

- 2.6 There were insufficient table spaces for all detainees to eat communally (see section on services). There was a range of recreational activities, including table tennis, pool and table football. Limited space on the wings meant that the association area was frequently very crowded. Each wing had its own exercise area, which consisted of a plain yard with no seating.
- 2.7 The most common complaint about residential areas was the poor ventilation. The centre was a sealed building and detainees could not open the windows. Several told us that they were suffering from headaches because of a lack of fresh air in their rooms. The no smoking policy in the communal areas was not strictly enforced and this exacerbated the problem of poor ventilation.
- 2.8 There was one room for a disabled person on the ground floor in each of the four wings. These rooms were the same size as the double rooms. They contained various aids and adaptations to assist detainees with physical disabilities, including a shower which they could use sitting down. Call bells were not easily accessible as they were too high for some disabled detainees to reach easily (see section on diversity).
- 2.9 The centre had been inspected in July 2009 by the Crown Premises Inspection Group. They found that the passive and active fire safety features were of a high standard and that the standard and management of fire safety on the premises was good. A number of recommendations had been made to improve standards further and we were told that most of these had already been implemented.
- 2.10 Each room contained a call bell which activated a buzzer and a light outside the room door and in the staff office. These arrangements appeared to work efficiently and we observed call bells being answered promptly. If a bell was not answered after three minutes, a back-up system triggered a further alert in the central control area.
- 2.11 We received a large number of complaints from detainees about the noise levels at night, which was also reflected in the centre's own safety survey. They said that arrivals and departures frequently took place around midnight and disrupted their sleep. This was exacerbated by the generally high noise levels in the residential units because of a lack of soft furnishing.
- 2.12 Consultation meetings were held monthly and there was usually a detainee representative from each residential area. Meetings were chaired by the Deputy Director and were well attended by staff from a range of areas including health care, Aramark, the UKBA team and the Independent Monitoring Board. Detainees raised topics such as problems with ventilation and food. Minutes of the consultation committee were displayed in each of the residential areas. The minutes indicated that replies to the queries raised by detainees generally consisted of explanations about why things could not change and there was little evidence that they were followed through.

Clothing and possessions

- 2.13 Each detainee had a 20 kilo limit for their personal property. Detainees were able to wear their own clothing and most did so. Additional clothing could be handed in by visitors. There was a clothing store in the reception area, which contained a wide range of new tracksuits, trousers, t-shirts, underwear and footwear. There were some light fleeces but no waterproof coats. Detainees who had inadequate clothing could submit a request for more items to the wing team leader who assessed each case on its merits. This procedure seemed to work effectively and we came across a number of detainees who had been assisted in this way.

- 2.14 All detainees had locker space under their beds. We received a large number of complaints about missing property from detainees who said that the lockers were not always secure. We were told by staff that initially there had been some design difficulties with the lockers and they had not been sufficiently robust. Modification work had been carried out to upgrade the locks. Despite this, there were still difficulties with lockers breaking and delays in their repair. We were informed that in a few cases detainees had been compensated for the loss of their property while at the centre.
- 2.15 Each of the wings had its own laundry, which contained sufficient, serviceable washers, dryers and ironing equipment. Detainees were able to use these facilities to clean their own clothing and had access to the laundries all day. They could obtain washing powder free of charge from the staff office. There was no rota or queuing system, but the informal arrangements appeared to work well. The laundries were in reasonable order and well used.
- 2.16 Bed linen was washed each week and whenever a detainee departed by a member of the contract cleaning staff who used the wing laundry for this purpose. Any pillows or duvets which needing laundering were sent for cleaning outside the establishment. A store of replacement mattresses was held on site.

Hygiene

- 2.17 Contractors' staff cleaned the communal areas every morning. They also cleaned any empty rooms before they were occupied again. They did not clean rooms occupied by detainees. Detainees had access to cleaning materials, including mops and brushes, and were able to use them whenever they wished. In practice, this seldom occurred and most of the rooms we entered were dirty and untidy. It was common to find discarded food and rubbish in the rooms. Detainees seemed to lack motivation to maintain a clean living environment and staff did not encourage or support them to achieve this.
- 2.18 Access to showers was very good and 96% of respondents to our survey said they could take a shower every day, which was significantly better than the comparator of 92%. The showers were located on the main residential landings. Screening was inadequate and did not provide detainees with enough privacy. There were no baths and we received a complaint from a disabled detainee about this. Although he was living in a room which had aids and adaptations, he said that he still found it difficult to use the shower and would have found it easier to maintain his personal hygiene if he had had the opportunity to use a bath.
- 2.19 Apart from the metal fittings in the RFA and TC areas, each of the rooms in the main living areas contained hard resin toilets, which were made in one piece and did not have seats. This was unhygienic and unpleasant.
- 2.20 There were no communal toilets. We received a considerable number of complaints about this from detainees who found it degrading to have to share a toilet in their room with someone else present. They did not have the option of using communal toilets on the wings and the screening for the toilets was inadequate. In many cases detainees had made their own ad hoc arrangements, using sellotape and curtain material.
- 2.21 On arrival, each detainee was provided with a hygiene pack containing soap, deodorant, comb, shampoo, flannel and a shaving stick. Disposable razors were issued on receipt of the detainee's ID card. Replacement items were provided to detainees on request.

