

ACTION PLAN – Report on an inspection visit to court custody facilities

CLUSTER: Greater Manchester

TIMETABLE	DATE
Date of inspection	2 to 12 December 2019
Report published	26 March 2020
Action plan submitted	

Rec. no	Recommendation	Accepted / Rejected	Response / action taken or planned	Action owner	Target date	Update
5.1	<p>Treatment and conditions, Main recommendation: Handcuffs should only be used on detainees if this is proportionate and justified by an individual risk assessment. (1.25)</p>	Accepted	<p>Under the existing contract, GEOAmeY manage the use of restraints as a standard approach set out in standard operating procedure (SOP) 059. The SOP dictates the level of handcuffing required by areas and was introduced to reduce the risk of escapes.</p> <p>GEOAmeY have recently introduced an individual risk-based approach to handcuffing to support social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in line with the changes that will be introduced under the Generation 4 contract which is due to commence at the end of August 2020, whereby the use of restraints will be based on individual risk assessments. This will ensure that restraints are only applied when necessary whilst safety and security is maintained.</p> <p>GEOAmeY managers and PECS Contract Delivery Managers (CDMs) will carry out dip tests during court visits, providing advice and feedback</p>	GEOAmeY	October 2020	

			to staff whilst the transition is embedded.			
5.2	Leadership, strategy and planning: Staff understanding and implementation of the content of ongoing training and development should be improved. (2.14)	Accepted	<p>All new GEOAmeY officers attend a 28 day comprehensive initial training course (ITC) which includes mental health and safeguarding awareness followed by a minimum of 1 week shadowing with a nominated coach/mentor. Officers also receive refresher training for first aid, control and restraint, MMPR & mental health awareness.</p> <p>In order to enhance staffs knowledge and understanding of mental health, GEOAmeY are working closely with the Charity MIND. From July 2020 GEOAmeY are launching a new initiative that will put in place local 'champions' who will be the subject matter experts having received enhanced mental health training. These champions will be based within court clusters and will be available to offer support & guidance as a contact point for Officers.</p> <p>Champions will be able to liaise with MIND if they have any questions they feel unable to answer and will receive annual refresher training to ensure their knowledge remains current.</p>	GEOAmeY	December 2020	
5.3	Leadership, strategy and planning: HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) should develop a safeguarding policy,	Accepted	<p>PECS and GEOAmeY have been working with HMCTS who are in the process of developing a safeguarding policy.</p> <p>Whilst this policy is still under development, GEOAmeY do have</p>	HMCTS (HQ), PECS & GEOAmeY	October 2020	

	and all staff should be made aware of safeguarding procedures and referral mechanisms for children and vulnerable adults at risk. (2.15)		<p>processes in place to ensure that any detainees who are identified as, or appear vulnerable are provided with support and are signposted appropriately.</p> <p>HMCTS Customer Directorate is conducting a formal review of all of its processes and responsibilities that relate to safeguarding. The review will recommend how we might best meet the needs of our users and support the development of an HMCTS safeguarding policy. The PECS escort contractor has Standard Operating Procedures for safeguarding.</p>			
5.4	Leadership, strategy and planning: The environment for detainees held in the IAC should be improved. (2.16)	Accepted	Activities for the detainee have been provided including: books, adult colouring books & pens, pack of cards. A daily newspaper is provided on the day as well. Useful Information has been displayed on the walls as well. We are awaiting installation of either paper towel dispensers/warm air driers in the detainee toilets (male & female).	HMCTS (Greater Manchester Civil, Family and Tribunals Cluster)	October 2020	
5.5	Individual rights: Cases involving detainees should be prioritised. HMCTS, Prisoner Escort and Custody Services, and the escort and custody contractor should investigate and address the reasons for the prolonged periods that some detainees, including children,	Accepted	<p>The listing of cases is a judicial function, however HMCTS & GEOAmey work with the judiciary in order to prioritise hearings involving those held in custody where possible.</p> <p>When a delay occurs, the GEOAmey Court Custody Manager will raise this as an issue at the following day's team information meeting as well as escalating through the GEOAmey management chain to ensure any significant concerns are highlighted to HMCTS and PECS, particularly</p>	HMCTS (Ops)/GEO Amey	October 2020	

