

This report has been redacted in a limited number of places to remove the names of junior staff to protect their privacy, and to remove some of the details on staff numbers where these are too sensitive on security grounds.

Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

A report for the chief executive and board of Serco plc

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Ed Marsden

January 2016

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1. Introduction

1.1 Serco plc (Serco) has managed Yarl's Wood, an immigration removal centre near Bedford (Yarl's Wood) since 2007 under a contract with the Home Office. Channel 4 News informed Serco at the end of February 2015 that it was preparing a report about conditions inside Yarl's Wood. Channel 4 News told Serco that the report would contain undercover film showing officers making derogatory, offensive and insensitive remarks about residents, and that the report would make further allegations and adverse comment about the treatment of residents.

1.2 The Channel 4 News report, which can be viewed at <http://www.channel4.com/news/yarls-wood-immigration-removal-detention-centre-investigation>, was broadcast on the nights of 2 and 3 March 2015.

1.3 In response to the allegations in the report about the behaviour of staff, Serco started its own investigations. These led in due course to disciplinary proceedings against some individual members of staff. After consulting with the Home Office, Serco also asked me to undertake an independent investigation. The non-executive chair of Serco's corporate responsibility and risk committee, its general counsel (David Eveleigh) and I agreed that my investigation would focus on the overall culture at Yarl's Wood and how this affects the welfare and wellbeing of residents.

1.4 Ed Marsden, managing partner of Verita, a firm specialising in investigations, was my co-investigator. Our biographies are set out in appendix A. Chloe Taylor has provided administrative services. Barry Morris, partner of Verita, peer-reviewed the investigation.

1.5 We had the benefit of discussing our findings and conclusions with others who are familiar with Yarl's Wood. They include Hindpal Singh Bhui, inspection team leader, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and Mary Bosworth, professor of criminology, Oxford University.

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2. Terms of reference

The general counsel of Serco plc commissioned this investigation on behalf of the board. Serco has held the contract to run Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre since 2007. The Home Office re-awarded the contract to Serco in November 2014 after a tendering exercise.

The purpose of this independent investigation is to examine the culture and other issues relating to the treatment of residents at Yarl's Wood.

The investigation is asked to:

1. Review the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre specifically as they relate to the welfare and wellbeing of residents. Such review to include all levels of staff within the contract (front line, management and contract leadership), and Serco staff outside the contract to any extent that they may be relevant.
2. Such review to include:
 - a) the adequacy of operational safeguarding policies, management and practice including in relation to self-harm and the physical environment
 - b) the appropriateness of policies and practice affecting the privacy and dignity of residents
 - c) the management of disabled residents, pregnant residents and residents with mental or other health issues and whether policies in this respect are appropriately and effectively applied
 - d) whether policies for preventing sexual misconduct or abuse between staff and residents are appropriate, understood, and effectively applied
 - e) the appropriateness of the staffing arrangements and in particular the gender balance among staff
 - f) allegations and issues raised in complaints by residents and in media reports about the treatment of residents and the handling of such complaints

- g) whether comments and allegations made in media reports about the treatment of residents and inappropriate and disrespectful behaviours and attitudes on the part of staff are isolated or reflective of a wider inappropriate culture.
- 3. To consider whether the terms of the new contract recently awarded to Serco to manage Yarl's Wood are likely to have a bearing on the matters under investigation.
- 4. To make recommendations based on the findings of the investigation and in particular recommendations for actions that Serco should take to address any material weaknesses or issues identified.

The investigation **will not** include matters of detention and Home Office policy or mandated procedure, save only as to assess the manner of their application in practice where this has a material bearing on the culture of the institution.

The investigation is not to include transport and healthcare services and/or matters or other services where they are not provided by Serco staff and/or where Serco is not responsible for their provision but will look at the extent to which such services impact Serco's ability to deliver their services and how they work in practice.

The full terms of reference for the investigation appear at appendix B at the back of the report.

3. Executive summary

3.1 Serco plc (Serco) has managed Yarl's Wood, an immigration removal centre near Bedford (Yarl's Wood) since 2007 under a contract with the Home Office. It is built to a prison design and houses adults detained under the United Kingdom's nationality, immigration and asylum legislation.

3.2 Yarl's Wood houses adult males who have entered the UK illegally, (known as "lorry drop" cases), who are detained for only short periods before being removed to other sites. It also houses single women and adult family groups. They fall into one of three categories: time-served foreign national offenders who have served a sentence in a UK prison and are awaiting deportation, (TSFNOs); those detained while their asylum application is considered; and others thought to have entered or remain in the UK illegally, (often referred to as "overstayers"). Residents are detained in accordance with chapter 55 of UK Visas and Immigration's Enforcement and Instructions Guidance, (principally to effect removal from the UK or because of reason to believe they will fail to comply with the conditions of temporary admission or release).

3.3 Managers at Yarl's Wood told us the average stay at the centre during the period January to September 2015 was 49 days for single female residents and 38 days for family groups. Home Office statistics show that in recent years of those subject to immigration detention in the UK half have been removed from the country. The rest have been bailed, granted leave to enter or remain in the UK or granted temporary admission or release. However the proportion of the residents of Yarl's Wood removed from the UK in 2013 was approximately 34 per cent and in 2014 the proportion was 25 per cent.

3.4 Channel 4 News informed Serco at the end of February 2015 that it was preparing a report about conditions inside Yarl's Wood. Channel 4 News told Serco that the report would contain undercover film showing officers making derogatory, offensive and insensitive remarks about residents, and that the report would make further allegations and adverse comment about the treatment of residents.

3.5 In response to the allegations in the report about the behaviour of staff, Serco started its own investigations. These led in due course to disciplinary proceedings against some individual members of staff. After consulting with the Home Office, Serco commissioned us to undertake an independent investigation. We agreed with Serco that

our investigation would focus on the overall culture at Yarl's Wood and how this affects the welfare and wellbeing of residents.

Methodology

3.6 We began our investigation with a review of the online material on the history of Yarl's Wood, and the allegations and controversies relating to it. It also allowed us to identify some of the charities and other organisations, as well as journalists and commentators, with an interest in the subject of immigration detention and the welfare of immigration detainees, and who we hoped would be prepared to share their views and evidence.

3.7 Serco managers provided us with a list of individuals who would be able to further our understanding of Yarl's Wood, the arrangements under which it operates and the concerns that have been expressed about the treatment of residents.

3.8 We reviewed a number of reports, articles and research papers. We also reviewed a large quantity of documents relating to the operating and management procedures at Yarl's Wood.

3.9 We began our structured interviews with the senior management team at Yarl's Wood. We conducted structured interviews with detainee custody managers (DCMs) and detainee custody officers (DCOs). We also interviewed staff in certain roles who we thought would add to our understanding of the culture and management of Yarl's Wood. We arranged to interview residents in group sessions. We interviewed many other people from Serco and from outside organisations who helped us with specific issues or added to our general understanding of matters at Yarl's Wood.

3.10 We were allowed our own keys to Yarl's Wood, giving us access to the whole site. Separately, and on different occasions, we both shadowed staff at Yarl's Wood for a 12-hour day shift and a 12-hour night shift. In total we visited Yarl's Wood on 23 occasions. During our visits we were able to speak freely with many residents and staff. We believe that our unlimited access to Yarl's Wood allowed us to form a realistic impression of the regime there, the relationships between staff and residents and the general culture of the centre.

3.11 While we considered the arrangements for single male detainees housed on the Bunting unit, spent time on that unit and spoke to residents there, we focused our attention primarily on the units housing single women and family groups. These units generated all bar one of the allegations of inappropriate behaviour and abuse that we were made aware of and they are the subject of most of the adverse comment and media reports about Yarl's Wood.

3.12 Before our terms of reference were finalised, we wrote to the producers of the Channel 4 News undercover films and reports broadcast on 2 and 3 March 2015 asking for a meeting. We hoped that the producers would provide us with a better understanding of the circumstances in which the matters complained of in the films had occurred, and any further information that might bear on our investigations. The managing editor of Channel 4 News replied that the broadcast reports contained all the information the producers could disclose without a court order.

3.13 Our investigation was commissioned by Serco alone. Accordingly, our terms of reference did not allow us to investigate the transport service that brings residents to and from Yarl's Wood, which is managed by Tascor Limited under its own contract with the Home Office, nor the healthcare service for residents, which is provided by G4S plc under its own contract with NHS England. Nevertheless, we considered the way the provision of those services had implications for how Serco managed Yarl's Wood.

Management challenges at Yarl's Wood

3.14 Our investigation made clear that those who manage Yarl's Wood and care for its residents face significant, and in some cases unique, demands and challenges.

3.15 Residents come from all parts of the world. They have widely differing life experiences, expectations, and concerns. Some may have been victims of violence, abuse, torture and other traumatic events. Many residents have little or no command of English. Ensuring that such a disparate, troubled and vulnerable population lives together safely and peacefully is clearly a demanding task.

3.16 Many of those we spoke to and interviewed said TSFNOs were disproportionately responsible for disruptive incidents in the centre and the recent increase in their numbers had created difficulties for the staff who had to manage the centre and look after the residents every day. Managers and staff at Yarl's Wood complained to us that information provided in respect of TSFNOs arriving at Yarl's Wood often arrived too late or gave inadequate information to allow them to identify people who might not be suitable for detention at Yarl's Wood or who might need special management.

3.17 Serco managers and staff and others told us of the relatively high incidence of behaviours that indicated mental health issues. This could be anything from an acute reaction to detention (an acute anxiety state) through to evident severe mental illness requiring diagnosis and treatment. Nearly all managers and staff said that managing residents with mental health issues was their greatest challenge.

3.18 A number of people we spoke to, especially the representatives of the charities and pressure groups representing asylum seekers, emphasised the uncertainties and anxieties faced by those subject to immigration detention. Our own discussions with residents and our observations of the processes of the detention system allowed us some appreciation of the stresses, anxieties and fears that residents are subject to.

3.19 We felt from the outset of our investigation that Yarl's Wood differs from much of the rest of the detention estate in the UK and faces some particular challenges that other immigration removal centres (IRCs) do not. It accommodates the largest number of women immigration detainees. As a result of this, and Yarl's Wood's previous history of housing child detainees, it has always been the focus of uniquely fierce media attention and active campaigns by charities and pressure groups concerned about the detention of women and children. Media attention has been further excited by Yarl's Wood's history of allegations of abuse of residents or other inappropriate behaviour by some officers.

3.20 Serco has experience of running IRCs both in the UK and abroad. However managers at Yarl's Wood suggested to us that the pressures of running a centre with its own particular issues and requirements and doing so under a media spotlight were compounded by the fact that it was the only IRC in Serco's current portfolio of UK custodial facilities. Members of the senior management team at Yarl's Wood suggested that the fact that Yarl's Wood was the only IRC operated by Serco in the UK had

sometimes meant that the particular needs of their organisation had not been fully appreciated or met.

