

Report on the unannounced inspections
of four short-term non-residential holding
facilities:

Gatwick Airport, North Terminal

Gatwick Airport, South Terminal

London City Airport

Dover Asylum Screening Centre

November 2004 – January 2005

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

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Introduction

This is the second combined report on 'non-residential' short-term holding centres that we have produced. It contains reports of inspections of four centres: Gatwick North and South, London City airport, and Dover asylum screening centre. All are run by GSL UK Limited (GSL) under contract with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).

Although these centres are designed for short stays, they can and do hold detainees overnight, for periods of up to 36 hours – indeed at Gatwick South we found that ten detainees had been held for over 24 hours during the last three months. None of the facilities we inspected was suitable for such overnight stays – we found detainees sleeping on tables, or in plastic chairs, sometimes without adequate heating, blankets or bedding.

All centres could hold men, women and children, but lacked the facilities for proper separation. None had adequate child protection arrangements, and one, at London City Airport, was completely unsuitable to hold children. No centres had regular visits from healthcare staff, or offered medical check-ups routinely to detainees on arrival; and suicide and self-harm procedures and training were lacking in three of the centres.

In previous reports, we have expressed concern about levels of external supervision and independent monitoring of these centres. In none of the four inspected were there routine and recorded management checks by IND staff; nor was there any independent monitoring of detainees' welfare. Some centres had occurrence books, but at both Gatwick centres entries were irregular, with no evidence of management checks. No centre had a complaints procedure.

We have now inspected 12 short-term holding centres: the first time these facilities have been exposed to independent scrutiny. Our inspections have identified some important shortcomings in the conditions and treatment of detainees held there. As a consequence, we have developed some general recommendations, both to IND and to GSL, to ensure a consistent standard of safety and decency in these facilities, and to minimise the stress and isolation for detainees, for whom this will usually be their first experience of detention. Additionally, we have recommended to the Home Secretary that he invites the National Council of Independent Monitoring Boards to examine the feasibility of setting up a system of independent monitoring visits. I hope that these recommendations are accepted.

Anne Owers
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

June 2005

Background

HM Inspectorate of Prisons inspects short-term holding facilities, residential and non-residential, which are under the control of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). An inspection programme of these places of short-term custody began during the summer of 2004. Reports on the inspections of non-residential facilities will be published in groups of four. The reports on residential facilities will be published in groups of three.

This report covers four unannounced inspections of non-residential holding facilities carried out during 2004 and 2005. The report begins with a summary of significant findings and recommendations, followed by individual reports on each of the four facilities.

Short-term holding facilities covered in this report:

Gatwick Airport, North Terminal, West Sussex

Gatwick Airport, South Terminal, West Sussex

London City Airport, London

Dover Asylum Screening Centre, Dover

GSL UK Limited runs all four facilities under contract with IND.

The healthy custodial establishment

HE.1 The concept of a healthy prison was introduced in our thematic review *Suicide is Everyone's Concern* (1999). The healthy prison criteria have been modified to fit the inspection of short-term holding facilities, both residential and non-residential. The criteria for short-term holding facilities are:

Safety – detainees are held in safety and with due regard to the insecurity of their position

Respect – detainees are treated with respect for their human dignity and the circumstances of their detention

Activities – detainees are able to be occupied while they are in detention

Preparation for release – detainees are able to keep in contact with the outside world and are prepared for their release, transfer or removal.

HE.2 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.

Safety

HE.3 Custody staff in all four short-term facilities provided good general standards of care and were aware of detainees' immediate needs. Each of the centres appeared to be well run, with good links to local immigration teams. There was a lack of the independent monitoring found in other immigration detention facilities and no on-site monitor from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) had daily oversight of service provision.

HE.4 None of the facilities were suitable for men, women and children to share and London City Airport holding room was too small to hold up to six detainees, including women and children, and two members of staff. Gatwick North and South and Dover Asylum Screening Centre were used for overnight detention and because of the lack of proper facilities, were totally unsuitable for that purpose.

HE.5 All four holding centres had inadequate provision for childcare and child protection. Dover Asylum Screening Centre immigration staff had good links with social services but none of the facilities had a child protection policy in place, and staff likely to be in contact with children had not undergone enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

HE.6 Although there was no evidence that self-harm or bullying was a problem in any of the facilities, there were no formal policies to deal with either.

HE.7 Information about legal status, any appeal rights and how to make a bail application was lacking in all four facilities.

HE.8 There were deficiencies in health and safety policies and/or procedures in all facilities.

Respect

HE.9 In all four holding centres, custody staff were respectful in their dealings with detainees. They attempted to allay understandable anxieties and to make the process of detention less traumatic. The use of first names was common and all staff wore clear name badges.

HE.10 None of the holding rooms had adequate healthcare provision or screening. Gatwick North and South and Dover had access to a port medical officer, used primarily for people on medication. London City Airport relied solely on paramedic emergency input.

HE.11 There was no information available in any language about the function of the holding rooms or their facilities; nor did detainees have information about making complaints or reporting racist incidents. There was no reading material available in languages other than English and none of the facilities had a disability policy or a diversity policy or officers who was known to custody staff.

HE.12 There was no access to telephones in London City Airport and access was inadequate in the other facilities. Detainees were not allowed to use their own mobile phones and telephones did not have privacy hoods, which was disrespectful given detainees' needs to contact family, friends and advisers following their detention.

HE.13 No hot meals were provided in any of the holding rooms, though detainees could be held for more than six hours. All holding rooms provided pre-packed sandwiches, biscuits and hot and cold drinks.

Activities

HE.14 There were insufficient activities to alleviate boredom in all four holding rooms. There was no opportunity for exercise in the fresh air at any of the facilities.

HE.15 There was very little reading material available and Gatwick North did not have a working television. Gatwick South had no TV in the room in use and Dover Asylum Screening Centre had a TV with no sound.

Preparation for release

HE.16 There was very limited opportunity to prepare for release, transfer or removal. Detainees were not, in the main, allowed visitors, nor were they generally allowed home to collect possessions. Many had to leave issues unresolved before transfer or removal, which led to considerable and understandable anxiety as some had been arrested and detained unexpectedly. There was a lack of provision to enable those facing removal to close their affairs in this country and recover their property. In the Dover Asylum Screening Centre a minority were referred to Migrant Helpline, a

voluntary organisation with an office in the port area, which received funding from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to assist with asylum support.

General recommendations (for all centres)

To the Home Secretary

HE.17 The Independent Monitoring Board's National Council should be invited to propose a mechanism for regular, independent monitoring of short-term holding centres.

To the Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)

HE.18 There should be regular, documented supervision of each holding room by on-site immigration managers, reporting to senior managers at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).

HE.19 Custody records of those held under the authority of IND should record all time spent in successive places of detention, including police cells.

HE.20 Written reasons for detention should be provided in a language detainees can understand.

HE.21 Detainees should receive written information about the place of detention and what will happen next in a language they understand.

HE.22 Detainees should not be held for substantial periods or overnight in accommodation which lacks adequate sleeping, washing, exercise and dining facilities.

HE.23 Families with children, and women, should be held in separate and appropriate accommodation.

HE.24 All holding facilities should have a comprehensive child protection policy agreed with the local area child protection committee. Staff in contact with children should receive appropriate training and all staff should undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

HE.25 Detainees should either be provided with adequate telephone facilities, including a free phone call on arrival, or be able to use mobile phones to contact families and advisers and sort out practical problems.

To all Centre Managers

HE.26 Custodial staff should receive refresher training in anti-bullying and self-harm and suicide prevention and adequate policies and procedures should be in place.

HE.27 All detainees should have healthcare checks within 24 hours of arrival, and a healthcare practitioner should visit the facility every day.

- HE.28 There should be a race relations and diversity policy in every holding room, and an assessment of the impact of procedures on different religious, ethnic and cultural groups should be conducted.
- HE.29 There should be a complaints procedure in every short-term holding facility.
- HE.30 All centres should keep daily occurrence logs, recording details of each detainee, and there should be regular management checks.
- HE.31 There should be a disability policy and a designated disabilities officer in every holding room.
- HE.32 Health and safety risk assessments should be produced and copies kept in each facility.
- HE.33 Detainees subject to control and restraint procedures should always be seen by a healthcare practitioner as soon as possible after the event and this should be recorded.
- HE.34 General information about legal rights, including how to apply for bail, and how to find a competent and qualified legal representative, should be freely available to detainees in a range of common languages.
- HE.35 Holding rooms should contain newspapers, books, notices and other reading material in different languages, including basic information on the facility, legal assistance and process, fire and health and safety procedures, anti-bullying and anti-racism policies.
- HE.36 Arrangements should be in place to allow detainees to recover or arrange for the disposal of their property and detainees should be informed of this.