- 6.5 Detainees were unlocked on their wing for up to 13 hours a day. They could visit the communal activity areas for nine and a quarter hours of this time, but only on production of their identity card to enter and leave. Detainees were not allowed to visit other wings, apart from controlled access to outdoor association areas for sporting activity. The 11-hour period that detainees were confined to their rooms was longer than in most other IRCs, and the lock-up time of 9pm each evening was inappropriately early.
- 6.6 The centre did not provide sufficient paid work. The 52 places only catered for 12.5% of the population. The average working time was 20 hours a week, but the variation in hours between jobs was great. While some consisted of mundane and repetitive tasks, over half presented an appropriate degree of interest or challenge. The centre rarely offered training for work, although detainees working in kitchens or serving food received basic, non-accredited training from the catering contractor.
- 6.7 The number of detainees on waiting lists for work was high and, at up to 10 weeks, the wait was long. Recruitment procedures allowed UKBA to veto individual applications for reasons such as non co-operation with the agency. This inappropriately muddled the roles of the centre and UKBA. Promotion of paid work was confined to information on noticeboards in the wings. These notices and the work agreements detainees had to sign were not translated into other languages.

Education

- 6.8 The centre did not provide sufficient education to meet the needs of detainees. In our survey, only 11% of detainees reported taking part in education, which was significantly worse than the comparator of 30%. The 20 sessions totalling 62 hours a week over five weekdays and four evenings were far too few to meet the needs of the sizeable detainee population. The range of education was not sufficient to meet the needs of detainees remaining for significant periods at the centre. At the time of the inspection, 45% of detainees had been held at the centre for more than four months.
- 6.9 Education provision was arranged flexibly so that detainees could join at any time. Detainees were free to attend and leave individual sessions when they wished and tutors managed this well. However, planning to meet the needs of individuals and groups of detainees was not sufficiently structured to develop and sustain learning. The centre did not offer any short units of study leading to internal or external accreditation of learning.
- 6.10 The centre had usefully broadened the subjects it offered in response to detainee feedback, but the addition of a weekly session in each of four modern foreign languages and in numeracy had reduced classes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) from 10 to five sessions a week. Arts and crafts continued to run for 10 sessions a week. A chaplain provided two evening music sessions.
- 6.11 The centre had only two classrooms dedicated to education use, each with capacity for about 15 detainees. During the inspection, classrooms were never full. The centre employed only two tutors and arrangements to provide cover for planned or unplanned staff absence were weak.
- 6.12 The enthusiastic education coordinator who taught ESOL, modern foreign languages and numeracy was well qualified and experienced for the role. ESOL classes took place in a bright, simply furnished room with attractive and pertinent wall displays. Sessions were reasonably well attended and detainees praised the coordinator highly. Sessions engaged detainees well and they received good individual help. Detainees valued additional work to complete outside

picture of the popularity of physical exercise, but did not identify the extent to which PE was inclusive of individuals or groups.

Recommendations

- 6.27 Internet security should not block legitimate websites, particularly those providing legal assistance and UKBA country of origin information.
- 6.28 The centre should offer structured training in using the internet and emailing to detainees unfamiliar with computers and ensure sufficient printing capacity to meet detainees' reasonable needs.
- 6.29 The centre should reduce the length of time detainees are confined to their rooms each day, institute later lock up and increase the time detainees are allowed in communal areas.
- 6.30 The centre should increase the volume of paid work available to detainees, accompanied by appropriate training for all work roles leading to internal or external accreditation.
- 6.31 Detainees' cooperation or failure to cooperate with UKBA should not affect the process of allocating paid work roles.
- 6.32 Appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure that detainees understand information about work roles, including any agreements they have to sign before starting work.
- 6.33 Detainees should have the opportunity to follow short units of study leading to internal or external accreditation.
- 6.34 Cover for planned or unplanned education staff absence should be routine and appropriate.
- 6.35 ESOL provision should prioritise the systematic development of detainees' speaking skills.
- 6.36 The range of arts and crafts activities and resources should significantly increase.
- 6.37 Effective monitoring of detainees' participation in activity, including education, visits to the library and PE, should form the basis for identifying patterns of participation by individuals or groups.
- 6.38 Thorough and systematic quality assurance, including regular self assessment, should apply to education and other activities.
- 6.39 Education staff should receive suitable professional support and development.
- 6.40 The library should stock and loan newspapers, periodicals, dictionaries, audio and video material which reflects the languages, cultures and interests of detainees.