3.21 It was made plain to us that management arrangements at Yarl's Wood draw heavily on prison practice and experience. There are some obvious parallels, but there are also important differences between the role and purpose of an IRC and those of a prison, and the demands and needs of their respective residents. Serco managers need to ensure that they adequately acknowledge those differences; that they differentiate the practices, policies and the staffing and training arrangements of their IRC; and that they support managers and staff at Yarl's Wood to cater for the particular requirements of an IRC.

3.22 We were struck at many points in our investigation by an unsatisfactory conflict between the roles that staff at IRCs are required to perform. Above all, they are responsible for housing and caring for the residents in their IRCs, but at the same time they are inevitably involved in or identified with immigration removal processes in a way that undermines their relationship with residents. The detainee custody officers (DCOs) inevitably face questions from residents about their immigration cases and have to try to help residents understand and cope with the implications of decisions made by immigration case workers. But DCOs are untrained and unconnected to the case work processes and expressly forbidden from providing advice to detainees on legal or immigration case work matters. Equally, it is the IRC staff who are required to ensure that residents due for removal from the UK are presented to escort services at an appointed time and, if necessary, to do so by force. A number of interviewees told us how the use of force to effect removals undermines trust and damages the relationship between staff and residents at Yarl's Wood.

Understanding the role and purpose of Yarl's Wood and the new contract

3.23 Managers and staff at Yarl's Wood and at the other IRCs we visited told us that until relatively recently IRCs operated more restrictive regimes and were more akin to prisons than they are today. All the IRC managers and senior staff we spoke to talked about their continuing efforts to introduce a more relaxed environment into their IRC. The vision for the new eight-year contract to run Yarl's Wood, awarded to Serco in November 2014, was of a "hotel model" aimed at "empowering residents" and offering them greater

freedoms to manage their daily life in the centre. Serco managers involved in the bid for the new contract were keen to emphasise that the design of the bid was informed by more than the need to offer a competitive price. Nevertheless, the contract bid summaries and our discussions with managers suggest that it had still been a significant driver of the vision for Yarl's Wood to reduce the staff workload and staff numbers and thereby cut costs.

3.24 Managers, and most staff we met appeared to welcome the official position that detention centres are not prisons and that detainees should not be subject to punitive and unnecessarily regimented regimes. They also welcomed the practical steps taken at Yarl's Wood to offer residents greater freedom of movement and a more relaxed regime. However, some staff said they preferred working under the more restrictive and prison-like regime of previous years. We also found that a number of policies or Centre Manager's Rules for managing the centre were evidently modelled on or imported wholesale from the prison system, and did not adequately acknowledge the differences between a prison and a detention centre.

3.25 Even among the majority of staff who appeared to welcome the greater freedoms for residents at Yarl's Wood as promoted by the new contract and recent management initiatives, it was clear that there was a significant degree of cynicism and concern about the new contract and how it would work in practice. It was compounded by the fact that they did not feel they had been given adequate opportunities to offer their insights and input into the design of the new contract, and what they felt about the way they had been informed of the changes arising under the new contract.

3.26 We interviewed members of the bid team about the way the new contract to run Yarl's Wood was bid for and implemented. They explained to us that the "staffing solution" for the Yarl's Wood bid had been modelled on HMP Ashfield, a category C prison managed by Serco. But staff and managers at Yarl's Wood said a bid based on the staffing requirements of HMP Ashfield was not appropriate for managing the residents at Yarl's Wood.

Culture of Yarl's Wood: relationships and behaviours

3.27 We observed interactions between staff and residents at Yarl's Wood on many occasions over a number of months. Residents at our resident focus groups said most staff treated them appropriately. However the residents said DCOs were overworked and stressed and as a result some could be offhand or "*snappy*". In a few cases, they said, poor attitude went beyond this and had been disrespectful. Most of the staff we spoke to talked of having good relationships with residents. All staff we spoke to were shocked to learn of the disrespectful and abusive comments alleged in the Channel 4 News reports. They said they had not seen or heard similar things and the reports were not an accurate portrayal of Yarl's Wood. Many suggested that the comments must have been taken out of context.

3.28 We found many good staff at Yarl's Wood who were doing a complicated job with great dedication, trying hard to offer residents the care they needed and maintaining friendly and supportive relationships with them. We saw them handle difficult situations and distressed residents with sympathy and sophistication. We were struck by how often they referred to their roles as "caring" and the extent to which they discussed and expressed concern for the vulnerability of residents. We also encountered some staff, especially those struggling with their work load, who were on occasions offhand or distracted. A few staff appeared to be disaffected, cynical and disengaged and to lack sensitivity and empathy in their dealings with residents.

3.29 Our evidence suggests that overall behaviour by staff at Yarl's Wood and their relationships with residents are good. But the attitude and commitment of a minority of staff makes them unsuited to work that requires such a focus on care and on occasions demands subtle and sophisticated handling of people with complex needs often in great distress.

Raising concerns and whistleblowing

3.30 We questioned staff and managers about whether staff felt able to raise concerns and were supported to draw attention to poor or inappropriate behaviour by fellow staff members. Their answers suggested that practice at Yarl's Wood in relation to raising concerns and whistleblowing was inconsistent and underdeveloped. Staff had little

confidence in arrangements for reporting concerns about their colleagues. The centre manager acknowledged that managers needed to devise and implement plans, including staff training, aimed at developing and supporting the culture of reporting by staff. We looked at the policies current at the time of our investigation aimed at ensuring appropriate behaviours and encouraging the reporting of matters of concern. The policies need redrafting to make them clearer and consistent and to ensure that they encourage the raising of all genuine concerns about the management of Yarl's Wood and the behaviour of fellow members of staff.

Privacy and dignity

3.31 One of the most common criticisms about the treatment of residents and a frequent feature of allegations against staff was their failure to respect the privacy and dignity of residents. We found evidence that staff did on occasion enter residents' rooms without waiting for residents to respond to a knock on the door. Managers should continue to ensure that they repeat and re-enforce expectations that staff should at all times respect the privacy and dignity of residents and should not enter rooms without giving residents the opportunity to ensure they are not undressed and are in a position to receive a visitor.

The use of force and segregation

3.32 We found no evidence of a punitive culture at Yarl's Wood. Overall, the evidence suggested that staff and managers understood and adhered to the rules and correct procedure regarding the use of force and segregation.

Allegations and incidents

3.33 Allegations of misconduct and inappropriate and disrespectful behaviours by staff have been a feature of media reports about Yarl's Wood since it opened in 2001. Nevertheless evidence from staff and others, including staff reactions to the Channel 4 News reports and the recent increase in staff self reporting incidents of concern, suggest

that staff well understand what constitutes appropriate behaviour and appropriate relations between staff and residents.

3.34 Our interviews with a wide range of interested parties, including the IMB, groups and legal advisers representing the interests of residents and ex-residents of Yarl's Wood, journalists and residents revealed no serious allegations of inappropriate behaviour that had not already been identified and entered on the log of allegations of inappropriate behaviour and misconduct maintained by the governance lead at Yarl's Wood. We do not believe there is a hidden problem of serious misconduct or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour by staff, nor that misconduct or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour is widespread or endemic in Yarl's Wood.

3.35 Recent allegations of inappropriate behaviour by individual members of staff have been investigated by Serco's internal investigation unit. In some cases this has led to disciplinary proceedings. It would have been inappropriate for us to get involved in those investigations. Accordingly we have not been able to make our own findings about the behaviours of individual officers and whether allegations of misbehaviour by them are true. Nevertheless we reviewed the internal investigation processes and we have no reason to believe that they were not thorough.

The new contract in operation

3.36 Under the new contract DCO numbers were to have been reduced from ■■■ to ■■■ but after a redundancy programme had been commenced in early 2015, the centre manager asked for the compliment of DCOs to be increased to ■■■. During our investigation, DCO staff numbers were significantly short of the ■■■ planned for.

3.37 Whatever is actually achieved in terms of recruiting the planned full complement of staff, the evidence indicated that management plans for the way that staff were deployed and the numbers in which they were deployed under the new contract were in any event problematic.

3.38 The new staffing model under the new contract meant a marked reduction in the number of DCOs on a shift. Staff shortages meant it was sometimes difficult to fully staff

all necessary rotas and staff were being asked to undertake significant amounts of over-time.

3.39 Despite the recently introduced technological and other innovations, which had offered residents greater opportunities to manage their own affairs and a less restrictive regime, and had also reduced demands on staff time, managers and staff all felt that the staffing model under the new contract did not meet the needs of caring for the residents at Yarl's Wood. They felt that staff were often extremely stretched and could not adequately engage with residents and offer them the support they needed.

3.40 Residents who attended our group meetings agreed that the centre was short-staffed. Some of the staff we interviewed also expressed their concerns about the fact that the redundancy programme had led to the loss of some more experienced staff. Some staff also told us that the fact that staff were no longer attached to certain units or areas in the centre meant that they sometimes had to undertake roles they were not familiar with and did not feel competent to do.

3.41 The population of Yarl's Wood is complicated and diverse, it includes highly vulnerable people, many of whom have experienced and continue to experience fear, trauma and stress, and increasingly includes many with more severe mental health problems. Staff need to have the time necessary to engage with residents and to answer their needs for care and support including emotional support. Providing such support is a key to maintaining good and effective relationships between DCOs and residents and the successful management of Yarl's Wood. Present staffing arrangements and in particular the numbers of staff available on residential units do not always allow for this.

3.42 We found a significant lack of management capacity in the centre after implementation of the new contract. This applies both in respect of front line managers, DCMs, and the senior management team. Pressure on DCMs had been increased by the significant increase in auditing and key performance indicator (KPI) requirements under the new contract. DCMs told us that other work commitments and new shift patterns meant they did not have sufficient time or opportunities to carry out thorough appraisals of the staff they line managed. The senior management team told us that the lack of front line managers had significantly added to their workload.

3.43 All recent reports on Yarl's Wood have highlighted the lack of female staff and the tensions and problems that arose as a result of male officers working with the predominantly female resident population. In the second week of October 2015 there were ■ female and ■ male DCOs. Like those who have undertaken investigations or inspections before us, we identified occasions when the lack of female officers meant that male DCOs carried out inappropriate tasks, including constant watches of female residents, doing ACDT checks on residents in their rooms, and all-male teams undertaking roll counts.