Main recommendations in relation to individual centres

Gatwick North and South

- HE.37 These facilities are not acceptable for overnight stay and should not be used for that purpose unless proper facilities are in place.

London City Airport

- HE.38 These facilities are not suitable for the detention of children and should be urgently refurbished or not used for that purpose.

Dover Asylum Screening Centre

- HE.39 The centre should not be used for overnight stay unless proper facilities are in place.

Section 1

Gatwick Airport, North Terminal, West Sussex

Inspected: 18 November 2004
Inspectors: Hindpal Singh Bhui
Eileen Bye

Overview

- 1.1 Gatwick Airport North Terminal deals with fewer passengers than South Terminal but receives passengers from areas requiring further examination, including North and South America, Africa and the Caribbean. It has a non-residential holding room on the secure side of the airport near immigration control. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) contracts custodial care to GSL UK Limited (GSL), whose staff are shared with the South Terminal holding room. The holding room functions 24-hours a day although, if numbers are low, detainees can be put in the South Terminal holding room overnight.

Escort vans and transfers

Expected outcomes:

Detainees under escort are treated courteously, provided with refreshment and comfort breaks as required and transported safely

- 1.2 Immigration officers served detention authorisation and used interpreters as required to explain to arriving passengers why they were being detained. No escort vehicle was observed during the inspection. The escort vehicle access point was a short walk from the holding room. Staff on duty said that they could not recall a detainee ever being handcuffed, although they said this might happen in a high-risk case, subject to managerial authorisation.
- 1.3 GSL custody staff received advance notice of detainees being escorted to the terminal for removal and they arrived with the IS91 (authority to detain form).

Arrival and accommodation

Expected outcomes:

Detainees taken into custody are treated politely and courteously, given reasons for this course of action in a language they understand and kept in safe and decent conditions

- 1.4 The North Terminal holding room was next to five interview rooms used primarily by immigration officers. The room was carpeted, but had no natural light. The carpet was in need of cleaning and the room was shabby. There were pictures on the walls, but some were faded and had graffiti on them. No information was displayed on the walls. The room contained three

tables each with four fixed plastic chairs and some short padded benches. There was a payphone, a water fountain and male and female toilets with sinks. There was no television. We were told by staff that a detainee had thrown the television at the reinforced glass window. Staff could not tell us how long ago the television had been broken. The room was cold, but staff said they were unable to adjust the temperature. Blankets were not supplied. Detainees complained about the cold and were wearing their coats.

- 1.5 The room was of sufficient size for the throughput of detainees. Records showed that between eight and 23 detainees had been through the room during each of the previous seven days. Four people, men and women, were in the room during our visit. Two had been in the room for almost 20 hours, one had been there for almost 12 hours, and one for nine hours. The room was totally unsuitable for detainees to remain there overnight. Detainees in the room told that they had slept on the benches, none of which was long enough to support a prone person of average height, or they had slept on the floor, without blankets.
- 1.6 Families, unaccompanied minors and disruptive detainees were placed in one of the interview rooms next to the holding room, within the secure area. On the day of the inspection there was one unaccompanied young girl in the interview room in a state of some distress. Immigration staff visited her periodically and one of the GSL staff regularly offered her drinks. She was there for approximately six hours before departing with a family member. The room was small, dingy, poorly decorated, and the furniture was in a state of disrepair. It was an inappropriate environment in which to hold a young person, or a family.
- 1.7 New arrivals were pat-down searched and had their property documented and stored. Detainees were allowed to retain adequate clothing and their money.
- 1.8 All new arrivals were offered a hot or cold drink, but newly arrived detainees were not allowed a free telephone call to inform friends or legal representatives of their whereabouts.
- 1.9 As the facility held men, women and children, a minimum of two staff, male and female, were supposed to be on duty at all times. Detainees we spoke to during the inspection told us that they had been well treated by staff on arrival, although communication was limited. New arrivals were dealt with and put into the holding room as quickly as possible. Very little information was offered to new arrivals and there was no written material, in English or any other language, about what to expect or how to raise a query in the holding room.

Recommendations

- 1.10 The holding room should be redecorated, properly furnished and made more welcoming.
- 1.11 The television should be replaced without delay.
- 1.12 Blankets should be provided to detainees on request, following risk assessment.
- 1.13 The temperature of the holding room should provide adequate comfort at all times.

See general recommendations and main recommendation HE.37

Legal rights

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to obtain expert legal advice and representation from within the facility. They can communicate with legal representatives without difficulty to progress their cases efficiently

- 1.14 Immigration officers used interpreters at the time of interview and detention. Detainees were given an IS91R (reasons for detention summary checklist) in English only. The reverse of this document included some telephone numbers for the Refugee Legal Centre and Immigration Advisory Service. Any telephone call made in the holding room was likely to be overheard by others in the room. No written information explaining status, appeal and bail rights was seen. There were no information notices at reception or in the holding room. We saw no leaflets of the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, suggesting how to find qualified legal advice, and no free telephone call to contact a legal representative was allowed.

Recommendation

- 1.15 Detainees should be able to make a free and private telephone call to legal representatives and this should be documented.

See general recommendations

Casework

Expected outcomes:

Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated. Detention is for the minimum period necessary

- 1.16 Most of the detainees passing through the holding room were held for further examination following arrival, or awaiting removal. The average length of detention was about six hours, although periods in excess of 12 hours were not uncommon. We noted an 18-year old had been held for 35 hours 45 minutes shortly before the inspection. He was then transferred to Oakington reception centre.
- 1.17 The Immigration Service control area was close to the holding centre. There was good observation of the holding room and good collaboration with custodial staff. A chief immigration officer and inspector were designated to oversee the detention facility. The chief immigration officer visited the holding room at least twice a day, although these visits were not logged.
- 1.18 A log was kept of those detainees who had been in detention for over 12 hours. This book had to be signed by immigration staff at the 12-hour point and every six hours thereafter. It helped to ensure that detainees were not 'forgotten', something that immigration staff told us had happened before. However, the names of neither of the two detainees present who had been there for 20 hours had been entered into the book, nor had the 35-hour case been properly recorded.

Recommendation

- 1.19 The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) staff's supervisory checks of the holding room should be logged.

See general recommendation HE.18

Duty of care

Expected outcomes:

The centre exercises a duty of care to protect detainees from risk of harm

Bullying, self-harm and suicide

- 1.20 Staff were seated directly in front of the holding room and had a clear view of all parts of the room apart from a small area by the toilets. Staff could remember no incidences of bullying or self-harm. There were no anti-bullying or self-harm and suicide policies.
- 1.21 We were told that detainees on medication were seen by the port medical inspector, if referred, and that paramedics could also be called to attend medical emergencies. In the event of an emergency, staff used an alarm to call for more assistance, and had quick dial access to police.

See general recommendations

Health and safety

- 1.22 Fire extinguishers and a sealed first aid kit were available to staff. We were told that the chief immigration officer was a designated fire officer and GSL staff had received first aid and fire training. Annual fire training courses were planned but had not yet begun. All staff that we asked were aware of evacuation procedures and meeting points.

Childcare and child protection

Expected outcomes:

Children are detained only in exceptional circumstances. Children's rights and needs for care and protection are respected and met in full

- 1.23 During the inspection an unaccompanied minor was being held for further examination. If available, an airline 'nanny' was asked to sit with an unaccompanied minor while immigration staff checked the suitability of arrangements for admitting the young person or pending referral to West Sussex social services. Immigration staff had gone to some effort over a period of time to develop a protocol with the local authority to refer unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors for assessment and care. The port medical officer might also be involved in age assessment, as well as health checks, where there was doubt.
- 1.24 Some IND staff had received special training in interviewing minors, but there was no child protection policy in place. Custodial staff did not have special training or Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks to enhanced level.

