

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

Dallas Court, Salford

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

1–2 May 2019

Glossary of terms

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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

Mitie Care and Custody

Last inspection

23 March 2016

Escort provider

Mitie Care and Custody

Introduction

The Home Office immigration operations for Greater Manchester are based at Dallas Court, Salford. Within the building, are the immigration compliance and enforcement (ICE) team, UK Visas and Immigration caseworkers and a reporting centre which individuals subject to immigration control attend regularly as a condition of their temporary admission to the UK. Once a decision has been made to remove someone from the UK and there are no barriers to removal, the Home Office may detain the individual at the reporting centre.

There are two places of detention in Dallas Court: the short-term holding facility and the transit lounge. The transit lounge provides facilities for comfort stops and brief stays when detainees are transferred on long journeys. It is also occasionally used by immigration enforcement officers to interview detainees, although no records are kept of its usage.

The facility has remained generally unchanged since the previous inspection. An office for detainee custody officers (DCOs) is located adjacent to the two holding rooms. We observed staff treating detainees with respect and sensitivity. Detainees are detained either from the reporting centre or following arrest in the community. During the previous three months, 76 detainees had been held, for an average time of five hours and three minutes. The longest period of detention had been 10 hours and 30 minutes.

Four detainees were held in the facility at the time of the inspection. The facility is usually staffed by two DCOs, including one female officer. 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, 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 2016 we made nine recommendations, three of which were achieved, two were partially achieved, three were not achieved and one was no longer applicable.
- S2 The escort vehicles were clean and well stocked. Detainees were not routinely handcuffed during their transfer between vehicles and the facility. Searching was not done in private. Detainees could make a telephone call shortly after arrival, but this was not generally in private.
- S3 Detainee custody officers (DCOs) showed good interpersonal skills and helped to put detainees at their ease.
- S4 Male and female detainees were held separately, and DCOs had good oversight of the holding rooms. Only one suicide and self-harm warning form had been completed in the previous three months, despite evidence that three detainees had been restrained to prevent self-harm in the same period. DCOs and escort staff carried anti-ligature knives when they had detainees in custody.
- S5 There was a safeguarding adults policy, but staff were not clear how to apply it. Children were not held in the facility. Use of force was rare and had recently been used only to prevent self-harm.
- S6 A transit lounge provided a larger holding space, with natural light, but was used mainly as a comfort stop for detainees and crews in transit. It was also used occasionally by immigration staff for detention interviews.
- S7 Detainees could maintain contact with legal representatives.
- S8 The two holding rooms were clean, but small and cramped. Toilet doors had been improved, to provide privacy. Hot and cold drinks and food were offered regularly.
- S9 There was evidence that professional telephone interpreting services were not used sufficiently. Detainees could practise their religion, and DCOs were familiar with different religious needs. Detainees could complain formally in writing.
- S10 Detainees could not access email or the internet.
- S11 During the inspection, detainees were transferred to the Manchester Residential Short-Term Holding Facility (STHF). Other possible destinations included Morton Hall and Colnbrook immigration removal centres (IRCs). Staff provided detainees with contact details of the IRC or residential STHF to which they were being transferred, and pointed out its location on a map of the UK.

Section 1. Safety

Arrival and early days in detention

Expected outcomes:

Detainees travelling to and arriving at the facility are treated with respect and care.

Risks are identified and acted on. Induction is comprehensive.

- I.1** Most detainees were taken into detention from the reporting centre which they had attended as part of their usual reporting requirements. Those arrested in the community were brought to the facility by immigration enforcement officers. Vans drew up next to the door leading directly into the holding facility, in a secure parking area. Detainees were not usually handcuffed when leaving the van unless a risk assessment deemed it necessary.
- I.2** Person escort records were used to document transfers to and from the facility by escort staff. All detainee custody officers (DCOs) and escort staff carried anti-ligature knives. The vans we inspected were clean and adequately equipped with water, first-aid supplies and closed-circuit television (CCTV).
- I.3** Detainees coming from a reporting centre were met by immigration enforcement officers in the reporting room and brought directly into the office adjacent to the holding rooms. They were not handcuffed.
- I.4** After explaining the reasons for detention, immigration officers handed responsibility for detainees to the DCOs. A rub-down search was conducted in the office; this was carried out with care and in a manner to put the detainee at ease, but was not private, as it could be seen by anyone in the holding rooms. Portable screens were available but not used.
- I.5** Property was checked and tagged in front of the detainee, who signed to confirm this. Detainees were not allowed to retain their own money, which we deemed to be an unnecessary restriction.
- I.6** DCOs provided a brief induction and asked some basic questions using a checklist. However, detainees were not asked about their health or state of mind following their detention.
- I.7** DCOs explained to detainees that their primary role was to care for the detainee's welfare, and we observed them being attentive to detainees' needs throughout the day, making routine checks and regularly offering food and drinks. Detainees were able to make telephone calls to legal representatives, family and friends. Those without money could use the office telephone, although this was not in private.