3.44 The new staffing model provides for ■ on each residential unit at night, apart from on the Crane unit where ■ are meant to be on duty. We found that having ■ of staff only on a residential unit meant it was often locked while the DCO undertook duties elsewhere. Staff raised concerns about the inadequacy of staffing levels at night both in relation to individual units and across the centre as a whole. We are concerned that not enough staff are on duty at night to deal safely with an incident such as the need to escort a resident to hospital while running the centre safely. This presents a risk to the wellbeing of staff and residents.

3.45 A particular problem with the present staffing levels is the fact that male staff sometimes have to undertake tasks on their own which put them in compromising situations and at greater risk than usual of becoming the subject of allegations. Male DCOs told us that the fear of allegations of inappropriate behaviour caused some to take a defensive approach to such tasks in which they put self-protection before the needs of residents.

3.46 Shifts used to overlap by 15 minutes to allow for handover. Since the introduction of the new contract however most DCO shifts in the residential units end at 9am or 9pm, with no provision for handover. Staff on residential units should have the information they need to manage and care for all residents on their unit. In particular, if they are to manage the risks relating to those residents on ACDT or otherwise giving cause for concern, they need up-to-date reports on the behaviour and progress of such residents. This information was not being handed over in any systematic or reliable way. Staff handover arrangements should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

3.47 Serco has initiated a review of staffing at Yarl's Wood. We recommend that those undertaking the review should address the concerns that we have identified in relation to present staffing.

Physical environment, facilities, food and activity

Cleaning

3.48 Residents who attended our meetings complained vociferously and consistently about the cleaning at Yarl's Wood. We found that most common areas were cleaned satisfactorily, apart from the dining rooms. But the time that cleaning staff have to clean residents rooms and bathrooms is limited. Given how important good cleaning standards are to residents, it is important that cleaning arrangements are closely monitored.

Access to outdoor space

3.49 Each residential unit has access to a garden, but these feel hemmed in. The only designated outdoor games facility is the small games pitch available for use by the short stay male residents. The centre manager told us of his plans to allow residents access to some disused polytunnels to grow things in and to reinstate a disused games pitch for the use of all residents.

3.50 There is a lot of unused space around the buildings which residents cannot access. A large part of the site lies derelict following the fire in 2002. We cannot determine how feasible it would be for arrangements to be made to give residents access to further open spaces, but we believe that doing so would greatly enhance the feel of Yarl's Wood, and residents' health and wellbeing and experience of being there.

3.51 Yarl's Wood has the unmistakeable look and feel of a prison or custodial environment. We urge managers to continue to look for opportunities to soften the look and feel of the centre and to discuss with the Home Office whether they can give residents access to more extensive open space, and whether they can increase natural light in corridors and common parts of the centre.

Care suites

3.52 There is a small enhanced-care unit at one end of the healthcare centre which is operated by Serco and Serco's staff are responsible for the care of residents accommodated in it. The enhanced care suite is used to house residents who may need to be cared for or treated in isolation. Managers opened a new care suite in August 2015 to meet the need for more appropriate accommodation for residents with mental health or other issues requiring more care or who need to spend time away from the main residential units. Managers hope that giving certain residents the opportunity to spend time in the new suite will prevent their state of mind or behaviour from deteriorating and will mean that fewer people will need to be confined or removed from association in the segregation unit.

Food

3.53 Food produced the most comment and complaint during our meetings with residents, second only to the handling of their immigration cases and healthcare which are not Serco's responsibility.

3.54 We found the lunch time meals heavy in carbohydrates and unappetising. We think that residents are not currently offered adequate fresh fruit and vegetables to encourage them to meet the five-a-day recommendation. We are concerned about the limited alternative food available to residents who do not want to eat a meal that they will have had to order at least three days in advance.

3.55 Serco told us that the quality and variety of food at Yarl's Wood should improve in the near future. They said they have developed with Brakes, their grocery and fresh food suppliers, a new set of recipes to use across their custodial estate. The purpose of this is to improve the quality, variety and consistency of meals served in the IRC and prisons.

3.56 We found there were limited opportunities for residents to cater for themselves. Giving them more opportunities would alleviate some of the eating difficulties they experience and help staff to encourage them to eat properly.

Facilities and activities

3.57 Yarl's Wood has a number of facilities and activities available to the female residents. Residents also have opportunity to undertake paid work in Yarl's Wood. But there are waiting lists for paid roles. Activities staff and other DCOs told us that activities had been increasingly curtailed because of recent staff shortages and Home Office restrictions on the use of money from the general purposes fund. Residents complained to us about the lack of meaningful activity.

3.58 The activities and facilities available keep residents occupied for only a limited part of their time. The training and education programmes need to offer greater opportunities for the more able residents as well as those lacking basic skills. We formed the impression that most residents were under-occupied and spent a large part of the day just wandering about or chatting.

Safeguarding

3.59 We are not aware of a specific policy at Yarl's Wood that provides for the management of adult safeguarding risks. The policies and training relating to keeping residents safe do not consider or address the fact that there may be features of residents' lives outside Yarl's Wood which threaten their safety or place them at risk of harm either while still in Yarl's Wood or on release. Staff said they understood adult safeguarding only in terms of the prevention of self-harm and suicide at the centre.

3.60 There has been come confusion between the local authority and managers at Yarl's Wood about the need for contact between Yarl's Wood and the local safeguarding adults board (SAB) and the local authority safeguarding team. In the light of the statutory guidance on adult safeguarding issued under the Care Act 2012, the safeguarding risks to the residents of Yarl's Wood, and the weaknesses we found in the safeguarding arrangements at Yarl's Wood, managers should seek further guidance from the SAB on developing appropriate policies and practices, including staff training. Yarl's Wood managers should establish ongoing contact with the SAB and the local authority safeguarding team.

3.61 The Yarl's Wood's child protection policy documents identify the forms of abuse that children might be subject to and set out procedures for staff who have concerns about, observe or receive evidence of abuse. But the policy documents contain inconsistencies. In particular they include differing and confusing definitions of the children staff have a safeguarding responsibility for. They fail to make clear that staff have a duty to share any information relating to children in the wider community who may be at risk of harm. Staff are not given refresher training in safeguarding

3.62 The safeguarding of the children of residents is central to the welfare and wellbeing of residents. It is a highly pertinent issue, especially given that some residents may have sought to hide the existence of their children or may have had to make hasty, ill thought-out or unorthodox arrangements for their care.

3.63 Yarl's Wood should have clear and consistent child safeguarding and child protection policies that outline for staff their responsibility to identify and report on all matters of concern. Yarl's Wood should also ensure that staff have regular training to equip them to understand and meet their safeguarding duties.

3.64 Managers at Yarl's Wood should agree with the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) on arrangements for reporting concerns and on the pattern and frequency of future contact between the LSCB and Yarl's Wood.

Health and disability

3.65 The contract to manage healthcare services at Yarl's Wood, which used to be provided by Serco, was awarded to G4S Justice Health in November 2014 and falls outside our terms of reference. However, the healthcare of residents directly and significantly affects their wellbeing and their experience of being in Yarl's Wood. It has an impact on the needs and demands of the residents, and in turn on the work of the Serco staff and managers trying to look after them. We felt able to consider and comment upon the outcomes and effects of the healthcare arrangements.

3.66 The residents, staff, managers and representatives of other organisations interested in the welfare of the residents of Yarl's Wood all raised with us their concerns about the standards of healthcare there. We observed for ourselves the distress among

some residents about the service they had received. We also heard from Serco staff about their lack of confidence in and frustrations with the healthcare service.

3.67 We asked the centre manager what was being done to resolve issues relating to the provision of health care. He said a weekly conference call had been taking place between him, the Home Office and the NHS commissioner of the services at Yarl's Wood to discuss findings and recommendations for improvement made by HIMP and the Care Quality Commission. He and the former Serco director of home affairs offered assurances that they would continue to do what they could to work with G4S and the NHS commissioner to improve health services.

3.68 We did not have access to medical records or official data on the incidence of mental health problems among residents at Yarl's Wood, but many residents and staff, including nursing staff, spoke of the high levels of depression and anxiety of residents. Managing residents with mental health problems, especially severe mental health problems, is a demanding job. Their presence at Yarl's Wood has implications for the management of the centre as a whole. All staff at Yarl's Wood should be given improved and continuous training to help them identify and manage appropriately residents with mental health problems.

3.69 During our investigation a series of residents with mental health assessments awaiting transfer to a mental health hospital was housed in the enhanced care suite at the back of the healthcare centre. We are concerned about the use of the enhanced care suite for accommodating residents with mental health problems, or indeed any residents. It is unsuitable and its isolation and confusion surrounding responsibility for its management present risks to residents housed there.

3.70 Managers opened a new care suite in August 2015 to meet the need for more appropriate accommodation for residents with mental health or other issues requiring more care or who need to spend time away from the main residential units. However the enhanced care suite will still have to be used to house residents if the new care suite is already occupied by a resident who needs to be isolated.

3.71 Whatever provision is made for their care, Yarl's Wood is not a suitable environment for people with severe or significant mental health problems. It is not in their interests to be detained there. Furthermore, detaining such people at Yarl's Wood places

burdens on the staff that they are not equipped to meet and undermines their ability to provide a suitable environment and appropriate care for other residents.

3.72 Serco should open discussions with G4S, NHS commissioners and local mental health care providers to consider how best to meet the needs of detainees with severe mental health issues and ensure that they are assessed and receive care and treatment in a timely and appropriate fashion.

The care of pregnant women and disabled residents

3.73 Overall we found appropriate policies in place at Yarl's Wood for the care of pregnant and disabled residents. Most witnesses we spoke to thought that in general staff at Yarl's Wood did their best to look after and manage disabled residents. However staffing pressures meant officers responsible for the care of pregnant residents had not been able to put on classes for pregnant residents. And the absence of the DCOs appointed to manage the care of disabled residents suggested that the management of disabled residents may not have received the attention it requires. We also learnt that the DCO responsible for safer detention had given up that role. Managers need to address these staffing issues to ensure that pregnant and disabled residents, and residents at risk of harm are properly managed and cared for.

Training and development

3.74 Staff at Yarl's Wood undergo a seven-week initial training course (ITC). Annual refresher training for all staff in security, equality and diversity, safer detention (which largely covers the management of self-harm and suicide risks) and health and safety/fire awareness is mandatory. Staff undertake a mandatory two-day first aid refresher course every three years.

3.75 Nearly all the staff we spoke to said their training had been deficient both in subject matter and the way it had been delivered. They had not found training sessions engaging and had had difficulty retaining what they had been taught. Senior managers agreed that training programmes had not met the needs of staff and needed to be

redesigned. We reviewed the training materials used for initial training courses at Yarl's Wood.

3.76 Staff felt most strongly that they needed better training in mental health awareness. Staff told us they needed a greater understanding of the conditions they had to cope with and the strategies for managing them.