	spend in court custody cells. (3.15)		<p>relating to children and vulnerable detainees.</p> <p>GEOAmey will ensure they highlight the requirement for detainee priority listings in order to reduce, where possible the time detainees spend in custody and managers will confirm the process for raising issues at the "TIB" or other relevant joint HMCTS meeting, providing evidence that cases are being listed.</p> <p>Daily cross agency dialogue to discuss the order of the list, with a view to giving priority to youths, female & adult detainees.</p> <p>This cross agency working is particularly robust at Manchester Magistrates' Court, which handles the majority of custody cases.</p>			
5.6	Treatment and conditions: Women and children should be transported separately from adult men. (4.20)	Accepted	<p>Where reasonably and practical, GEOAmey make best endeavours to transport women and children separately from adult men. However, the current contract does permit the use of escort vehicles with a separation capability, which allows different types of prisoners (male/female, adult/young people) to be carried on the same vehicle. The separation screen ensures these groups do not come into contact during the journey and additionally provides sound attenuation.</p> <p>The Generation 4 contract is designed to reduce the occasions when women and children will be required to be transported with adult men.</p>	GEOAmey	October 2020	

			A custody officer is always present in the cell area of the vehicle to ensure support and supervision.			
5.7	Treatment and conditions: Staff should use professional telephone interpreting services, to check on the welfare, risk management and understanding of detainees who speak little or no English, on arrival and throughout their stay in court custody. (4.21)	Accepted	<p>All GEOAmeY officers have the ability to access interpreting services for detainees and instructions for use are set out in the standard operating procedures.</p> <p>GEOAmeY recognise that this service is often underutilised and are taking steps to encourage staff to make more effective use of the service. The service has recently featured in the 'WOU', a weekly notice informing all staff of the importance and value of this service including a guide of when and how to use the service.</p> <p>Cordless telephones have been purchased to make the service more accessible and a monthly report on each courts use is provided to the GEOAmeY Managers so as they can monitor uptake.</p> <p>GEOAmeY Managers and CDMs will continue to promote the service and to challenge staff where it is noted that the service is not being effectively utilised.</p>	GEOAmeY	October 2020	
5.8	Treatment and conditions: The individual needs of all children transported to, and held in, court custody should be understood and	Accepted	Under the Generation 4 contract, children and young people (CYPs) will always be transported separately from adult prisoners with the exception of some CYPs being transported from police stations to court. These are usually very short journeys and the	GEOAmeY	October 2020	

	consistently met. (4.22)		<p>separation screen would always be used.</p> <p>Under the new contract, GEOAmeY are introducing enhanced care and provisions for CYPs. This includes new infotainment devices which will be made available on journeys as well as improved boredom alleviation packs which will include age appropriate reading material and quizzes as well as colouring materials.</p> <p>Officers will actively engage with CYPs throughout their time in GEOAmeY's care in order to build positive relationships and to help alleviate any anxieties (see 5.9).</p> <p>PECS now have two CDMs dedicated to the care of children and young people in custody and to oversee the CYP contract. These CDMs carry out regular court visits to assess processes for children and to ensure their care and welfare needs are met. They also have strong links to other criminal justice services which support the care of young people in custody.</p>			
5.9	<p>Treatment and conditions: Custody staff who deal with children should receive specific training, including on the use of minimising and managing physical</p>	Accepted.	<p>An enhanced level of care to all CYPs whilst in the care of GEOAmeY is being introduced in the Generation 4 contract. Officers will be trained to specifically care for CYPs and to recognise their additional emotional and physical needs.</p> <p>GEOAmeY have invested in a strategic partnership with the</p>	GEOAmeY	October 2020	