- 1.25 There were minimal special facilities for children. Nappies and baby food were available or could be purchased from a shop on the airport concourse but this was not advertised. There were no toys or other activities for children.

Recommendation

- 1.26 Written advice given to detainees should include the availability of nappies and food suitable for babies and children.

See general recommendations

Positive relationships

Expected outcomes:

Those detained are treated respectfully by staff, throughout the duration of their stay

- 1.27 Detainees had no complaints about their treatment by custodial staff. Staff wore name badges and inspectors observed them being courteous and respectful. GSL staff circulated between the two holding facilities in north and south terminals. However, detainees told us that, apart from on reception and discharge; there was little interaction with custodial staff. Detainees with a question attracted staff attention by knocking on the glass screen or the door.

Diversity

Expected outcomes:

There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural norms.

Detainees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, nationality, gender or religion and there is positive promotion and understanding of diversity

- 1.28 No racist incidents had been recorded in the occurrence log (see recommendations 1.32 and 1.36) on the three days in which it had been filled in (16, 17 and 18 November), and staff could not remember any incidents. There was no complaints system and no evidence that thought had been given to enabling detainees to make race-related complaints. We saw no evidence of an impact assessment of local policies.
- 1.29 We were told that detainees could obtain copies of the Koran, Bible and other religious texts on request. Staff were able to find two copies of the Bible and two of the Koran, but detainees were not informed that holy books were available. Detainees with limited English could not easily obtain information during their detention following their immigration interview. The holding room staff said they relied on sign language to communicate with detainees who could not speak English.
- 1.30 GSL staff could not remember people with disabilities being detained in the past. We were told that a chief immigration officer was responsible for health and safety matters, including disability issues, but holding room staff were not aware of any specific policies.

Recommendations

- 1.31 Religious texts should be freely available to detainees, who should be informed of their existence in a language they understand.
- 1.32 Detainees should be aware of how to make racist incident or other complaints, and assisted to do so.

See general recommendations

Facility rules

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to feel secure in a predictable and ordered environment

- 1.33 Detainees were given no written information in any language about their place of detention. There was no information in the holding rooms about expected codes of conduct. A recent and positive initiative was the use of an occurrence log, which was used for all significant occurrences relating to detainees in the holding rooms. Staff were required to note anything significant about detainees or the management of the holding rooms, including requests from detainees, visits from managers and handover information. However, there were records for only three days, 16, 17 and 18 November. Staff were unsure why there had been no entries prior to these dates.
- 1.34 All GSL staff were trained in control and restraint techniques but we were told that use was rare.
- 1.35 There was no formal complaints system. No independent visitors or monitors made periodic visits to check conditions of detention or receive complaints.

Recommendation

- 1.36 The occurrence log should be used as intended.

See general recommendations

Services

Expected outcomes:

Services available to detainees allow them to live in a decent non-punitive environment in which their everyday needs are met freely and without discrimination

- 1.37 The holding room contained a payphone with a minimum charge of 30p (the usual British Telecom charge is 20p). Reverse charge calls could be made to landlines, but not to mobile phones. Detainees were not allowed access to their own mobile phones. Custody officers did not handle money. In some cases an immigration officer agreed to exchange a detainee's foreign currency for sterling and buy a telephone card, but this was neither advertised nor guaranteed.

- 1.38 Detainees were offered drinks and a meal of sandwiches, crisps and biscuits three times a day. This food was prepared at the nearby Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre. One detainee who had a vegan diet was given a bag containing two apples, two oranges, a milk chocolate bar and biscuits containing milk products, which was a wholly inadequate attempt at a vegan meal and contributed to his increasing irritability and frustration during the nine hours of his detention. He had effectively been offered only fruit and drinks during this time and felt he needed more solid food.
- 1.39 There was no fridge in the holding room. Food for those hungry in between meal deliveries was collected from the fridge in the Gatwick South holding room office. None of the sandwiches were suitable for vegetarians or vegans.

Recommendations

- 1.40 Minimum telephone charges should be in line with most BT public telephone boxes.
- 1.41 Staff should offer to change money to suitable coins or cards so that detainees can use the telephone and this should be advertised.

See general recommendation HE.25

- 1.42 Nutritious, balanced meals should be available for detainees held beyond a short period of time. Special diets should be catered for.
- 1.43 There should be a fridge in the holding area.

Activities

Expected outcomes:

The facility encourages activities and provides facilities to preserve and promote the mental and physical well being of detainees

- 1.44 Detainees could be held for 24 hours or more, frequently immediately after a long flight or a journey in a secure vehicle, but there was no access to fresh air or exercise. The facility was in the restricted secure area (airside), in a non-smoking zone. There was nothing to occupy detainees in the holding room; no television, games, books, dictionaries or newspapers. We saw one detainee reading his own bible, which he had been allowed to recover from his luggage.

See general recommendations

Preparation for release

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to maintain contact with family, friends, support groups, legal representatives and advisers, and are given notice of their release, transfer or removal

- 1.45 Assistance to prepare for removal, transfer or release was minimal. Contacting anyone was difficult since no free telephone call was offered, and using the telephone in the holding room depended on having a telephone card or the right money. Retention of mobiles was not allowed, although people might be allowed to take numbers from their mobiles. Some detainees had been detained in the country without notice and without preparation. Visitors were not allowed so no one could bring detainees clothing or money.

See general recommendations

Section 2

Gatwick Airport, South Terminal, West Sussex

Inspected: 18 November 2004
Inspectors: Hindpal Singh Bhui
Eileen Bye

Overview

- 2.1 The South Terminal at Gatwick Airport handles a larger proportion of the airport's 30 million passengers a year than the North Terminal. The non-residential holding room is used to detain arriving passengers for further examination or removal, or those who had been in the country and are to be removed through Gatwick. It is located in the controlled airside area and run by GSL UK Limited (GSL) for the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). The holding room functions 24 hours a day, accommodating men, women and children for short periods. The average period in the holding room was just over six hours, although some detainees were held for more than 24 hours.

Escort vans and transfers

Expected outcomes:

Detainees under escort are treated courteously, provided with refreshment and comfort breaks as required and transported safely

- 2.2 The holding room was close to the Immigration Service control and interview rooms. Immigration officers explained to arriving passengers why they were being detained, with the help of interpreters if necessary, and then accompanied them to the facility. People due to be removed through the airport who had arrived from other parts of the country had to be accompanied by Gatwick GSL staff, who had the necessary airside passes. No escort vehicle was observed during the inspection. Detainees had no complaints about treatment by escort staff. The escort vehicle access point was a short walk from the holding room and staff on duty said they could not recall a detainee ever being handcuffed, although they said this might happen in a high-risk case, subject to managerial authorisation.
- 2.3 GSL custody staff received advance notice of detainees being escorted to Gatwick South to effect removal. They arrived with the IS91 (authority to detain form).

Arrival and accommodation

Expected outcomes:

Detainees taken into custody are treated politely and courteously, given reasons for this course of action in a language they understand and kept in safe and decent conditions

- 2.4 There were two holding rooms at Gatwick South Terminal. The designated main room was temporarily unoccupied. We were told this was because of a fault with the heating controls, which meant it was too cold for use. It had no natural light, no carpet and, apart from a fire

evacuation sign, no notices or posters on the walls. It contained a few tables with fixed plastic chairs and some fixed plastic benches. Some of the loose chair seats had been removed, leaving exposed bare metal brackets. The room also had a payphone, a water fountain, a television and male and female toilets. The lock on the male toilets was broken and there was a considerable amount of graffiti on the walls. The room was clean but in a poor state of repair.