3.77 Staff and managers and those involved in supporting immigration detainees agreed that staff needed to be better able to identify and understand issues likely to affect residents and to be relevant to their care. These include trafficking, forced labour and sexual and domestic abuse. Staff also indicated that they would welcome greater instruction in the cultural issues and sensitivities relating to the different nationalities of residents.

3.78 The care of residents at Yarl's Wood and the good order of the centre depend to a significant extent on staff being socially adept; good at handling awkward situations; and employing de-escalation techniques. At present, the interpersonal skills training forms a part of the day's training in conflict management. We believe that training must be more extensive.

3.79 Staff training and awareness in relation to both adult and child safeguarding is deficient.

3.80 Many staff told us they would like to understand more about the immigration processes residents go through. They said it would help them to better understand and care for the residents. They also said it was the subject which residents most wanted to talk about and on which they most asked for help.

3.81 Serco should consider with the Home Office the extent to which it would be possible to offer some training aimed at giving staff at Yarl's Wood better understanding of immigration processes.

Reputation and public image of Yarl's Wood

3.82 The centre has a largely negative image in the public mind. Senior managers we interviewed said Yarl's Wood had a uniquely difficult and controversial public image and attracted media attention in a way no other Serco service did. A number of on-site demonstrations in support of the closure of the centre took place during our investigation.

3.83 Media coverage of Yarl's Wood does not usually distinguish between the responsibilities of the Home Office, Serco and G4S. Serco is usually held responsible for any deficiencies. Serco does not have a communications strategy specifically for the centre, despite the media attention it receives.

3.84 Staff we interviewed felt the impact of the negative publicity and reputation of Yarl's Wood. Some said it affected both their work and home lives and were considering different employment. Other staff were clearly proud of their work and felt a great commitment to the residents and the centre but recognised that Yarl's Wood had a poor public image.

3.85 Our investigation made us aware of the significant gap between the perceptions and image of Yarl's Wood and the reality of the workings of the centre. Some of the misperceptions and misunderstandings arise from the closed nature of the IRC. Insularity and lack of openness undermine the staff and add to the difficulties of managing Yarl's Wood and IRCs in general.

3.86 We recommend that Serco should seek to agree with the Home Office a new strategic communications plan for Yarl's Wood based on the principles of openness and transparency.

Our overall conclusions

3.87 The population of Yarl's Wood is diverse and vulnerable. Residents come from all over the world. Many speak little or no English. Some have suffered traumatic experiences before arriving at Yarl's Wood. Residents exhibit anxiety and distress as a result of their detention and uncertainty about their future.

3.88 The management and care of residents poses significant challenges for managers and staff at Yarl's Wood. Those challenges are added to by the fact that their work is the subject of much negative public comment.

3.89 We found that the issues that most concerned residents were the handling of their immigration cases and the healthcare provided to them. Neither of these matters are within Serco's control but they clearly have a significant bearing on the wellbeing of residents and their experience of being in Yarl's Wood.

3.90 During our investigation we observed staff at work and the nature of their relationships with residents on many occasions at all times of the day and night. We talked freely with many staff, residents, and others with insight into life within the centre. We considered the prevalence of inappropriate behaviours and mistreatment of residents by staff, and how specific incidents and allegations had been managed.

3.91 Overall we found the behaviour of staff towards residents and the relationships between staff and residents were good. The majority of staff appeared to be sympathetic to the concerns and needs of residents and to deal with them in a caring and supportive manner. However some staff we encountered seemed cynical or disengaged from their work and lacked sensitivity or empathy in their dealings with residents.

3.92 There have been some well publicised incidents of inappropriate and abusive behaviours and treatment of residents by staff. However we do not believe there is a hidden or significant problem of serious misconduct or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour by staff, nor that such behaviours are endemic at Yarl's Wood. We found that staff had a good understanding of what does and does not constitute appropriate behaviour and treatment of residents.

3.93 In recent months the challenges faced by managers and staff have increased as a result of the rise in numbers of TSFNOs and detainees with pre-existing mental health problems.

3.94 In November 2014 Serco was re-awarded the contract to operate Yarl's Wood for a further eight years. The bid for that contract envisaged residents of Yarl's Wood having greater independence and freedom to manage their own affairs within the centre. It led to Serco managers instigating a redundancy programme which resulted in a significant

reduction in the numbers of DCOs employed at Yarl's Wood, the removal of a whole middle tier of management and the loss of the deputy director post.

3.95 Notwithstanding the introduction of technological and other innovations aimed at relieving staff from some duties, we found that the staffing levels provided for in the new contract meant staff were working under a great deal of pressure, and that the care of residents had to some extent been undermined and compromised. Above all we were concerned to find that low staffing levels meant staff did not have enough time to engage with residents. We were also concerned by the fact that activities were being curtailed, residents were under occupied and did not have adequate opportunities for meaningful activity.

3.96 The loss of management capacity under the new contract meant that certain functions, including strategic planning and staff appraisal, were being neglected. This poses a risk to the good management and governance within the centre and to the care and wellbeing of residents.

3.97 During the time that we were conducting our investigations there were two separate incidents of serious and unusual disturbance at Yarl's Wood. Both incidents involved TSFNOs and one resulted in serious injury to a DCM. We believe these incidents highlight the increasing risks and pressures involved in running the centre and that those pressures and risks have been enlarged by the recent reduction in staff.

3.98 We identified a number of further specific areas where there were shortcomings which had an impact on the wellbeing of residents. They include the food offered to residents, residents' access to open space, the safeguarding arrangements and the training of staff.

3.99 The matters of concern identified in this report and the risks they pose for the wellbeing of residents need to be tackled as a matter of urgency. That task will require managers to devise a comprehensive plan of action. The delivery of that plan will require some investment by Serco, and determined and visible leadership.

Recommendations

3.100 A suggested timescale for completion of each recommendation is in ***bold italics***.

R1 Serco should monitor the numbers of time-served foreign national offenders detained at Yarl's Wood, and the impact their presence has on the good order of the centre and the safety and security of others. Serco should consult regularly with the Home Office to ensure that only those who do not threaten good order, safety and security are detained at Yarl's Wood. (***Within three months***)

R2 Serco should continue to press the Home Office to improve the quality and timeliness of information-sharing about time-served foreign national offenders transferred to Yarl's Wood. (***Within three months***)

R3 Serco should consider with the Home Office the development of suitability criteria for the detention of time-served foreign national offenders at Yarl's Wood. (***Within three months***)

R4 Serco should consider with the Home Office whether the escort service can take responsibility for ensuring that residents are presented to HOIE for removal. This would include escorting residents from their room in Yarl's Wood. (***Within three months***)

R5 Managers at Yarl's Wood should put in place a programme of organisational development work involving all staff, to develop a clearer and better shared understanding of the centre's mission, role and purpose, and the cultures and arrangements, including staffing arrangements, that will ensure the appropriate care of Yarl's Wood's residents. Such a programme should allow staff to share their insights and engage them in devising plans for how the centre will be managed in the best interests of residents and staff. (***Within three months***)

R6 Managers should review the centre's policies, its recruitment, training and appraisal arrangements and the regime at the centre to ensure they are consistent with its mission, role and purpose. (***Within three months***)

R7 Managers should review the appraisal process and ensure that those who undertake appraisals have the time, training and support they need to appraise staff in a robust and meaningful way. *(Within three months)*

R8 Managers should undertake a review of present local policies and arrangements for whistleblowing and reporting matters of concern. They should devise policies and arrangements that are easily understood by staff, command the confidence of staff and encourage and support them to report colleagues whose behaviours are inappropriate or below standard. *(Within six months)*

R9 Managers undertaking the current staffing review should address the question of how staff can best be given time to engage with residents and meet their emotional as well as practical needs. *(Urgent)*

R10 Managers undertaking the current review of staffing should rectify the problems with management capacity. *(Urgent)*

R11 Managers should undertake an audit and assessment of the roles that only female staff should undertake and how many female staff are required at Yarl's Wood to answer the needs of residents. Managers should develop a staffing plan, based on that audit and assessment. *(Within three months)*

R12 Managers undertaking the current staffing review should in particular consider and address weaknesses in the night staffing arrangements. *(Urgent)*

R13 Managers should review policy and procedure in relation to entering residents' rooms and interviews with and checks on residents, particularly at night, to ensure that interviews and checks are as thorough as necessary and carried out in a consistently by all staff. *(Within three months)*

R14 Managers should review staff handover arrangements as a matter of urgency. *(Urgent)*

R15 Managers should closely monitor standards of cleaning throughout the centre. *(Within three months)*

R16 Managers should continue to look for opportunities to improve the physical environment at Yarl's Wood and make it less prison-like. In particular they should discuss with the Home office whether they can give residents access to more open space and whether they can increase natural light in the corridors and common parts of the centre. *(Within six months)*

R17 Serco should routinely redecorate parts of the centre showing wear and tear. *(Within six months)*

R18 Managers should ensure that menus:

- offer adequate appetising fresh fruit and vegetables and encourage the consumption of five portions of fruit and vegetables a day; and
- offer a better-balanced choice of foods at lunchtimes. *(Within three months)*

R19 Leftovers that would otherwise go to waste should be offered to residents. *(Within three months)*

R20 Serco should consider how residents might be given greater opportunities to cater for themselves, including by expanding the cultural kitchen facilities, the choice of foods in the shop and providing facilities for residents to store and cook food and make snacks for themselves. *(Within six months)*

R21 Serco should work with the Home Office to ensure that the current DSO on food and fluid refusal is appropriately amended to make it explicit that residents who prefer to cater for themselves can do so without automatically being subject to ACDT. *(Within three months)*

R22 Serco should review the activities, education and training programmes available to residents to ensure they allow them adequately to occupy their time and provide meaningful activity, education and training, even for the most able residents. *(Within three months)*

R23 Managers at Yarl's Wood, in consultation with the local safeguarding adults board, should devise appropriate adult safeguarding policy and practice, including staff training. *(Within three months)*

R24 Managers at Yarl's Wood should actively engage with the local authority safeguarding team and the safeguarding adults board and ensure establish appropriate and ongoing information sharing to secure the safeguarding of residents. *(Within three months)*

R25 In consultation with the LSCB, managers should review and redraft Yarl's Wood's child protection and safeguarding policies to ensure that they clearly and consistently identify the extent of staff responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, including children in the community, and conform to the requirements of the LSCB. *(Within three months)*

R26 In consultation with the LSCB, managers should review the training of staff in relation to safeguarding and child protection to ensure that they are given regular training to help them understand and meet their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children. *(Within three months)*

R27 Managers should agree with the LSCB on arrangements for reporting concerns and on the pattern and frequency of future contact between the LSCB and Yarl's Wood. *(Within three months)*