Recommendation

- I.8 All searching should be conducted in private.**

Safeguarding adults and personal safety

Expected outcomes:

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

- I.9 There was a safeguarding adults policy, which included a vulnerable adult warning form to be completed as necessary. DCOs were aware of this form but were unclear of its purpose and how and when to use it. They knew about the national referral mechanism, to identify and support victims of trafficking, but they did not consider it to be their responsibility to use it, assuming that this would be done by immigration enforcement officers. However, DCOs were clear that if they had any concerns, they would share these immediately with their managers.
- I.10 DCOs continued to have good oversight of the two holding rooms. They were able to observe detainees through glass panels and view footage from the two CCTV cameras monitoring each holding room.
- I.11 Unrelated male and female detainees were held separately. One holding room was equipped with reading materials, mainly for women and children, and had freely available sanitary products in its toilet. In the other, reading materials were mainly aimed at male detainees. In the previous three months, 83% of detainees had been male and 17% female.
- I.12 DCOs made good efforts to help detainees feel at ease, and those we spoke to said that they felt safe.
- I.13 All DCOs had received training in the Home Office Manual for Escorting Safely and had received refresher training within the previous nine months. Force had been used on three occasions, involving three detainees, in the previous three months. Use of force incident forms had been completed for each event and reviewed by a manager. The force used in all incidents had been to prevent the detainee from self-harming. Written statements by DCOs described appropriate attempts to de-escalate the situation, and the use of a proportionate level of force.
- I.14 DCOs were aware of the triggers for self-harm and the use of the suicide and self-harm warning forms. However, only one of these forms had been completed in the previous three months, despite the fact that three detainees had self-harmed. The copies of personal escort records that we inspected contained relevant entries for risk of self-harm.

Safeguarding children

Expected outcomes:

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

- I.15 Children were no longer held at the facility. Staff told us that when families had previously been held, they had mainly been located in the transit lounge, which was a larger room with natural light. There were some toys, children's books and board games available in one of the holding rooms and in the office.

Legal rights

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are fully aware of and understand their detention, following their arrival at the facility and on release. Detainees are supported by the facility staff to freely exercise their legal rights.

- I.16** Immigration officers explained to detainees that they were being detained, and served legal documents. The purpose of each document was explained to the detainee with the help of professional telephone interpreting services. However, all documents were written in English. The immigration officer then faxed these documents to the detainees' legal representative, if they had one.
- I.17** Detainees who already had a legal representative when they entered the facility could contact them by telephone. Immigration enforcement officers offered to fax documentation to them on behalf of detainees immediately following their detention. However, for detainees who were not already represented, there was no information available on possible sources of independent advice.
- I.18** During the period 1 February to 30 April 2019, detainees had been held at the facility for an average of five hours and 15 minutes, and the longest detention had been 10 hours and 30 minutes. Throughout this time detainees did not have access to exercise or fresh air.

Recommendation

- I.19 Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air** (Repeated recommendation I.20)

Respect

Accommodation and facilities

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are held in a safe, clean and decent environment. They are offered varied meals according to their individual requirements. The facility encourages activities to promote mental well-being.

- I.20** The accommodation had not changed since the previous inspection. There were two small holding rooms without natural light, opening onto the holding room office. Furniture included a fixed table and two benches in one room, and a fixed table and two chairs in the other. Blankets and pillows were available but there was nowhere to lie down, other than on the floor. A few posters were provided on the walls, which reduced the starkness of the environment, but the rooms were small and claustrophobic, and suitable only for short stays.
- I.21** The toilet facilities had improved. New doors had been fitted, and provided adequate privacy, and the toilets now had seats. The toilet facilities were clean. One bathroom contained a selection of sanitary items, and a bin for their disposal.
- I.22** An information leaflet, translated into 15 languages, was available in the holding room but was located in an unmarked folder. This was not clearly pointed out to detainees, and we did not observe any detainees referring to it. One detainee we spoke to was unaware of its existence.
- I.23** Details of health needs and medications required by detainees was obtained by immigration enforcement officers before a decision was made to detain and bring the detainee to the holding room. There was no longer a medical triage service for DCOs to consult about detainees' health needs or whether carried medication could be taken. They could call the nursing service at a nearby immigration removal centre (IRC) but this was not always available; they could also call emergency services, although DCOs told us that this sometimes led to the inappropriate use of these services. In the event of a detainee appearing to need non-emergency medical attention, DCOs sought to fast-track their removal to an IRC.
- I.24** Snacks were available in the holding rooms, including croissants and crisps. A selection of microwave meals and hot and cold drinks were offered to detainees throughout their time in detention, although the choice for vegetarians was limited and there were no options for vegans. However, DCOs said that they would buy in food if they could not meet a particular dietary need.
- I.25** A television was available in each holding room, and detainees were offered the remote control, so that they could choose what to watch. A daily newspaper was available. The range of newspapers available in languages other than English was limited but they were current. Other reading materials were mainly in English. Board games were also available but not routinely offered.
- I.26** The transit lounge had been refurbished since the previous inspection. It provided a large space, with natural light. It contained a fixed table and benches to seat four people. A further row of four fixed chairs was located to the side. An office was located adjacent to it, from which there was full view of the room through a large observation window. We were told that it was used as a comfort stop for detainees and crews in transit, and that immigration

enforcement officers sometimes used it for interviews. However, no records were kept of its usage.