- 2.5 The second holding room, called the overflow room, in which all detainees were held, was slightly smaller, but similar in design and decoration. It had three tables each with four fixed chairs and another eight plastic chairs. However, there were no toilets, which meant that detainees wishing to use these facilities had to go to the window and signal to staff. This was embarrassing and inappropriate.
- 2.6 The rooms were of sufficient size for the throughput of detainees. Groups of eight and 14 had been logged over the previous two days. We were told that up to 28 people might go through the rooms in one day. However, the rooms were totally inappropriate for detainees who might spend more than 24 hours in there. This happened regularly and we were told that detainees slept slouched over the tables, stretched out over the chairs or on the floor. Blankets were not available.
- 2.7 We were given conflicting accounts of what happened to unaccompanied minors. Immigration staff said they would be allowed to sit outside on the concourse with an airline 'nanny' or a member of GSL staff; but GSL staff themselves said they would be seated in the unoccupied holding room.
- 2.8 During the inspection, detainees were searched by a staff member of the same gender. One young child who arrived with his mother was not searched but 'wanded' with a metal detector. The searching observed was carried out in a sensitive, professional manner and GSL staff made an effort to put the young boy at his ease. All searches took place in a small, messy area with a dirty floor and caged roof.
- 2.9 Property was documented and stored. Detainees were allowed to keep their money and adequate clothing for warmth. All were offered a hot or cold drink. Detainees we spoke to during the inspection told us that they had been well treated by staff, although communication was limited. The reception area was small and crowded if there were more than five people in it. New arrivals were dealt with and put into the holding room as quickly as possible. New arrivals were not offered much explanation about what to expect or how to raise a query and we saw no written material, in English or any other language. As the facility held men, women and children, a minimum of two staff, male and female, were supposed to be on duty at all times. However, we were told that there had been occasions when only one custody officer was on duty.

Recommendations

- 2.10 Detainees should be held in a room with toilet facilities.
- 2.11 Detainees should be provided with blankets on request following risk assessment.

See general recommendations and main recommendation HE.37
- 2.12 Detainees should not be held in the holding room unless adequate staffing levels are met.

2.13 The holding rooms should be redecorated and made more welcoming.

Legal rights

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to obtain expert legal advice and representation from within the facility. They can communicate with legal representatives without difficulty to progress their cases efficiently

2.14 Immigration officers used interpreters during the initial detention interview. Detainees were given an IS91R (reasons for detention summary checklist), in English only. The reverse of this document included some telephone numbers for the Refugee Legal Centre and Immigration Advisory Service. Calls made from the telephone in the room could be overheard by other detainees. No written information explaining status, appeal and bail rights was seen. There were no notices at reception or in the holding room. We saw no leaflets of the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner suggesting how to find qualified legal advice. Of the detainees questioned, only one said that she had managed to contact a legal adviser, although she had since run out of money and was unable to make further contact.

Recommendation

2.15 Detainees should be able to make free and private contact with legal representatives and this should be documented.

See general recommendations

Casework

Expected outcomes:

Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated.

Detention is for the minimum period necessary

2.16 Limited records were available in the holding room. Only that week's daily log was kept on site. There were three and a half days' records at the time of the inspection, during which time there had been an average of 12 detainees per day. Detainees fell into the following categories:

- Gatwick passengers detained pending further investigation before immigration officers could decide whether to allow or refuse leave to enter
- passengers refused leave to enter and held awaiting removal on the next flight
- passengers who had not been given leave to enter, but were not removed immediately, and either given a short period of temporary admission with a requirement to return and, having returned, were awaiting removal, or those who had been transferred to a removal centre and brought back for removal

- people picked up in the country by enforcement officers and held pending removal at Gatwick Airport.
- 2.17 Most of the detainees recorded in the logs were Gatwick cases. We noticed that Gatwick immigration staff appeared to be more aware of their detainees' needs than many other holding facilities.
- 2.18 The Immigration Service offices were close to the holding centre and there was good observation of the holding room and collaboration with custodial staff. A number of systems were in place to ensure frequent review of the progress of detained cases by chief immigration officers and inspectors, including twice daily team meetings. The chief immigration officer made daily visits to the holding room to double check how long individuals had been held.
- 2.19 Custodial staff also kept a separate log of cases exceeding 12 hours in the holding room. These were reported to immigration staff to ensure review. Although the average duration was just over six hours, during the previous three months we counted 73 detainees who had been held for more than 12 hours; 10 of whom had been held for 24 hours or more. The longest period was 28 hours 25 minutes. We were told that people might be held for longer than normal if the interval before removal made it difficult to make alternative arrangements. It was feared that, if detainees were transferred to a removal centre, staff might not be able to get them back in time. However, of the 10 held for more than 24 hours, only one was removed; six were transferred to removal centres; two were given temporary admission and one outcome was not recorded.

Duty of care

The centre exercises a duty of care to protect detainees from risk of harm

Bullying, self-harm and suicide

- 2.20 Staff were seated directly outside the holding rooms. They had a clear view of all parts of the unoccupied room. The occupied room had two obscured areas, one of which could be observed by looking at security mirrors. The other, beyond the payphone, was visible if staff moved from the desk to the window. Staff could remember no incidents of bullying. One member of staff who had worked in the facility for more than three years could recall no incidents of self-harm. We did not see self-harm or anti bullying policies and staff were not aware of any if they existed.
- 2.21 We were told that detainees on medication were seen by the port medical inspector, if referred, and that paramedics could also be called to attend medical emergencies. In the event of an emergency, staff were able to use an alarm to call for more assistance, and also had quick dial access to the police.

See general recommendations

Health and safety

- 2.22 There were fire extinguishers outside the holding rooms and a sealed first aid kit was located on top of the fridge behind the custody officers' desk. All staff were trained in first aid and two had received fire training. The third had no memory of such training. All staff were aware of evacuation procedures and meeting points.

Childcare and child protection

Expected outcomes:

Children are detained only in exceptional circumstances. Children's rights and needs for care and protection are respected and met in full

- 2.23 Immigration staff at Gatwick avoided detaining families with children and unaccompanied minors and were conscious that this was harmful. For short periods they might be asked to sit in the terminal. Custodial staff said that they did sometimes detain unaccompanied minors, who would be placed in the unused holding room. In some cases, they said that an airline 'nanny' was asked to sit with an unaccompanied minor while immigration staff checked the suitability of arrangements for admitting the young person or pending referral to West Sussex social services. Immigration staff had gone to some effort over a period of time to develop a protocol with the local authority to refer unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors for assessment and care. The port medical inspector was also involved in age assessment, as well as health checks, where there was doubt.
- 2.24 Children with adult relatives were admitted to the main holding room. During the inspection a woman and her five-year old son were in the holding room alongside other detainees, male and female. One of the detainees told us that his removal was arranged following arrest for a violent incident. Although two holding rooms were available, staff did not consider that the family should be accommodated separately. There was no apparent risk assessment process in the holding room and indeed staff had little information on which to base one. According to the log for the week, this was the only child detained in the holding room.
- 2.25 Some IND staff had received special training in interviewing minors, but neither IND staff, responsible for authorising and reviewing detention, nor GSL custodial staff had a comprehensive child protection policy in place. Custodial staff did not have special training or enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.
- 2.26 There was no evidence of any special arrangements for children, other than a nappy changing shelf in the toilet. Nappies and baby food were available or could be purchased from a chemist on the airport concourse, but this was not advertised. There were no toys, books, or games.

Recommendations

- 2.27 Detainees should be informed that nappies and baby food are available.
- 2.28 Toys and constructive activity material should be available for children.

See general recommendations

Positive relationships

Expected outcomes:

Those detained are treated respectfully by staff, throughout the duration of their stay

- 2.29 During the inspection, detainees said they had no complaints about their treatment by custodial staff. Custodial staff wore clear name badges and were courteous and respectful, and addressed detainees by their first names. Airside approved GSL staff circulated between the two holding facilities in North and South Terminals and shared information. However, apart from reception and discharge, there was little communication with custodial staff once detainees had been placed in the holding room. The only way they could communicate with staff was by knocking on the glass screen. When this happened, we observed staff reacting promptly and helpfully.

Diversity

Expected outcomes:

There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural norms.

Detainees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, nationality, gender or religion and there is positive promotion and understanding of diversity

- 2.30 While there was no racist incident log book, an occurrence log was meant to be used for all significant occurrences relating to detainees in the holding rooms. There were no recorded racist incidents in the book for the three days on which it had been filled in during the previous week, and staff could remember no incidents. There was no complaints system of any sort, and no evidence that thought had been given to enabling detainees to make race-related complaints. There was no assessment of the impact of local policies or procedures on different ethnic and cultural groups.
- 2.31 We were told that detainees could obtain copies of the Koran, Bible and other religious texts on request, but staff were able to find only two copies of the Bible, one in Italian and one in English. Detainees were not informed that holy books were available. Detainees with limited understanding of English could not easily ask questions to obtain information during their detention following their immigration interview. The holding room staff, though sympathetic, tended to rely on sign language.
- 2.32 Although a rare occurrence, staff could remember people with disabilities being detained in the past. They described an occasion when they had removed a walking stick from a disabled person who then had to ask a fellow detainee to signal his need to use the toilet as he could not walk unaided. Staff were not aware of a designated disabilities officer.