R28 The centre manager and senior Serco managers should continue to engage at all levels with NHS commissioners and G4S to ensure that concerns about the healthcare provision at Yarl's Wood are addressed. *(Within three months)*

R29 Serco should open discussions with G4S, NHS England and local mental health care providers to consider how best to meet the needs of detainees with severe mental health issues, and ensure that they are assessed and receive care and treatment in a timely and appropriate fashion. *(Urgent)*

R30 Pregnant residents should be allowed to eat their meals away from the main dining rooms without having to obtain permission from healthcare staff. *(Within three months)*

R31 Serco managers should undertake a thorough review of the initial training course and the refresher training programme to ensure that they enable staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. The review and any consequent redesign of staff training should

ensure that staff are adequately trained in mental health matters affecting residents at Yarl's Wood; the backgrounds and vulnerabilities of residents; interpersonal skills including de-escalation techniques; and adult and child safeguarding. ***(Within six months)***

R32 Serco managers should consider with the Home Office the possibility of providing training to give DCOs a better understanding of the rudiments of immigration processes. ***(Within six months)***

R33 The Serco director of media relations should form and maintain a regular stakeholder group. ***(Within three months)***

R34 Serco should seek to agree with the Home Office a new strategic communications plan for Yarl's Wood based on the principles of transparency and openness. ***(Within three months)***

R35 Serco should seek Home Office approval for a programme of visits to the centre. Visitors could include officers and politicians from the local council, interested MPs and groups providing services. The purpose of the programme would be to show them the work and facilities and brief them. ***(Within six months)***

4. Methodology

Initial scoping, research and evidence gathering

4.1 We began our investigation with a review of the online material, principally media reports and commentaries, on the history of Yarl's Wood, and the allegations and controversies relating to it. This enabled us to piece together an initial chronology and some understanding of the issues relating to the management of Yarl's Wood, including the allegations and complaints made over the years about the treatment of detainees. It also allowed us to identify some of the charities and other organisations, as well as journalists and commentators, with an interest in the subject of immigration detention and the welfare of immigration detainees, and who we hoped would be prepared to share their views and evidence.

4.2 Serco managers provided us with a list of individuals who would be able to further our understanding of Yarl's Wood, the arrangements under which it operates and the concerns that have been expressed about the treatment of residents. They included senior Serco managers, local managers at Yarl's Wood, politicians, relevant representatives of Yarl's Wood's most significant stakeholders, such as the Home Office and HM Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales (HMIP) and Yarl's Wood's Independent Monitoring Board, journalists, charities and other organisations known to have an interest in immigration detention and detainees.

4.3 We arranged for early meetings with some of the organisations and individuals described above. The imminent general election prevented us from meeting politicians in our first round of interviews. Some of our early interviewees put us in contact with others they thought we would benefit from meeting and taking evidence from at an early stage.

4.4 During our first round of interviews we met, among others, the director of returns at the Home Office, the Home Affairs editor of the Guardian and Observer newspapers, an adviser to Keith Vaz MP, chair of the House of Commons home affairs select committee, the chair of the Yarl's Wood Independent Monitoring Board, representatives of the GMB Union at Yarl's Wood, the charities Women for Refugee Women and Medical Justice, Mary Bosworth, professor of criminology at Oxford University, who leads a research project on detention centres, and one of her research team who had visited Yarl's Wood for four weeks in March 2015. We also met the team leader at HMIP who led the inspection at

Yarl's Wood in 2013 and who at the time of our meeting was planning a further unannounced inspection.

4.5 We reviewed a number of reports, articles and research papers, including the HMIP report on its inspection at Yarl's Wood in 2013; the report of the inquiry into the use of immigration detention in the UK produced by the All Parliamentary Group on Refugees and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration published in March 2015; research reports written by Professor Mary Bosworth and Blerina Kellezi on the quality of life in detention; research papers published by organisations campaigning on issues related to immigration detention. A list of the reports, articles and research papers reviewed is set out at appendix C.

4.6 We visited Yarl's Wood for the first time on 1 April 2015 when we met informally with senior managers and toured the centre. During that tour we spoke informally with a number of staff and residents.

4.7 HMIP began an unannounced inspection at Yarl's Wood on 13 April 2015. It lasted three weeks. At HMIP's invitation we attended two internal on-site meetings at which the inspection team developed and agreed on their findings and feedback for Yarl's Wood's senior management team. Our attendance at these meetings added significantly to our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the regime and arrangements at Yarl's Wood. We are grateful to HMIP inspection team, and in particular its leader, Hindpal Singh Bhui, for their generosity with their time and their openness and cooperation with us.

4.8 Our early researches, discussions and interviews highlighted for us some of the more significant issues relating to immigration removal centres (IRCs) generally and Yarl's Wood in particular. They enabled us to understand better the nature and extent of matters we would have to consider in order to come to conclusions about the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood as they relate to the welfare and wellbeing of residents. They allowed us to identify matters and questions we needed to explore in greater depth in more structured interviews with other interviewees.

4.9 After our initial scoping, research and evidence gathering, we agreed with Serco on the final version of our terms of reference.

Evidence gathering

Document review

4.10 We reviewed a large quantity of documents relating to the operating and management procedures at Yarl's Wood. These included Home Office Detention Service Orders, Yarl's Wood's policies and directions to staff in the form of Centre Manager's Orders and Post Orders, some management reporting data and logs. A list of the principal documents reviewed is set out in appendix C.

Interviews

4.11 We began our structured interviews with the senior management team at Yarl's Wood. We conducted structured interviews with five detainee custody managers (DCMs) and 10 detainee custody officers (DCOs). Managers at Yarl's Wood arranged some of the initial DCO interviews for us. We selected other DCOs and DCMs at random from the full staff list provided to us. We also interviewed staff in certain roles who we thought would add to our understanding of the culture and management of Yarl's Wood. They included the pastor, the welfare officer, the cleaning manager, the acting head of training and the catering manager.

4.12 We wrote to all staff we invited for interview setting out the basis on which the interviews were to be conducted. They were also sent a guide to the process. A copy of the letter and the guide is at appendix D. Interviewees were offered the opportunity to be accompanied at interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. We sent interviewees a copy of their transcript and asked them to approve it. We told them at interview that they might be quoted in this report. We have not shared transcripts with Serco and they remain confidential to the investigation team.

4.13 A page of information about our investigation was placed on the Yarl's Wood intranet offering any member of staff the opportunity to speak to us and giving details of how we could be contacted. Three staff got in touch with us and were given a formal interview.

4.14 We arranged to interview residents in group sessions. We chose people at random from the list Yarl's Wood provided. We invited the residents by letter. Our letter, which is at appendix E, explained the purpose and form of the group interview sessions. Some residents who were asked to attend the group interviews chose not to do so, but many others who had not received a letter heard we were in Yarl's Wood and came to talk to us. About 40 single women residents attended these sessions.

4.15 We told the attendees at the group sessions how they and their fellow residents could contact us if they wanted to talk to us later. A notice with our contact details was also put up in the centre. Twelve residents asked if they could speak with us. We met them in the library. Most wanted to talk about their immigration cases.

4.16 We interviewed many other people from Serco and from outside organisations who helped us with specific issues or added to our general understanding of matters at Yarl's Wood.

4.17 We are grateful to all who agreed to be interviewed. A full list appears at appendix F.

Visits

4.18 We arranged visits to two other immigration detention centres to increase our understanding of the regime and culture at Yarl's Wood. We chose Dungavel IRC in Strathaven, South Lanarkshire because it is the only other IRC in the UK that houses single women for more than brief periods; 14 of its 249 residents are women. We also visited Heathrow IRC. It has capacity for 1,061 residents. It has a separate unit that accommodates 27 women on a short-term basis. For the purpose of drawing distinctions with a women's prison, we also visited HMP Bronzefield, which houses 527 women of whom about 40 per cent are on remand and the rest are sentenced prisoners. We had the opportunity in all these facilities to talk to senior managers and staff; we were given an extensive tour and talked informally to staff and residents/prisoners.

4.19 We are grateful to the staff at each of the facilities we visited and to the Home Office for arranging our visits.

Our access and visits to Yarl's Wood

4.20 The Home Office gave us clearance and we undertook safety and key training. We were allowed our own keys to Yarl's Wood, giving us access to the whole site. Separately, and on different occasions, we both shadowed staff at Yarl's Wood for a 12-hour day shift and a 12-hour night shift, when we visited all parts of the centre. We made visits to residential units and other parts of the site on the days we conducted structured interviews with staff and made unannounced visits as well. We visited Yarl's Wood on 23 occasions.

4.21 We met and talked freely with staff and residents. We made plain that they could speak to us unattributably. They were open to discussing their experience of Yarl's Wood and their views about how it was run. Staff and residents came to talk to us once word of our presence and the nature of our work at Yarl's Wood spread. We believe that our unlimited access to Yarl's Wood allowed us to form a realistic impression of the regime there, the relationships between staff and residents and the general culture of the centre.

Channel 4 News allegations

4.22 Before our terms of reference were finalised, we wrote to the producers of the Channel 4 News undercover films and reports broadcast on 2 and 3 March 2015 asking for a meeting. We hoped that the producers would provide us with a better understanding of the circumstances in which the matters complained of in the films had occurred, and any further information that might bear on our investigations. Ed Fraser, the managing editor of Channel 4 News, replied that the broadcast reports contained all the information the producers could disclose without a court order. Channel 4 News has not responded to a further letter in which we said a meeting would help us understand concerns about Yarl's Wood and help us come to appropriate conclusions. Copies of our correspondence with Channel 4 News are at appendix G.

4.23 HMIP published the report of their 2015 unannounced inspection in early August 2015. It is the result of a methodical appraisal of the regime and service provided to residents at Yarl's Wood against a predetermined and defined set of criteria. We used information from the inspection to inform our investigations, so our work and that of HMIP inevitably overlapped. However, the matters we considered were perhaps more abstract

and less tangible and measurable - namely the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood and how they affected the welfare and well-being of residents. We also looked at specific allegations and incidents relating to the treatment of residents. Our work involved greater engagement with staff, residents and other interested parties, over a longer period.

Structure of this report

4.24 The report begins with a section giving some background information about the history of Yarl's Wood. The next three sections consider the role, purpose and challenges involved in running Yarl's Wood, and the overall culture of Yarl's Wood. Subsequent sections deal with specific issues that others have raised as causes for concern, including the allegations of the mistreatment of residents, or which we identified as issues that needed to be investigated and commented upon.

4.25 We provide a summary of our findings and conclusions at the end of some sections where we think it helpful.

4.26 Our findings from interviews and documents are set out in ordinary text. Quotations from those we interviewed are in italics.