<p>restraint techniques. (4.23)</p>		<p>children's charity Barnardo's to help design and deliver bespoke training for all officers who work with children around building positive relationships and how the impact of trauma can affect the behaviour of CYPs, this will be in addition to safeguarding and child protection training.</p> <p>All CYPs will receive an enhanced care provision where officers will remain with them whilst at court engaging and interacting with them throughout their time at court. They will accompany them in the courtroom and ensure that they understand what is happening throughout the day.</p> <p>There will be boredom alleviation packs available at all courts, which will include age appropriate reading material, colouring materials, quiz's and board games.</p> <p>CYPs will not be routinely hand cuffed but rather hand cuffed upon a risk based approach. All officers will received safeguarding training.</p> <p>Children will also not be searched unless there is a reason to suspect they may have something concealed, this would have to be approved by a court custody manager or officer in charge.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that COVID 19 is affecting the rollout of training which cannot be delivered at the planned rate because of the need for social distancing.</p>			
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			<p>The dedicated CYP CDMs will monitor and assure the new introductions to the service, reviewing use of restraints, searching as well as care and welfare.</p> <p>PECS are also introducing a quarterly welfare board to review all incidents involving CYPs.</p>			
5.10	<p>Treatment and conditions: Detainees coming from prison or police custody should be accompanied by a person escort record that includes clear and accurate information of any current risks to themselves or others. (4.36)</p>	Accepted	<p>The PER is key vehicle for ensuring that information regarding risks posed by prisoners is always available for staff responsible for the individuals care.</p> <p>PECS and GEOAmeY are working together to improve the quality of PERs.</p> <p>PECS issued a notice to contractors in April 2020, reinforcing the process that contractor staff should follow when they are found to have an incomplete PER. This includes checking the PER and highlighting missing mandatory fields to dispatching staff for correction at the point of handover as well as an escalation process should significant risks be missed.</p> <p>GEOAmeY carry out a comprehensive PER review, producing a monthly consolidated report to highlight where PERs are not completed to the required standard. These failings are shared with the relevant prisons and the police in order to drive up the quality of information communicated.</p>	GEOAmeY/ PECS	October 2020	

			<p>PER completion will be added as an agenda item to the regional PECS Stakeholder Meeting where poor completions will be discussed and challenged as necessary.</p>			
5.11	<p>Treatment and conditions: Regular cell checks should be carried out on time, should normally include interaction with the detainee and should be recorded accurately. (4.37 & 4.27)</p>	Accepted	<p>GEOAmey are responsible for the continuing care and safety of all detainees whilst in court custody. The Court Custody Manager or Officer in Charge must ensure that checks of all detainees in their custody are carried out to the standard required in the standard operating procedures and that all checks and interactions are recorded onto the e-PER.</p> <p>GEOAmey Managers will brief and deliver training to staff in order to improve the quality of interaction with custodies and will conduct dip tests to quality assure the improvement.</p> <p>PECS CDMs will also carry out checks during their visits.</p>	GEOAmey	October 2020	
5.12	<p>Treatment and conditions: Court custody managers should understand the main risks associated with detainees in their suite, and provide a briefing for their staff accordingly. (4.38 & 4.26)</p>	Accepted	<p>It is a contractual requirement and expectation from PECS that all staff are briefed by the court custody manager or officer in charge regarding any vulnerability and/or risks relating to detainees.</p> <p>Training will be delivered to court custody managers to improve the quality of briefings, this will include the requirement to brief staff coming on duty after the initial briefing as well as further briefings should new custodies</p>	GEOAmey	July 2020	