Recommendations

- 2.33 Sufficient religious texts should be freely available to detainees, who should be informed of their existence in a language they understand.
- 2.34 Detainees should be aware of how to make racist incident or other complaints, and assisted to do so.

See general recommendations

Facility rules

Detainees are able to feel secure in a predictable and ordered environment

- 2.35 There was no information in the holding rooms relating to rules or expected codes of conduct. A positive initiative was the use of an occurrence log. Staff were asked to note any significant occurrences relating to detainees or the management of the holding rooms, including requests from detainees, visits from managers and handover information. However, there were records for only three days in the previous week. Staff were uncertain why there had been no entries for the rest of the previous week.
- 2.36 All GSL staff were trained in control and restraint techniques. Two incident reports relating to a use of force earlier in the day had been filled in by GSL staff. A woman detainee being escorted on to a flight by one male and one female officer had started taking off her clothes, and had refused to board the flight. She was restrained by the female officer and brought back to the holding room. The forms had been properly completed and had been checked by a supervisor in the early afternoon. We interviewed the detainee concerned in private and, though still distressed at her situation, she was complimentary about the way that GSL staff had handled the situation. She said that she had given them no option but to restrain her and that the use of force was minimal and had not been painful. Staff had continued to talk to her to de-escalate the situation and the male officer had been careful not to make any contact with her. There was no record of a medical practitioner having been called to examine the detainee.
- 2.37 There was no formal complaints system. No independent visitors or monitors visited the facility to check conditions and receive complaints.

Recommendation

- 2.38 The occurrence log should be updated daily.

See general recommendations

Services

Expected outcomes:

Services available to detainees allow them to live in a decent non-punitive environment in which their everyday needs are met freely and without discrimination

- 2.39 The holding room contained a payphone with a minimum charge of 30p (the usual British Telecom charge is 20p). Detainees without means were not offered a free phone call. Detainees were not allowed to use their own mobile phones. They were offered drinks and sandwiches, crisps and biscuits three times a day. This food was prepared at the nearby Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre. We were told that special diets were catered for. There was a fridge containing food for those who were hungry in between meal deliveries. It contained several sandwiches, none of them vegetarian. Nappies, sanitary products and baby milk formula were available to detainees on request. Nappies were kept in stock, and the other products were purchased from the nearby chemist as necessary. However, there was no

guarantee that the shop would be open at the required time and essential products should therefore have been kept in stock.

Recommendations

- 2.40 Minimum telephone charges should be in line with BT charges.
- 2.41 A supply of essential items such as sanitary products, nappies and baby milk formula should always be kept in stock.

See general recommendation HE.25

Activities

Expected outcomes:

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

- 2.42 Detainees could be held for 24 hours or more, frequently immediately following a long flight or a journey in a secure vehicle, but there was no access to fresh air or exercise, not even for smokers. Smoking was not permitted in the holding room. There were no arrangements to occupy detainees and there was no television in the holding room. The unused holding room had a television, but there was no evidence that it was available to detainees. There were no games, books, dictionaries or newspapers.

Recommendation

- 2.43 Detainees should be able to watch television.

See general recommendations

Preparation for release

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to maintain contact with family, friends, support groups, legal representatives and advisers, and are given notice of their release, transfer or removal

- 2.44 Assistance to prepare for removal, transfer or release was minimal. Contacting anyone was difficult since no free telephone call was offered. Using the telephone in the holding room depended on having a telephone card or the right money. Detainees were not allowed to keep their mobile phones, although they might be allowed to make a note of stored numbers.

- 2.45 Custody officers did not handle money. In some cases an immigration officer agreed to take a detainee's foreign currency to exchange it for sterling and buy a telephone card, but this was neither advertised nor assured.
- 2.46 Some detainees had been detained without notice and without preparation. No visitors were allowed so no one could bring detainees clothing or money. One of the holding room occupants, detained abruptly and awaiting imminent removal to an eastern European country during winter, had only what he was wearing, a thin jumper and sandals. He had been initially held in a police station, where a friend had tried to deliver clothing but was turned away. He had no money, although he did have funds which he could not obtain before removal. His home in the country to which he was being removed was some 400 kilometres from the airport and he had no idea how he was going to get there.
- 2.47 Another detainee, a woman detained during one of her regular reporting appointments, was upset and had resisted removal without her money and other effects. During the previous few days she had been moved from a short-term holding centre to two removal centres, in different parts of the country, in quick succession. The first opportunity she had had to contact anyone was in the removal centre when they had given her a free telephone card. However, she was moved before anyone could visit her to bring her property.

Recommendation

- 2.48 Detainees should not be removed without clothing suitable for the destination.

See general recommendations

Section 3

London City Airport, Silvertown, London

Inspected: 1 December 2004
Inspectors: Jim Gomersall
Eileen Bye

Overview

- 3.1 The airport deals primarily with European routes including UK internal flights and is open from 6.30am to 10pm on weekdays and reduced hours at weekends. There had been 1.8m passengers through London City Airport during the past year. The single, small holding room is in an airside corridor beside immigration and police interview and store rooms. It can hold a maximum of six people (men, women and children). The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) contracts custodial care to GSL UK Limited (GSL).

Escort vans and transfers

Expected outcomes:

Detainees under escort are treated courteously, provided with refreshment and comfort breaks as required and transported safely

- 3.2 Passengers detained at the airport were accompanied to the airside holding room by immigration staff who had served the authority to detain. Some were brought to the airport from other places of detention, to be removed from City Airport. As the facility was not residential, any detainees remaining in the holding room in the evening had to be transferred elsewhere, usually to a removal centre. In some cases people were moved to an east London police station temporarily and might return to the holding room the next day. There was no movement of detainees during the inspection and no escort vehicle was seen. The main escort contractor was GSL.
- 3.3 There was a secure escort vehicle access point along the corridor from the holding room, but escorts usually used the general entrance. Staff could not recall thinking it appropriate to handcuff a detainee.
- 3.4 GSL custody staff received advance notice of detainees due to arrive and, once they had the reference, they could communicate directly with the Detainee Escorting and Population Management Unit (DEPMU) of IND. This was sometimes necessary late at night when they were kept waiting for a vehicle to collect a detainee after the airport had closed.

See general recommendations

Arrival and accommodation

Expected outcomes:

Detainees taken into custody are treated politely and courteously, given reasons for this course of action in a language they understand and kept in safe and decent conditions

- 3.5 The single room shared by staff and detainees was around 22 feet by 16 feet in size. It appeared cramped even though there were no detainees held during the inspection. There was just enough space for six hard plastic chairs and the authorised capacity was six detainees. Nearly half of the room was taken up by the 'reception' area: desk, filing cabinets, fax, small fridge and two chairs for the minimum of two GSL staff. Between the desk and the rest of the room there was an insubstantial, clear plastic partition, which reached head height. There was no separating partition alongside the desk. An alarm bell was positioned behind the desk, beside the entry door, but there was no CCTV coverage.
- 3.6 A machine offering free hot and cold drinks took up most of one wall. There was a wall-mounted television and a heater. As there was no window, there was no natural light or ventilation.
- 3.7 A single toilet led off the holding room, for male and female use. Like the rest of the holding area, it was clean and tidy. Although staff held a stock of sanitary goods, there was no sanitary bin and, according to the occurrences log, sanitary items were sometimes left on the floor.
- 3.8 Detainees brought to the room were pat-down searched, and had their property checked, alongside the reception desk, which would be potentially embarrassing if there were other detainees close by. There was no dedicated storage area. Small bags and any valuables were either kept beside the desk or left in the outside corridor.
- 3.9 Detainees were told to keep their cash with them, although they had no use for it in the holding room. There was no telephone and they were not allowed to keep their mobile phones. Nor was any initial free telephone call offered.
- 3.10 With few exceptions any medication was withheld and was only given to a detainee if approved by the immigration officer, who checked first with a medical authority. There was no port medical inspector. Staff could call on the airport fire brigade's paramedics in an emergency but any detainee with health problems had to be sent to the local hospital.
- 3.11 Detainees arrived with the Immigration Service authority to detain form (IS91). Interpreters were not used in the holding room and there was no translated information given to detainees about what to expect. The only notices on the wall were warnings. One advised against assaulting staff and another, in several languages, warned potential asylum seekers that if they failed to claim asylum on arrival they might not get support.
- 3.12 A male and female officer were on duty during the inspection, which was the minimum GSL staffing requirement, as the facility could hold men, women and children. The holding room was inappropriate for holding men, women and families with children together. We were told that unaccompanied minors were never held in the room. Immigration staff said they rarely dealt with such cases and tried to refer them to Newham social services, who were generally disinclined to accept them. However, on occasion a family with children was detained. The only special arrangement for children was a small stock of baby food and nappies, although

there was no baby changing facility. Staff said they had to borrow one of the other rooms in the corridor if someone needed to attend to a baby.