4.27 Section 5 sets out some background to Yarl's Wood and outlines the focus of our investigation.

4.28 Section 6 outlines the demands and challenges faced by those who manage Yarl's Wood, particularly in relation to the make-up of the resident population.

4.29 Section 7 sets out the role and purpose of detention centres such as Yarl's Wood and the effect of changes introduced with the new contract.

4.30 Section 8 looks at the culture at Yarl's Wood in respect of relationships and behaviours, including relations between staff and residents, raising concerns and whistleblowing, maintaining residents' privacy and dignity, and the use of force and segregation.

4.31 Section 9 outlines how complaints and allegations are handled at Yarl's Wood, and also considers some specific allegations and incidents.

4.32 Section 10 covers the new contract in operation, including the effects on staffing and management capacity.

4.33 Section 11 explores how the physical environment, facilities, food and activities affect residents' experience at Yarl's Wood.

4.34 Section 12 considers the safeguarding arrangements at Yarl's Wood, and the involvement with local safeguarding organisations.

4.35 Section 13 considers how healthcare provision affects residents' wellbeing and experience at Yarl's Wood. It also looks at how Yarl's Wood manages pregnant women, disabled residents and those with mental health problems.

4.36 Section 14 explores the adequacy of the training that is offered to staff.

4.37 Section 15 looks at the public image of Yarl's Wood and the handling of relationships with stakeholders and the media.

4.38 Section 16 sets out our overall conclusions.

5. Background

5.1 Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre (Yarl's Wood) is a self-contained, residential centre located on a business park near the village of Clapham about six miles from Bedford. It is built to a prison design and houses adults detained under the United Kingdom's nationality, immigration and asylum legislation. HMIP and the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration have summarised the basis on which residents are detained as follows:

"The UK Border Agency's power to detain comes from several sources, including the 1971 Immigration Act, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and the UK Borders Act 2007. Detention is an administrative decision taken by UKBA [now UK Visas and Immigration] and Border Force officers and is not sanctioned by the judiciary. The way that immigration staff should apply their powers to detain is set out in chapter 55 of UKBA's enforcement and instruction guidance (EIG). The guidance allows detention for four broad reasons: to effect removal; to establish someone's identity or the basis of their asylum claim; to fast-track an asylum claim¹; and to prevent non-compliance with conditions of temporary release or admission."²

5.2 Yarl's Wood opened on 19 November 2001. It was built to hold up to 900 people, making it the largest immigration removal centre in Europe at the time. A large block of buildings on the Yarl's Wood site was gutted by a fire in February 2002 that followed a protest by detainees. The fire-damaged buildings were pulled down and their part of the site was left derelict. The centre reopened in September 2003 as a smaller facility, housing only family groups and single women, with capacity of 410 detainees.

5.3 The contract to run Yarl's Wood on behalf of the Home Office was awarded to Serco plc (Serco) in April 2007. Serco took the contract over from GSL UK Limited. Serco was re-awarded the contract in November 2014. The new contract was for eight years.

¹ The detained fast track process for determining asylum claims was held to be unlawful by the Court of Appeal at the end of June 2015. It is currently suspended pending an appeal of the decision to the Supreme Court. The detained fast track cases are now referred to as detained asylum cases.

² HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Independent Inspector of Borders and Immigration (December 2012) *The effectiveness and impact of immigration detention casework: A joint thematic review*.

5.4 Those detained at Yarl's Wood initially included children. The High Court ruled in January 2011 that detaining children was unlawful. In 2012 Yarl's Wood began housing adult males who had entered the UK illegally, (known as "lorry drop" cases). They are detained at Yarl's Wood for only short periods before being removed to other sites. The single women and adult family groups housed at Yarl's Wood fall into one of three categories: foreign national offenders who have served a sentence in a UK prison and are awaiting deportation; those detained while their asylum application is considered; and others who are thought to have entered or remained in the UK illegally (sometimes referred to as "overstayers"). Residents are detained in accordance with Chapter 55 of the Home Office's enforcement instructions and guidance, (principally to effect removal from the UK or because of reason to believe they will fail to comply with the conditions of temporary admission or release).

5.5 Home Office statistics from 2014 show that 93 per cent of detainees in UK IRCs passed through the immigration removal centre system within four months. Of the remaining seven per cent, (2,043 people), 152 were detained for between one and two years, and 26 for two years or longer. Managers at Yarl's Wood told us the average stay at the centre during the period January to September 2015 was 49 days for single female residents and 38 days for family groups. Statistics show that half of all detainees have been removed from the UK in recent years, and the rest released having been bailed, granted leave to enter or remain in the UK or granted temporary admission or release. However, the proportion of the residents of Yarl's Wood removed from the UK in 2013 was 34 per cent and in 2014 the proportion was 25 per cent.

5.6 Yarl's Wood has a reception unit where detainees are received, undergo initial assessment and administrative processes and are given introductory information. The centre has five residential units: Crane, where single women are housed for their first two or three nights; Dove and Avocet, which house single women detainees; Hummingbird for adult family groups; and Bunting for men who entered the UK illegally.

Focus of our investigations

5.7 The investigation focused on the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood and how they affect the welfare and wellbeing of residents.

5.8 Single males detained at Yarl's Wood spend only one to two days there before they are moved to centres or immigration housing projects elsewhere in the country pending the processing of their asylum claims. Given the circumstances in which most of the single men at Yarl's Wood arrived in the UK and the brief time for which they are detained at Yarl's Wood, it is perhaps unsurprising that most of them appear to be grateful for the food and shelter they receive at Yarl's Wood and generally appreciate the efforts of the staff. We saw on a notice board in the Bunting unit many written notes of gratitude pinned up by residents and we did not receive any adverse comment from the residents on that unit about the way they had been treated. We were told that there had been no allegations of mistreatment or inappropriate behaviour by staff from single male detainees apart from one incident in which a single male resident complained that a DCO had placed a hand on the resident's shoulder.

5.9 Accordingly, while we considered the arrangements for single male detainees, spent time on the Bunting unit and spoke to residents there, we focused our attention primarily on the units housing single women and family groups. These units generated all but one of the allegations of inappropriate behaviour and abuse that we were made aware of and they are the subject of most of the adverse comment and media reports about Yarl's Wood.

5.10 Our investigation was commissioned by Serco alone. Accordingly, our terms of reference did not allow us to investigate the transport service that brings residents to and from Yarl's Wood, which is managed by Tascor Limited, under its own contract with the Home Office, nor the healthcare service for residents, which is provided by G4S plc, under its own contract with the NHS England. Nevertheless, we considered the way the provision of those services had implications for how Serco managed Yarl's Wood.

6. Management challenges at Yarl's Wood

6.1 Our investigation made clear that those who manage Yarl's Wood and care for its residents face significant, and in some cases unique, demands and challenges. These demands and challenges must be borne in mind in any discussion of the merits or otherwise of the arrangements, policies and practices within the centre and whether they adequately provide for the well-being of residents. The nature and make-up of the resident population is the greatest challenge.

The resident population

6.2 The Home Office decides who is detained at Yarl's Wood. Residents arrive through differing paths in the immigration and asylum system. Those held in detention come to the centre as a result of decisions by a number of Home Office bodies including: the National Removals Command, the Third Country Unit, Operation Nexus³, the Criminal Casework Directorate, the Detained Asylum Cases team (formerly Detained Fast Track) and the Border Force. All these bodies undertake immigration casework.

6.3 Some residents are asylum seekers, some entered or remain in the UK illegally and others are time-served foreign national offenders (TSFNOs) awaiting deportation. They come from all parts of the world. Residents therefore have widely differing life experiences, expectations, and concerns. Some may have been victims of violence, abuse, torture and other traumatic events. Many residents have little or no command of English. Ensuring that such a disparate, troubled and vulnerable population lives together safely and peacefully is clearly a demanding task. The following table shows some of the features of the resident population.

³ A joint initiative by the Home Office and Metropolitan Police focusing on the identification of foreign nationals who break the law.

Features of Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

Characteristic/ issue	Presenting features /experience of resident population	Outcome/implications for management of centre
Sources of admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple sources - including border, immigration reporting centres, police and prison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admissions throughout the 24 hour period Residents often vulnerable, tired and distressed Little or no prior intelligence received by Yarl's Wood as to nature of residents
Previous experience of resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widely varied - could include trafficking, violence, torture and other traumatic events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex past/previous experiences often poorly understood by staff
Resident's lack notification of detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some residents unexpectedly detained at reporting centre or border 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents emotionally unprepared for detention Residents arrive without belongings or papers relevant to immigration status May leave family including children in the community in the UK
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-served foreign national offenders (TSFNOs) Asylum seekers Over-stayers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex population with different needs and vulnerabilities Mixed population has implications for harmony of the community
Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many different nationalities with residents from Europe, Africa, Asia, Middle East and Caribbean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential tensions between different communities which require careful management Different cultural needs and sensitivities to be catered for

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many languages spoken by residents • Residents with limited or no English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication difficulties between staff and residents • Challenges inducting and integrating residents
Outcome of immigration case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No time limit on detention. • Immigration outcome for a resident uncertain: could include deportation, removal or leave to stay (temporary or permanent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary source of concern, anxiety and distress for residents over which the centre has no control
Regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities for work and meaningful daily activities • No obligation on residents to participate in a regime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a daily structure leads to increases in anxiety in individuals and the possibility of disturbance and disorder in the community
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High and sometimes complex health needs among resident population. • Mental wellbeing affected by prolonged detention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant demands on staff in managing health problems - particularly mental health problems (anxiety through to major mental illness) • Quality and consistency of healthcare provision is vital to running of the centre

6.4 Mary Bosworth, the professor of criminology at Oxford University, has been conducting independent academic research into the immigration removal system in the UK since 2009. She has spent time in a number of immigration removal centres (IRCs) including Yarl's Wood. Alice Gerlach, a member of Professor Bosworth's research team spent three weeks in Yarl's Wood in March 2015. Professor Bosworth told us:

"...these institutions, while although they resemble prisons in so many ways, they don't have a classification system. All you need to enter them is the lack of British citizenship...and the population is not homogeneous. It is incredibly diverse. So for

staff that is just massively challenging... I do think it is important not to underestimate how challenging it must be to work in these environments.”

Time-served foreign national offenders

6.5 Managers told us in May 2015 that, of a population of 380 residents at that time, 37 were TSFNOs, double the number previously held. Clare Checksfield, director of returns, Home Office Immigration and Enforcement (HOIE), told us that since 2012 the Home Office had been trying to increase the number of removals of TSFNOs from the UK and to bring down the number held in prisons for removal. This had led to an increase in ex-offenders in immigration detention but she said *“the process has been quite slow and quite gradual”*. She also said that the numbers of TSFNOs in IRCs had been stable since September 2014.

