.11)

Achieved

Detainees should be told how to make complaints or submit comments about Home Office or escort staff during or after the removal. (4.13)

Partially achieved

A detainee's medical records should be opened and read only when there is evidence of cause for concern. (4.17)

Not achieved

Preparation for reintegration

Detainees are prepared for their arrival and early days in the destination country.

Recommendation

The British government should work with the Nigerian government to establish an appropriate reception facility for returnees at Lagos airport. (5.7)

Achieved