			<p>arrive or risks change throughout the day.</p> <p>GEOAmeY managers and PECS CDMs will observe and review briefings to ensure they are carried out to the required standard.</p>			
5.13	<p>Treatment and conditions: Searching of detainees should be carried out effectively and consistently across all suites, in line with a policy which restricts it to situations where it is clearly necessary. (4.39)</p>	Accepted	<p>The current searching strategy included in SOP 061 was updated in 2015 in line with HMiP recommendations, however as a result of COVID, searching has currently moved to an individual risk based approach to support the government guidelines on social distancing and where necessary, PPE is used.</p> <p>For Generation 4, the searching strategy is currently under review. This review will include consideration of risk and frequency to ensure that searching is only carried out where necessary.</p>	GEOAmeY	October 2020	
5.14	<p>Treatment and conditions: All detainees should be helped to prepare for leaving custody with practical consideration of any imminent risks and needs, and with the opportunity to wear their own clothes as they leave. (4.40)</p>	Accepted	<p>Detainees who are cleared for release from court custody are taken through a release checklist (Form-OPS-0066) which details the assistance they can expect to receive on leaving custody along with reviewing any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>Staff will be reminded of their responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided with an 'Onwards & Upwards' leaflet as well as details of local support agencies.</p>	GEOAmeY	October 2020	

			Where practical, GEOAmev will allow custodies to change into their own clothes before leaving the custody area, however there are a number of custody suites where this is not possible.			
5.15	Treatment and conditions: All court cells should be clean and free from graffiti, and all ligature points should be removed. (4.50)	Accepted	<p>During the daily opening checks, GEOAmev staff check all cells for offensive graffiti and any ligature points. Cells are taken out of action if they contain any graffiti that is offensive, racist, sexual or homophobic. This is reported to HMCTS for cleaning.</p> <p>Cells are also checked for potential ligature points and any identified are reported to HMCTS and if necessary cells can be taken out of action.</p> <p>However ligature points form only part of the risk process and should be considered in conjunction with the overall risk process for each individual, ensuring that those most at risk are located in the safest accommodation.</p> <p>Through the local Stakeholder meetings, a review of the HMCTS key check & test document will be used to drive forward improvements.</p> <p>HMCTS Operations Managers are working up a schedule regarding deep clean of cells. The action plan will detail the approach to ligature points and graffiti.</p> <p>The relationship between HMCTS and cell staff means there is robust reporting on both these issues.</p>	HMCTS (Property)/ GEOAmev	October 2020	

			Report of offensive graffiti ligature issues is acted upon immediately by HMCTS. Action plan will detail the process.			
5.16	Treatment and conditions: Fire drills to practise emergency evacuations should be carried out in all the court custody suites. (4.51)	Accepted	<p>HMCTS Fire and Incident Officers are required to practice emergency evacuation procedures twice a year. Once where notice is given and the building does not need to be evacuated. The second requires a full evacuation with no prior notice.</p> <p>Fire drill records are held by the HMCTS and are recorded on the monthly HMCTS key check & test document.</p> <p>GEOAmeY will work with HMCTS to confirm that all custody units are participating in fire drills as required.</p> <p>HMCTS have protocols and timelines in place at each court site to meet the fire drill/evacuation procedures. Detail to follow with regard to this as part of the action plan</p>	HMCTS (Ops & Property)/ GEOAmeY	October 2020	
5.17	Treatment and conditions: All custody staff should receive annual first-aid refresher training, to maintain their skills. (4.59)	Rejected	GEOAmeY officers are trained in first aid at work and resuscitation and attend 2 day refresher training course every 3 years in line with current legislation; both GEOAmeY and PECS have internal processes in place to monitor this.	GEOAmeY		
5.18	Treatment and conditions: All custody staff should have regular mental health and substance misuse	Accepted	Drugs and alcohol (including legal highs) and mental health awareness training is delivered to GEOAmeY officers as part of their initial training course. As well as this, staff are provided with refresher training every 3 years.	GEOAmeY		

	awareness training. (4.60)		<p>In order to enhance staffs knowledge and understanding of mental health, GEOAmeY are working closely with the Charity MIND. From July 2020 GEOAmeY are launching a new initiative that will put in place local 'champions' who will be the subject matter experts having received enhanced mental health training. These champions will be based within court clusters and will be available to offer support & guidance as a contact point for Officers.</p> <p>Champions will be able to liaise with MIND if they have any questions they feel unable to answer. Champions will receive annual refresher training to ensure their knowledge remains current.</p>			
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Recommendations		
Accepted		14
Accepted Subject to Resources/Partially Accepted		
Rejected		1
Total		