6.6 The director of returns, HOIE and the centre manager at Yarl’s Wood said the increased percentage of TSFNOs in Yarl’s Wood was not in itself a problem: what mattered was whether they were appropriately risk-assessed for their suitability for transfer to Yarl’s Wood and how they behaved.

6.7 Managers at Yarl’s Wood told us that the records of incidents of violence, which included incidents of bullying and anti-social behaviour, did not specifically identify whether TSFNOs had been responsible for such an incident.

6.8 Nevertheless, many of those we spoke to and interviewed said TSFNOs were disproportionately responsible for disruptive incidents in the centre and the increase in their numbers had created difficulties for the staff who had to manage the centre and look after the residents every day. The assistant director of operations at Yarl’s Wood said:

“...it is a very small minority within that group [TSFNOs] that do cause an issue but when they do, it [has] more of a bigger impact...”

6.9 The assistant director of governance also spoke of the increasingly demanding nature of the TSFNOs sent to Yarl’s Wood:

“The type of [TSFNOs] we are getting has changed massively...They are more challenging with more complex needs. They are prolific self-harmers, or manipulation by self-harm. It sounds awful but there are well seasoned prisoners, who understand the system and who are au fait with what conditioning is, and how to manipulate people. That calibre of prisoner has increased here”.

6.10 DCOs were clear about the particular difficulties posed by the presence of some TSFNOs. One DCO said:

“Perhaps from my own personal view, a few residents who have been in jail...have this mentality with a lack of respect for authority. They can be a little bit manipulative and cocky, for want of a better word...”

6.11 Others said:

“I think [the increase in numbers of TSFNOs] does cause a bit of a problem, because they are a lot more worldly wise, have a few more tricks up their sleeves. ...A prisoner is used to the regime, they will look out for the flaws in it, see if they can get away with doing stuff, whereas a person who has just been picked up will be absolutely terrified of coming here in the first place, because they have never been detained anywhere like this before in their lives, and they are horrified, but to a prisoner it’s nothing.”

“... [a greater proportion of TSFNOs] does change the dynamics because obviously they know their way round the system and they know how to manipulate if you like and they show the lead and the others just sort of follow. It definitely goes like that.”

6.12 And another DCO said:

“... it is not easy because a lot of these ladies come from HMP, they know the system, they know what they can get away with and what they can’t get away with. They can be very intimidating for some of the residents that might have come straight from the airport. The way they are, it’s very intimidating.”

6.13 Mary Coussey, the chair of the Yarl's Wood independent monitoring board (IMB), said a sit-in by residents on 9 April 2015, aimed at preventing a removal and which we consider in detail below, was instigated by two TSFNOs who had been responsible for many other instances of rule-breaking and trouble-making. Ms Coussey said:

"...of course the Home Office always say [TSFNOs] are all risk assessed before they go [to Yarl's Wood] but in my recollection over the last two years, when you have a certain number of people who have committed certain offences, it does make it more difficult to manage."

6.14 The head of detention operations HOIE told us that IRCs are sent a Movement Order in advance of the arrival of a TSFNO, setting out risk information, including information about their behaviour in prison, on the basis of which IRC managers might be able to make a case against them accepting a particular person into an IRC. The head of detention operations HOIE conceded however:

"That Movement Order will provide some risk information, it is not a massive amount of information and that is one of the things that we are trying to improve...an internal review... acknowledged that information sharing could be improved".

6.15 Managers and staff at Yarl's Wood complained to us that information provided in respect of TSFNOs arriving at Yarl's Wood often arrived too late or gave inadequate information to allow them to identify people who might not be suitable for detention at Yarl's Wood or who might need special management.

6.16 Recent experience of having to manage two particularly disruptive TSFNOs, one of whom assaulted a DCO breaking his jaw, had clearly heightened concerns among staff and managers about having such residents at Yarl's Wood. Nevertheless, we learnt that some of the behaviour of these individuals was not without precedent. And in late September 2015 two further TSFNOs were involved in an incident that led to one being charged with causing actual bodily harm to a DCM and to another being charged with arson. We had conversations and witnessed incidents ourselves that indicated that the attitude and behaviour of some TSFNOs could be more challenging than those of the rest of the residents. One young TSFNO, subsequently involved in the incident in late September 2015, openly admitted to us that she sometimes sought to cause trouble and misbehave

because she had nothing better to do. Managers and staff also told us that the presence of some TSFNOs at Yarl's Wood had given cause for concern in relation to intimidation and bullying of other residents. Furthermore, whatever the realities of their behaviour might be, we believe that the presence of TSFNOs must add, at least initially, to the insecurities and anxieties felt by other residents, particularly in the early stages of their time at Yarl's Wood.

TSFNOs: our conclusions

6.17 The numbers of TSFNOs detained at Yarl's Wood and the extent to which their presence undermines good order and poses problems in relation to the safety, security and wellbeing of other residents and staff must be continuously monitored.

6.18 In any event, it is unacceptable that some TSFNOs are transferred to Yarl's Wood without the centre being given adequate information to allow them to be properly managed, including information about the risks they might pose. Serco and the Home Office should hold further discussions aimed at ensuring better information-sharing.

Recommendations

R1 Serco should monitor the numbers of time-served foreign national offenders detained at Yarl's Wood and the impact of their presence on the good order of the centre and the safety and security of others. Serco should consult regularly with the Home Office to ensure that only those who do not threaten good order, safety and security are detained at Yarl's Wood.

R2 Serco should continue to press the Home Office to improve the quality and timeliness of information-sharing about time-served foreign national offenders transferred to Yarl's Wood.

R3 Serco should consider with the Home Office the development of suitability criteria for the detention of time-served foreign national offenders at Yarl's Wood.

Mental health issues

6.19 Serco managers and staff do not have access to the medical records of residents and could not tell us how many Yarl's Wood residents had diagnosed mental health conditions but they and others told us of the relatively high incidence of behaviours that indicated mental health issues. This could be anything from an acute reaction to detention (an acute anxiety state), through to evident severe mental illness requiring diagnosis and treatment. Some residents had been sectioned and moved from Yarl's Wood to secure inpatient services. A significant number of the residents at Yarl's Wood were considered at risk of suicide or self-harm and subject to the ACDT process⁴. In 2014 there were 78 incidents of self-harm or attempts to self-harm and in the eight months from January to August 2015 there were 63 such incidents. A small number of residents committed or tried to commit self-harm many times. One woman had done so 19 times.

6.20 Some residents arrive at Yarl's Wood with serious mental health conditions. Staff told us that a small but increasing number of residents arrived with mental health problems so severe that it was obvious from the outset that Yarl's Wood was not an appropriate place for them to be detained. Jane Leech, former chair of the IMB, said:

"...there are cases we can point to of women coming usually from the airport, and presenting with quite severe problems. Whether that is a diagnosed condition or not, I don't know, that's for someone else to decide. There are a number of reasons why it's so concerning, but it seems there is nowhere else for them to go, so other authorities are not taking responsibility for them at that initial point."

6.21 Managers and staff at Yarl's Wood also had to deal with a wider population of residents who suffered from mental health problems as a result of their detention.

6.22 Professor Cornelius Katona, medical director of the Helen Bamber Foundation, a charity which provides holistic care, including legal support, for survivors of human rights abuses, talked about the incidence of mental health issues among detainees:

⁴ ACDT stands for Assessment Care in Detention and Teamwork. It is the process by which detainees at risk of harm are made subject to a care plan, including regular assessments and observations. The number of ACDT plans opened in 2014 was 428. In the eight months from January to August 2015 the number was 260. However a significant number of these will have been opened because of a resident's refusal to eat six consecutive meals in the Yarl's Wood dining rooms.

“What we know from studies elsewhere and here, including a study done by my colleague at The Helen Bamber Foundation, Dr Katy Robjant, and from a study by Keller et al in the States, that the longer people are detained the more likely they are to have significant mental health problems and the more severe the problems are likely to be.”

6.23 Mary Coussey, chair of the IMB, talked to us about the prevalence of mental health issues among residents:

“Mental health and anxiety are big big issues. Over the year’s we’ve had these conversations with the healthcare people and they say “Oh, that’s behavioural, it’s not mental health” and we always say “so, what’s the difference?” Where do you draw the line?”....I suppose that means that people are behaving like that because it will help them to get out...but to my mind they shade into each other... of course I am not a professional”

6.24 Nearly all managers and staff said that managing residents with mental health issues was their greatest challenge. One DCO told us about two recent residents with severe mental health problems whose conditions had meant they had been housed away from other residents in the enhanced-care suite for a number of weeks where they were looked after by DCOs. He gave a vivid description of the highly disturbed behaviour of the two residents and of how he had felt ill equipped to offer them appropriate care. He was frightened that any interaction with them would cause an adverse reaction.

6.25 The assistant director of operations explained to us the effect on managing Yarl’s Wood of residents with more severe mental health issues:

“If they are ill and unwell, it’s not behavioural, it’s not within their control but they do have an impact...they have an impact on the whole regime. For example, they need isolating so that takes up an officer and that takes him away from the rest of the population. It could be that they are dealing with assault or unpredictable behaviour, so it could be an assault or aggressive behaviour. It could be that they just need more time, more monitoring and support ...”

6.26 The centre manager told us that he had developed a new care suite in order to provide a more appropriate environment for those with significant mental health issues. He said:

“...if I was to go back and start looking at segregation numbers over the year, the vast majority of people who have been in segregation have had a mental health condition and they’ve been there because they have been assessed under the [Mental Health] Act and they are awaiting a bed in an appropriate unit. That usually takes about two weeks, for two weeks they will end up living in segregation and that is not ideal, but this environment would be.”

6.27 The centre manager suggested that the increase in the number of residents arriving at Yarl’s Wood with mental health problems resulted from the fact that residents are no longer subject to health assessment by the Home Office before being detained. Mary Coussey and others spoke to us about their concerns that some people are detained at Yarl’s Wood simply because they present at immigration offices or ports of entry with mental health issues and need to be accommodated. Mary Coussey said:

“There was one woman I remember seeing. She was in Kingfisher [segregation unit] quite a lot, I think she was Sri Lankan...The family wouldn’t have her because of her mental health state and she was in Yarl’s Wood for quite a long time before they found a bed for her [in a hospital]...and there is sometimes the feeling that [Yarl’s Wood is] the first port of call if somebody turns up at an airport with mental health problems...they can’t just leave them in the community...they send them to Yarl’s Wood because it is a secure, safe place”.

6.28 Home Office officials at Yarl’s Wood confirmed that more residents had been detained at airports and ports of entry where there were no facilities for assessing their mental health, although the director of returns HOIE told us that all decisions to detain should be subject to risk assessment. Home Office officials also conceded that in the absence of more appropriate provision border staff saw Yarl’s Wood as a safe environment in which to detain people who were mentally unwell and could not be left alone in the community.

