

**4** Contrary to media allegations, none of the recent reviews found evidence of a culture of abuse. The Lampard Review found that most residents were largely positive about their relationships with staff. The HMIP report found that 80% of residents surveyed said most staff treated them with respect. The reviews also reported positively in a number of areas including accommodation, recreational facilities and dental services. Provision of faith services in particular was highlighted as being very good.

**5** The reviews also identified a number of problems, and there were common themes between them. These included:

- the quality of the services and facilities provided, for example residents, many of whom were vulnerable, were not able to access a comprehensive mental healthcare service;
- the needs of residents and the extent to which they are being met, for example staff were not properly trained to understand residents' experiences, and there were not enough female staff; and
- the management decisions and measures taken by contractors to ensure that services meet residents' needs, for example residents who had been victims of torture were not identified when they arrived, or identified quickly enough.

**6** Concerns about operations at Yarl's Wood were first raised directly with us in late 2014 to early 2015 and came from several sources. We decided to wait until other reviews, in particular the CQC and HMIP inspections were complete before beginning our own inquiries. Our investigation has focused on the new contract management arrangements – an area where we felt we could add expertise given our past work. While the various independent reviews identified problems at Yarl's Wood, we have sought to understand what caused them:

- how far the problems identified by the reviews were caused by gaps in the new contracts between the Home Office and Serco, and NHS England and G4S;
- how far the gaps were caused by the contractors failing to fully implement the requirements of the contracts; and
- the extent of progress in addressing the gaps in provision.

**7** We found that there were three broad ways in which the Home Office and NHS England's approach to contracting out services played a role in the problems that the reviews found at Yarl's Wood:

- problems arose as a result of the Home Office's contract. For example, the contract for residential services permitted a reduced number of staff at Yarl's Wood. Staff shortages were criticised by a number of reviews, and some of the posts have now been reinstated;
- problems arose because there were gaps between the service specifications of the two contracts and no clear way to resolve them. For example, there was a lack of clarity about who was responsible for archiving old medical records, dealing with clinical waste and deep cleaning medical facilities. Partnership Boards, including both departments and contractors, took place from November 2014. Both contractors told us that while they could raise concerns with the departments, there was no clear process for resolving them; and
- problems arose because although an issue was covered in the contract, the provisions in the contract were not fully implemented. For example, the healthcare contract requires G4S to provide mental health training for all staff, including Serco staff on site. The contract took effect from September 2014, but the training was not offered to Serco staff until April 2015, and no Serco staff were able to attend until October 2015. To date, 27% of all Serco staff have undertaken the training.

## **Key findings**

### Designing the service specification

**8 The Home Office did not reflect lessons from previous inspections when it agreed the service specification with Serco. Many of the concerns raised by HMIP in its 2015 inspection were raised in 2011 and 2013 prior to the new contracts.** For example, HMIP identified issues with the quality of Rule 35 reporting (the process for identifying vulnerable residents) and the role of male staff in searching female residents' rooms. At the time of the 2015 report, 59% of the 2013 report's recommendations had not been achieved, with little evidence that issues had been tackled until recently (paragraphs 1.31, 2.12 and 3.2).

**9 While the move to self-service in the residential services contract reduced demands on staff time, Serco's reduction of staff meant there were insufficient operational and management staff.** The contract envisaged freeing up staff time by moving to a 'self-service' model where, for example, residents send their own faxes and book their own visits. While the self-service model has reduced demands on staff time, numbers were reduced too far. Serco has now made further changes to the staffing model. It has replaced some of the posts that were removed, changed shift patterns, reintroduced specialist teams and increased staff training (paragraphs 2.12 to 2.17).