Recommendation

- I.27 A record should be kept of how often detainees are held in the transit lounge, and the length of their detention.**

Respectful treatment

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are treated with respect by all staff. Effective complaints procedures are in place for detainees. There is understanding of detainees' diverse cultural backgrounds. Detainees' health care needs are met.

- I.28** Four detainees were held in the facility at the time of the inspection. DCOs displayed good interpersonal skills and checked that detainees understood what was happening to them and what would happen next. They were friendly in their interactions, and proactive in helping detainees to contact family, friends or legal representatives. For example, one detainee who was struggling to get through to his contacts was invited to retry several times from the office telephone.
- I.29** Complaint forms, in a range of languages, and a complaints box were available in both holding rooms. These were pointed out to detainees. However, no complaints had been received in the previous six months and DCOs could not remember any complaints being submitted in the previous year. A dummy complaint we submitted took a week to be answered.
- I.30** DCOs had been trained in diversity during their induction but had undergone no refresher training. They were aware of different religious needs, including the requirements of Ramadan. Detainees were asked about their religious observance, and Qur'ans and Bibles were available. Prayer mats and compasses were also provided.
- I.31** During the inspection, professional telephone interpreting services were used appropriately for all four detainees, to ensure that they understood that they were being detained, the reasons for their detention and that they were being served legal documents. Interpreters remained on the line to translate for DCOs during the searching and induction process. However, there was no further use of the service, despite the fact that one detainee appeared to understand little English. Records showed that there had been 18 uses of telephone interpreting in the previous 10 months. Given our observations during the inspection, this level of usage was insufficient for the cohort of detainees being held at the facility.

Recommendation

- I.32 Professional telephone interpreting services should be used routinely, to assist detainees with poor spoken English skills.**

Preparation for removal and release

Communications

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to maintain contact with the outside world using a full range of communications media.

- I.33** Detainees could not receive visitors but family and friends were able to deliver property. During the inspection, the friend of one detainee arrived at the reporting centre to collect the latter's house key, which a DCO took to him. DCOs also explained to him how to arrange a visit that evening at the detention centre, and asked escort staff to inform the centre on his arrival.
- I.34** Detainees were allowed to make telephone calls or send text messages. Where possible, a detainee's own SIM card was transferred to a basic mobile phone that precluded the use of the internet or social media. Detainees were allowed to use their own mobile phone if it did not provide access to the internet or have an integral camera. Each holding room contained a payphone, which detainees could use to make outgoing calls and receive incoming calls.

Recommendation

- I.35 Detainees should have access to the internet, including e-mail, social networking sites and Skype unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise.**
(Repeated recommendation I.37)

Leaving the facility

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are prepared for their release, transfer or removal. They are able to retain or recover their property. Families with children and others with specific needs are not detained without items essential for their welfare.

- I.36** As soon as DCOs received notification of where detainees were to be moved to, they passed this information on to the detainees. This helped to prepare detainees for their removal. Wallet-sized cards containing the contact details of their destination IRC or residential STHF were provided, and DCOs pointed out the location on a map of the UK on the holding room wall. Over the previous three months, most detainees had been removed to Manchester Residential Manchester Residential STHF, which was a short distance away. Other destinations were Morton Hall, Yarl's Wood and Harmondsworth IRCs.
- I.37** Escort staff collecting the detainees conducted a rub-down search before removal. This took place in the holding room, in front of other detainees, which lacked respect. During the inspection, escort staff arrived much sooner than detainees had been told to expect, and the suddenness of their arrival and manner of the searching increased their anxiety.

Section 2. Summary of recommendations and good practice

Recommendations

To the Home Office and facility contractor

- 2.1** Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air. (1.19, repeated recommendation 1.20)

Accommodation and facilities

- 2.2** A record should be kept of how often detainees are held in the transit lounge, and the length of their detention. (1.27)

Communications

- 2.3** Detainees should have access to the internet, including e-mail, social networking sites and Skype unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise. (1.35, repeated recommendation 1.37)

Recommendations

To the facility contractor

Arrival and reception

- 2.4** All searching should be conducted in private. (1.8)

Respectful treatment

- 2.5** Professional telephone interpreting services should be used routinely, to assist detainees with poor spoken English skills. (1.32)

Section 3. Appendices

Appendix I: Inspection team

Fran Russell

Inspector

Appendix II: Progress on recommendations from the last report

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

Safety

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

Recommendations

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

Partially achieved

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

Achieved

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

Partially achieved

Immigration Enforcement officers should serve all legal documentation as soon as detention begins. (1.18)

Achieved

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

No longer applicable

Detainees should not be held for substantial periods without access to exercise in the fresh air. (1.20, repeated recommendation 1.49)

Not achieved (recommendation repeated, 1.19)

Respect

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

Recommendations

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

Achieved

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

Not achieved

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 the internet, including email, social networking sites and Skype, unless an individual risk assessment indicates otherwise. (I.37)

Not achieved (recommendation repeated, I.35)

Appendix III: Photographs



Right-side holding room



Left-side holding room



Holding rooms



Transit lounge