Recommendations

- 3.13 Separate male and female toilets should be installed.
- 3.14 The holding room toilet should include a sanitary disposal bin.

See general recommendations and main recommendation HE.38

Legal rights

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to obtain expert legal advice and representation from within the facility. They can communicate with legal representatives without difficulty to progress their cases efficiently

- 3.15 Immigration staff told us that they used interpreters when they interviewed and detained anyone who did not speak English. They had installed a conference telephone to enable them to engage an interpreter from the Home Office approved list. Detainees were given an IS91R (reasons for detention summary checklist) in English only. The reverse of this document included some telephone numbers for the Refugee Legal Centre and Immigration Advisory Service. No written information explaining status, any appeal rights and how to apply for bail was seen. There were no leaflets or notices of the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner on how to find qualified legal advice. No free telephone call was offered and there was no telephone in the holding room. We were told that immigration staff could arrange for a legal visit in a nearby interview room, although this was rare.

See general recommendations HE.20 and HE.34

Casework

Expected outcomes:

Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated. Detention is for the minimum period necessary

- 3.16 The great majority held were the airport's own passengers, recently arrived or awaiting removal, with a few being removed from City Airport on behalf of other ports. There was evidence that the immigration team sought to minimise detention and progressed cases as quickly as possible. Only the previous month's log was retained in the holding room, and this showed that, in the 21 days that it was occupied during the previous 30 days, 47 people were held; 11 of whom were women. No minors were detained. The highest occupancy was five people. The average length of detention was just over two hours, the longest was four hours. Thirty detainees were put on to flights, 10 were transferred to removal centres and seven were released on temporary admission.

Duty of care

Expected outcomes:

The centre exercises a duty of care to protect detainees from risk of harm

Bullying, self-harm and suicide

- 3.17 Staff sat in the same area as those detained and did not believe that there had been a problem with any form of bullying or harassment. There was no policy in place to advise staff on how to manage bullying behaviour. We were also told that there had not been a serious suicide attempt since the room was opened. There was a self-harm and suicide policy and the F2052SH documentation was used to record any self-harm and to monitor those considered to be at risk. The staff present had been trained in first aid and there was an up to date first aid kit available. The room was ligature free but the taps in the single toilet presented a risk.

See general recommendations

Health and safety

- 3.18 We were told that the room was checked daily for defects and that these were reported to the airport maintenance department for rectification. The reporting of deficiencies was not documented in the holding facility. We were also told that on-site immigration staff had conducted a health and safety audit but there was no health and safety policy document or risk assessments available to staff in the room.
- 3.19 Fire instructions were on display in the staff area but there were none for detainees. However, staff remained with detainees at all times and would lead them to the designated safe area in the event of an emergency. Fire fighting equipment was available in the main corridor but there was no fire extinguisher in the holding room.

Recommendation

- 3.20 Fire fighting equipment should be installed in the holding room.

See general recommendations

Childcare and child protection

Expected outcomes:

Children are detained only in exceptional circumstances. Children's rights and needs for care and protection are respected and met in full

- 3.21 There was no child protection policy or protocols available and staff had not had Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks to enhanced levels. If children with families were detained they were all held in the holding room pending transfer. Any issues about children held were referred to immigration staff. There were no recreational facilities available for young children and no access to fresh air. The holding room was unsuitable for holding children.

See main recommendation HE.38

Positive relationships

Expected outcomes:

Those detained are treated respectfully by staff, throughout the duration of their stay

- 3.22 There were no detainees present during the inspection but both members of staff wore name badges and told us that they addressed detainees by their first names whenever possible.

Diversity

Expected outcomes:

There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural norms.

Detainees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, nationality, gender or religion and there is positive promotion and understanding of diversity

- 3.23 GSL staff received training in diversity issues during their initial training. There was no formal procedure for detainees to make a complaint about racist incidents, no race relations policy document and no impact assessment of locally implemented policies. The needs of disabled people were not addressed and there was nowhere for individual religious worship.

Recommendations

- 3.24 A racist incident reporting system should be available to detainees.
- 3.25 Detainees should have access to a room for religious worship.

See general recommendations

Facility rules

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to feel secure in a predictable and ordered environment

- 3.26 GSL staff filled out a daily occurrence sheet for their own purposes. Although the number of entries in the briefing and occurrences records indicated staff were familiar with them, entries were often about movements and offered little information about detainees. Immigration staff visits were not generally recorded but we were told that these were frequent. We saw no information for detainees about the centre rules, other than warnings not to assault staff.
- 3.27 All GSL staff were trained in control and restraint (C&R) techniques. Staff on duty said that they could not remember ever using C&R and said that they usually just talked sympathetically to detainees. The occurrence sheets for the previous month reported no such incidents.
- 3.28 There was no formal complaints system. No independent visitors or monitors visited the facility to check conditions and receive complaints.

See general recommendation HE.18

Services

Expected outcomes:

Services available to detainees allow them to live in a decent non-punitive environment in which their everyday needs are met freely and without discrimination

- 3.29 Hot and cold drinks, including soup, were freely available from a machine in the holding room. Sandwiches were delivered daily and kept in a small fridge under the staff desk. The food was good, although the range seen was limited and there was no complaints book. Staff said they could make a request to suit special needs, provided that the day's delivery had not yet been made. Stocks of crisps and biscuits, as well as baby food, nappies and sanitary products were held, although this was not advertised.

Recommendations

- 3.30 Detainees should be notified of the services and goods available to them.
- 3.31 Sanitary products should be freely available without detainees having to request them.
-

Activities

Expected outcomes:

The facility encourages activities and provides facilities to preserve and promote the mental and physical well being of detainees

- 3.32 Detainees could be held from morning to evening, but there was no access to fresh air or exercise. There was a television in the holding room and a small quantity of magazines. There were no dictionaries or foreign language reading materials.

See general recommendations

Preparation for release

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to maintain contact with family, friends, support groups, legal representatives and advisers, and are given notice of their release, transfer or removal

- 3.33 The holding room had no facilities for visitors and there was no access to a pay telephone. Many detainees were detained unexpectedly and had had no opportunity to inform family or friends or to arrange their affairs.

See general recommendations

Section 4

Dover Asylum Screening Centre, No.1 Control Building, Eastern Docks

Inspected: 18 January 2005
Inspectors: Jim Gomersall
Eileen Bye

Overview

- 4.1 The Dover Asylum Screening Centre (DASC) is located within the port area and shares a building with the Immigration Service. The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) contracts custodial care and escorting to GSL UK Limited (GSL). DASC is an initial processing centre for asylum seekers who present themselves as asylum applicants, or who are detected, either at the port or in the area.
- 4.2 One purpose of the facility is to promote speedy processing of asylum claims and it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If claimants cannot be processed quickly the facility works in tandem with the nearby short-term residential holding centre operated by Port of Dover police. Detainees might be transferred there overnight to sleep, and then be returned to DASC.

Escorts, vans and transfers

Expected outcomes:

Detainees under escort are treated courteously, provided with refreshment and comfort breaks as required and transported safely

- 4.3 Most escorted movements were undertaken by GSL staff and the custody officers monitoring the holding facility could act as escorts, around or beyond the port. Detainees at DASC had been picked up in the area. The GSL van seen during the inspection was clean. Detainees arrived with the authority to detain and any property.

Arrival and accommodation

Expected outcomes:

Detainees taken into custody are treated politely and courteously, given reasons for this course of action in a language they understand and kept in safe and decent conditions

- 4.4 The holding facility had recently opened and was in a good state of repair and decoration. There was only one large room to accommodate men, women and children and there were seats for more than 50 individuals. There was a separate and well-ventilated smoking room

attached to the main holding area and separate male and female toilets and washrooms in good condition. Sanitary protection and nappies were available on request.

- 4.5 Eleven men were detained at the start of the inspection. Custody records were not stored on site but we were told that recent monthly detention figures varied between 450 and 600. During the first 17 days of January 2005, 207 people had been detained, averaging 12 per day. These figures were made up of 180 men, 10 women and 17 children. We noted that in a number of cases people had been held at the DASC for more than 12 hours and overnight. One detainee had been held for 19 hours 25 minutes a few days prior to the inspection.
- 4.6 Staff all wore clear name badges and appeared to engage well with detainees. We were told that there was always a gender mix of staff on duty. Detainees were searched, photographed and fingerprinted, then given a screening interview to establish the details of their arrival in the UK and their personal information. Personal property was stored in sealed bags. Decisions to detain were given by immigration officers who used on-site interpreters when necessary.
- 4.7 Other than a picture of prohibited items, there were no informative notices explaining detention procedures or the rules of the facility on the walls and no booklets were available.
- 4.8 There was only one telephone in the holding room and it was not private. When it was not possible to relocate detainees to the port residential holding centre, detainees were held overnight in the holding room. No blankets or bedding were available and detainees had to sleep in the chairs provided. There was no shower or bath.
- 4.9 Hot and cold drinks were available all day, free of charge and the vending equipment was clean and in good condition.
- 4.10 There was no on-site healthcare provision and the Port of Dover medical officer was asked to attend in the first instance. Detainees requiring further care or assessment were escorted to the local hospital. No regular health screening took place in the facility.

See general recommendations and main recommendation HE.39

Legal rights

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to obtain expert legal advice and representation from within the facility.

They can communicate with legal representative without difficulty to progress their cases efficiently

- 4.11 Most of the detainees seen in the holding room had recently arrived, and were tired and confused. A member of a group found in the back of a lorry that morning described a journey of 20 days in the lorry. Immigration officers were trying to interview them, apparently with limited success as, even with interpreters, it appeared that little information was being effectively exchanged. Some held an IS91R (reasons for detention summary checklist), issued only in English, but they did not understand it.
- 4.12 The holding room had no information about legal rights or access to legal advice. There were no notices on the wall advising detainees that they could get free legal advice over the telephone from the Refugee Legal Centre or the Immigration Advisory Service, or giving contact details of the local Refugee Legal Centre office. No free telephone call was offered.

Custody officers said they would refer such queries to immigration staff. Immigration staff said they did not normally get involved in advising detainees about where to locate legal advice.

See general recommendations

Casework

Expected outcomes:

Detention is carried out on the basis of individual reasons that are clearly communicated.

Detention is for the minimum period necessary

- 4.13 On-site immigration staff were responsible for initial screening processes and detention. The purpose of the centre was to screen asylum applicants and those who passed through its doors were mainly, but not exclusively, asylum seekers. The majority were new arrivals detected in the port area or in Kent, or as a result of enforcement operations in the area. Because of the short-term nature of the accommodation, the Immigration Service aimed to hold people at DASC no longer than 12 hours.
- 4.14 Of the 207 detained during the first 17 days of January 2005, 137 detainees went on to further detention, 67 were released on temporary admission subject to reporting requirements, and one was listed as removed straight away.

See main recommendation HE.39

Duty of care

Expected outcomes:

The centre exercises a duty of care to protect detainees from risk of harm

Bullying, self-harm and suicide

- 4.15 Staff were alert to the potential of bullying in the holding room. Large windows on both sides of the staff office made observation easy. Custody officers had been trained in self-harm and suicide prevention but there was no refresher course available. An F2052SH (self-harm and suicide) procedure was in place but there had been no incidents since the holding room had opened. Staff had access to a ligature knife in the first aid box held in the office. There were minimal ligature points in the washrooms.

Health and safety

- 4.16 The room was checked for deficiencies on a daily basis and these were reported to the port maintenance team for rectification. The health and safety policy document and area and fire risk assessments had been completed by the port authority but there was no copy available to the holding room staff. Fire prevention equipment was properly maintained and staff had access to brief fire instructions, but there were no instructions available for detainees.

See general recommendations

Childcare and child protection

Expected outcomes:

Children are detained only in exceptional circumstances. Children's rights and needs for care and protection are respected and met in full

- 4.17 Of the 207 detained in the first 17 days of January 2005, 17 were listed as minors; including children with family members and unaccompanied minors. No child protection policy had been agreed with the local authority and area child protection committee, and there was no designated child protection coordinator. Staff working with children at the DASC had not been vetted to CRB enhanced level. The same holding room housed men, women and children. There were no special domestic arrangements for children, other than that baby food, nappies, and some snacks for children, were kept in stock.
- 4.18 Families with children were processed quickly and referred to the nearby office of Migrant Helpline for assistance in obtaining asylum support. Unaccompanied minors were diverted quickly to local social services. The Immigration Service at Dover had developed good links with Kent social services, to collect and care for unaccompanied minors and to assess those whose minority was in doubt. They did not refer those whom they believed to be over the age of 18. In cases of doubt, one week's temporary admission was granted into the care of social services. Social services could then observe and assess.

See general recommendations

Positive relationships

Expected outcomes:

Those detained are treated respectfully by staff throughout the duration of their stay

- 4.19 Inspectors observed that staff addressed detainees respectfully at all times and demonstrated good levels of care. After location in the holding room, the levels of interaction reduced as the staff were able to fully observe all areas of the room except the washrooms from the office. However, we noted several occasions when staff entered the room to sit and talk to detainees.

Diversity

Expected outcomes:

There is understanding of the diverse backgrounds of detainees and different cultural norms. Detainees are not discriminated against on the basis of race, nationality, gender or religion and there is positive promotion and understanding of diversity

- 4.20 There was no racist incidents reporting policy and no designated disabilities officer. Detention and escort staff had some relevant training during their initial training and occasional refresher training.

- 4.21 Staff said they could order special sandwiches or food if they knew someone had a particular dietary requirement. The Bible, Koran, prayer mat and compass were stored in a filing cabinet. However, there were no notices advising detainees of these possibilities.

See general recommendations

Facility rules

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to feel secure in a predictable and ordered environment

- 4.22 There were no notices setting out the standards of behaviour expected from detainees when in the holding room.
- 4.23 The level of security was appropriate and physical security was adequate for a short-term population. All custody staff were trained in the use of control and restraint (C&R) and were refreshed annually. Staff said that there had been no requirement to use C&R since the holding room had opened.
- 4.24 There was no complaints procedure. Staff said that detainees rarely complained but if they did, the complaint would be passed to GSL management or the Immigration Service.

Recommendation

- 4.25 The rules of the facility should be on display in common languages.

See general recommendations

Services

Expected outcomes:

Services available to detainees allow them to live in a decent, non-punitive environment in which their everyday needs are met freely and without discrimination

- 4.26 No hot meals were provided, even if detainees had to stay in the room overnight. Various free pre-packed sandwiches, crisps, chocolate biscuits and hot and cold drinks were available. The facility had a fridge. Baby food, nappies, and women's sanitary goods were also stocked and freely available. Detainees could obtain other items, such as cigarettes, if they had money and coincided with the daily visit of a support staff member who made a shopping trip to the port mini-market.
- 4.27 Although there was seating for more than 50 people, there was only one payphone in the holding room. The minimum charge was 30p and it was not private. There were no free telephone calls. Detainees were not allowed to keep their mobile phones with them. When asked if they could recover numbers from their mobiles, an officer told us that would be up to

immigration staff. Immigration officers, when asked, were unsure and concerned about security implications.

See general recommendations

Activities

Expected outcomes:

The facility encourages activities and provides facilities to preserve and promote the mental and physical well being of detainees

- 4.28 There was little to occupy detainees in the holding room. A small wall-mounted television was on, but without sound. It was controlled by custody officers who demonstrated that, without a proper aerial, reception was so poor that only a jarring buzz emitted when the volume was raised. We saw no reading material other than three notices on the otherwise bare walls (no smoking, no mobiles, no prohibited items). There were no games and no toys. Although there was a separate small smoking room, there was no exercise area. Detainees were only taken out to be interviewed or moved.

See general recommendations

Recommendations

- 4.29 Detainees should be able to watch and listen to television.
- 4.30 Toys should be available for children.

Preparation for release

Expected outcomes:

Detainees are able to maintain contact with family, friends, support groups, legal representatives and advisers, and are given notice of their release, transfer or removal

- 4.31 Some of those detained during enforcement operations had been living in the area for significant periods and had established links there. They could not receive visitors or recover property at the facility, although this might be possible if they were moved to the nearby Dover police residential short-term holding facility. There was no welfare scheme to assist those facing removal to recover property or tie up their affairs before they were removed.
- 4.32 A minority were released with temporary admission, and if they were eligible for asylum support were referred to Migrant Helpline, a voluntary organisation with an office in the port area, who received funding from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to assist with asylum support.

See general recommendations

Section 5: Recommendations

General recommendations (for all centres)

To the Home Secretary

- 5.1 The Independent Monitoring Board's National Council should be invited to propose a mechanism for regular, independent monitoring of short-term holding centres. (HE.17)

To the Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)

- 5.2 There should be regular, documented supervision of each holding room by on-site immigration managers, reporting to senior managers at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). (HE.18)
- 5.3 Custody records of those held under the authority of IND should record all time spent in successive places of detention, including police cells. (HE.19)
- 5.4 Written reasons for detention should be provided in a language detainees can understand. (HE.20)
- 5.5 Detainees should receive written information about the place of detention and what will happen next in a language they understand. (HE.21)
- 5.6 Detainees should not be held for substantial periods or overnight in accommodation which lacks adequate sleeping, washing, exercise and dining facilities. (HE.22)
- 5.7 Families with children, and women, should be held in separate and appropriate accommodation. (HE.23)
- 5.8 All holding facilities should have a comprehensive child protection policy agreed with the local area child protection committee. Staff in contact with children should receive appropriate training and all staff should undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks. (HE.24)
- 5.9 Detainees should either be provided with adequate telephone facilities, including a free phone call on arrival, or be able to use mobile phones to contact families and advisers and sort out practical problems. (HE.25)

To all Centre Managers

- 5.10 Custodial staff should receive refresher training in anti-bullying and suicide and self-harm prevention and adequate policies and procedures should be in place. (HE.26)

- 5.11 All detainees should have healthcare checks within 24 hours of arrival, and a healthcare practitioner should visit the facility every day. (HE.27)
- 5.12 There should be a race relations and diversity policy in every holding room, and an assessment of the impact of procedures on different religious, ethnic and cultural groups should be conducted. (HE.28)
- 5.13 There should be a complaints procedure in every short-term holding facility. (HE.29)
- 5.14 All centres should keep daily occurrence logs, recording details of each detainee, and there should be regular management checks. (HE.30)
- 5.15 There should be a disability policy and a designated disabilities officer in every holding room. (HE.31)
- 5.16 Health and safety risk assessments should be produced and copies kept in each facility. (HE.32)
- 5.17 Detainees subject to control and restraint procedures should always be seen by a healthcare practitioner as soon as possible after the event and this should be recorded. (HE.33)
- 5.18 General information about legal rights, including how to apply for bail, and how to find a competent and qualified legal representative, should be freely available to detainees in a range of common languages. (HE.34)
- 5.19 Holding rooms should contain newspapers, books, notices and other reading material in different languages, including basic information on the facility, legal assistance and process, fire and health and safety procedures, anti-bullying and anti-racism policies. (HE.35)
- 5.20 Arrangements should be in place to allow detainees to recover or arrange for the disposal of their property and detainees should be informed of this. (HE.36)

Main recommendations in relation to individual centres

Gatwick North and South

- 5.21 These facilities are not acceptable for overnight stay and should not be used for that purpose unless proper facilities are in place. (HE.37)

London City Airport

- 5.22 These facilities are not suitable for the detention of children and should be urgently refurbished or not used for that purpose. (HE.38)

Dover Asylum Screening Centre

- 5.23 The centre should not be used for overnight stay unless proper facilities are in place. (HE.39)

Other recommendations in relation to individual centres

Gatwick Airport, North Terminal, West Sussex

Arrival and accommodation

- 5.24 The holding room should be redecorated, properly furnished and made more welcoming. (1.10)
- 5.25 The television should be replaced without delay. (1.11)
- 5.26 Blankets should be provided to detainees on request, following risk assessment. (1.12)
- 5.27 The temperature of the holding room should provide adequate comfort at all times. 1.13)

Legal rights

- 5.28 Detainees should be able to make a free and private telephone call to legal representatives and this should be documented. (1.15)

Casework

- 5.29 The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) staff's supervisory checks of the holding room should be logged. (1.19)

Childcare and child protection

- 5.30 Written advice given to detainees should include the availability of nappies and food suitable for babies and children. (1.26)

Diversity

- 5.31 Religious texts should be freely available to detainees, who should be informed of their existence in a language they understand. (1.31)
- 5.32 Detainees should be aware of how to make racist incident or other complaints, and assisted to do so. (1.32)

Facility rules

- 5.33 The occurrence log should be used as intended. (1.36)

Services

- 5.34 Minimum telephone charges should be in line with most BT public telephone boxes. (1.40)
- 5.35 Staff should offer to change money to suitable coins or cards so that detainees can use the telephone and this should be advertised. (1.41)

- 5.36 Nutritious, balanced meals should be available for detainees held beyond a short period of time. Special diets should be catered for. (1.42)
- 5.37 There should be a fridge in the holding area. (1.43)

Gatwick Airport, South Terminal, West Sussex

Arrival and accommodation

- 5.38 Detainees should be held in a room with toilet facilities. (2.10)
- 5.39 Detainees should be provided with blankets on request following risk assessment. (2.11)
- 5.40 Detainees should not be held in the holding room unless adequate staffing levels are met. (2.12)
- 5.41 The holding rooms should be redecorated and made more welcoming. (2.13)

Legal rights

- 5.42 Detainees should be able to make free and private contact with legal representatives and this should be documented. (2.15)

Childcare and child protection

- 5.43 Detainees should be informed that nappies and baby food are available. (2.27)
- 5.44 Toys and constructive activity material should be available for children. (2.28)

Diversity

- 5.45 Sufficient religious texts should be freely available to detainees, who should be informed of their existence in a language they understand. (2.33)
- 5.46 Detainees should be aware of how to make racist incident or other complaints, and assisted to do so. (2.34)

Facility rules

- 5.47 The occurrence log should be updated daily. (2.38)

Services

- 5.48 Minimum telephone charges should be in line with BT charges. (2.40)
- 5.49 A supply of essential items such as sanitary products, nappies and baby milk formula should always be kept in stock. (2.41)

Activities

- 5.50 Detainees should be able to watch television. (2.43)

Preparation for release

- 5.51 Detainees should not be removed without clothing suitable for the destination. (2.48)

London City Airport, Silvertown, London

Arrival and accommodation

- 5.52 Separate male and female toilets should be installed. (3.13)
- 5.53 The holding room toilet should include a sanitary disposal bin. (3.14)

Duty of care

- 5.54 Fire fighting equipment should be installed in the holding room. (3.20)

Diversity

- 5.55 A racist incident reporting system should be available to detainees. (3.24)
- 5.56 Detainees should have access to a room for religious worship. (3.25)

Services

- 5.57 Detainees should be notified of the services and goods available to them. (3.30)
- 5.58 Sanitary products should be freely available without detainees having to request them. (3.31)

Dover Asylum Screening Centre, No.1 Control Building, Eastern Docks

Facility rule

- 5.59 The rules of the facility should be on display in common languages. (4.25)

Activities

- 5.60 Detainees should be able to watch and listen to television. (4.29)

5.61 Toys should be available for children. (4.30)