6.29 It was made clear to us that the management of residents with mental health issues is a significant and increasing challenge for all who work at Yarl's Wood. We consider this further in section 13.

The nature and effect of detention

6.30 A number of people we spoke to, especially the representatives of the charities and pressure groups representing asylum seekers, emphasised the uncertainties and anxieties faced by those subject to immigration detention. Our own discussions with residents and our observations of the processes of the detention system allowed us some appreciation of the stresses, anxieties and fears that residents are subject to.

6.31 Some residents told us how they had been detained without warning when they attended for appointments at immigration reporting centres. They said they had been held for many hours before being picked up in an escort van and driven to Yarl's Wood. The journey is often lengthened by the need to pick up others on the way. Nearly a third of arrivals are between the hours of 10pm and 6am. First impressions of Yarl's Wood are of secure gates, locked doors and uniformed guards. Many residents arrive with only the clothes they are wearing. In answer to a survey conducted by HMIP as part of their recent inspection at Yarl's Wood, nearly half of residents reported feeling depressed or suicidal on their first night there.

6.32 Once at Yarl's Wood, residents have to navigate the immigration process. They do not know how long they will be detained. They do not know whether they will be removed from the UK or released. The average length of stay in Yarl's Wood for single female residents during the period January to September 2015 was seven weeks. Nevertheless, at the time of their inspection of Yarl's Wood in April 2015 HIMP found that 15 detainees had been held there for more than six months but less than a year, and four had been held for more than a year. We met one resident who told us that she had been in detention for 15 months.

6.33 Unlike prisoners, residents in an IRC not only have no release date to work towards, but they are not subject to the set daily regime of a prison, nor to a set planning process for their release and resettlement.

6.34 Professor Bosworth told us about the effects of immigration detention:

“...the uncertainty of detention is something that I have written quite a lot about...it is something which absolutely characterises these institutions and makes them very distinct from other custodial institutions. I think that sometimes staff underestimate the effect of that. ...it is quite hard to find anybody who supports the ...lack of upper end to a period of detention. I have never really found anybody who defends that who actually works in [an IRC]. However on the other hand, I also think that people don’t fully appreciate the anxiety and the pain that this uncertainty generates among detainees. Therefore, there’s a level of sympathy and compassion, but I think there is probably a little bit of a lack of understanding.”

6.35 We interviewed Gillian Kelly, consultant nurse within secure services, West London Mental Health NHS Trust who has worked extensively with women held in secure mental health units for indefinite periods. She described the experience of such women:

“I think what women have described to me is that sense of open-endedness- not knowing when you are going to be able to move on and the fear of the unknown. It really does cause a lot of fear, a lot of anxiety and the sense of having no power and [being] out of control of your life...For anyone who is incarcerated you lose your normal role in life and contact with people who are often very important to you, and that is very difficult and creates a lot of distress. It is a trauma in itself. So I think that the whole idea of being detained somewhere unknown, not knowing what time frame is on it, and whether or not you might be deported somewhere...that is terrifying, that is going to be incredibly difficult.”

6.36 A number of those we interviewed spoke of the psychological effects that immigration detention had on women in particular. Mary Coussey, chair of the Yarl’s Wood IMB, told us that one common response among women detainees was to stop eating:

“At the moment [not eating] is reasonably low, touch wood, but it goes up and down....But I have a theory, when I worked at Oakington [IRC] it was all male and they showed their stress differently, like physical punch ups and that kind of thing

whereas Yarl's Wood being mostly women, they show their distress in a different way."

6.37 Ms Coussey went on:

"...the other thing...talking about the mental health and the anxieties, a big factor is that those with children, the children are in care. Some of my colleagues have seen very distressing scenes in the visitors' room when the children come to see the mother and then they have to go. Isn't that stressful for both parties?"

6.38 Professor Bosworth spoke of the mistrust and fear many of the women residents felt:

"You can talk about the culture of disbelief existing within the Home office, and I think one of the parallels or corollaries of that is that detention centres are these sites of immense low trust. So that women first of all feel as though they are not being believed. Therefore, there is a sense of persecution and some feel that, but they also don't really trust one another very much, and they also find it hard to trust the staff."

6.39 Professor Bosworth said that against this backdrop, women in Yarl's Wood tended to believe stories of mistreatment and abuse by staff and to be fearful of such events:

"It is magnified by all sorts of things one of which is clearly...to do with language and people's understanding. It is not like they are able to read the news and come to a critical understanding of it themselves, so they rely on stories that go round."

6.40 Professor Cornelius Katona spoke of the particular fears of detainees who had previously suffered abuse and persecution. He said:

"... detention may be particularly difficult and distressing for these people. A lot of these women, and come to that a lot of men as well say, "I came here seeking protection and what I got was detention and further ill treatment" or what they experience as further ill treatment. They find it very frightening and unexpected and bewildering. A lot of them talk about being particularly frightened by people in uniform, by large men, by people with keys. I think in general, for people who

have been detained and ill-treated while in detention before, the fact of being detained has threatening connotations of future ill treatment, even if nothing of the kind happens.”

The role and effects of immigration casework in the management of Yarl’s Wood

6.41 At the time of this investigation 400 or so women were detained in Yarl’s Wood under immigration powers. Some were TSFNOs awaiting deportation, others were asylum seekers on the detained fast track (or latterly as detained asylum cases) and others had overstayed their visa. The quality and effectiveness of the Home Office immigration case work are central to their release or continued detention. Detainees are held by the administrative authority of UK Visas and Immigration or Border Force officials. There is no judicial oversight, but detainees can apply for bail.

6.42 HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration published a joint thematic review *The effectiveness and impact of immigration detention casework* in December 2012. The review listed factors relevant to Serco’s day-to-day management of Yarl’s Wood. They include:

- detainees experienced heightened levels of anxiety and distress;
- detainees sometimes suffered physical and mental health problems and those held for more than six months were more likely to experience these difficulties;
- detainees had difficulty getting good legal advice and some had no legal representation; and
- Home Office monthly progress reports to detainees were not particularly informative and some detainees found them difficult to understand.

6.43 The joint review made recommendations to the Home Office.

6.44 Many residents told us they did not feel sufficiently supported with their immigration claim. Almost all the residents we met at Yarl’s Wood said they had never met the Home Office caseworker responsible for deciding their immigration status. Some reported difficulties communicating with their caseworker. They felt that the Home Office on-site staff were simply ‘messengers’ and rarely had answers. A Home Office enforcement official who works at Yarl’s Wood confirmed that caseworkers could be based

all over the country and that a resident's contact with their caseworker was likely to be via fax or email. On-site Home Office enforcement staff usually provide residents with any updates about their case. Their role is to pass on information from the caseworker and they play no part in deciding individual cases. Residents made it clear to us that the issue that most concerned and upset them was the handling of their immigration cases.

6.45 Many residents find it hard to obtain good legal advice. They complained about limited access to legal advice and said some lawyers were unsupportive. We spent time in the legal visit centre during our fieldwork and saw first-hand that some residents were reluctant to come to talk to their solicitor or participate in an immigration interview for fear of what they might be told. Residents said that induction to Yarl's Wood did not cover how to navigate the immigration process and that this was particularly hard for women who did not have solicitors. One resident who joined our meeting had been in Yarl's Wood for 15 months.

6.46 These circumstances leave many residents feeling anxious and distressed. They are well recorded in the HMIP report.

6.47 Lonnie Haye, pastor at Yarl's Wood, described the impact of detention:

"Everything here is short-term, very, very short-term because we don't know how long a resident will stay with us, so you are constantly trying to give them things to do, things to keep them occupied, things to keep them balanced while they are trying to sort out their immigration. Most of their issues is with immigration. They know that we are trying to help them through that process. The stress level for many of them is quite high."

Media and public interest in Yarl's Wood

6.48 We felt from the outset of our investigation that Yarl's Wood differs from much of the rest of the detention estate in the UK and faces challenges that other IRCs do not. It accommodates the largest number of women immigration detainees (Dungavel IRC in South Lanarkshire, the only other long-term detention centre for women, has only 14 female beds). As a result of this, and Yarl's Wood's previous history of housing child detainees, it has always been the focus of uniquely fierce media attention and active

campaigns by charities and pressure groups concerned about the detention of women and children. Media attention has been further excited by Yarl's Wood's history of allegations of abuse of residents or other inappropriate behaviour by some officers.

6.49 Staff at Yarl's Wood told us they found the wholly negative media reporting of Yarl's Wood unfair and unjustified. Some told us how it adversely affected their view of their work and their lives outside work. One long-term member of staff, a DCO, told us he was actively looking for another job because the publicity surrounding Yarl's Wood was affecting his home life. He said:

"There's too much publicity with this place. It's not doing my home life any good with people asking questions. It's best for me, before something else goes wrong or something else happens I may just leave....a lot of people know I work here...of course they don't know the true picture of it and make assumptions on what the press showed them...Then the issue of family life is affected because people ask questions and it's having an effect on my family."

6.50 What staff told us supported Professor Mary Bosworth's findings on the effects on staff of the media reports and public perceptions of IRCs. She told us:

"[IRC]s are so politicised. They are on the back foot all the time....these centres often feel very embattled and I don't think that can be at all good for how staff are doing their job...they talk all the time about how they never tell anybody what they do."

6.51 The centre manager at Yarl's Wood explained to us how much of his and senior managers' work was necessarily focused on managing the press and public interest in the centre. He said:

"...the bulk of my work and the work of the senior management team here is dealing with the scrutiny, the media, the politicians etc. You don't get that anywhere else in [Serco] contracts."

Yarl's Wood's position within Serco operations

6.52 Serco has significant experience of managing immigration removal facilities. Until November 2014 it held the contract to run Colnbrook IRC at Heathrow. It also manages 11 immigration detention facilities in Australia, including some which house women. However Yarl's Wood is currently the only IRC run by Serco in the UK.

6.53 Managers at Yarl's Wood suggested to us that the pressures of running a centre with its own particular issues and requirements and doing so under a media spotlight were perhaps compounded by the fact that it was the only IRC in Serco's UK portfolio of custodial facilities. The centre manager told us:

"I suppose when you look at it, if I want to share experiences, challenges and get any kind of advice within the Serco network, I don't have that direct at the moment certainly up to date with Serco. However there are a number of contract directors now working in the prison estates who are very experienced with immigration....The experience is there but yes, in terms of getting the day to day kind of advice from people who are experiencing the same issues within the immigration world potentially that's a challenge."

6.54 Members of the senior management team at Yarl's Wood suggested that the fact that Yarl's Wood was the only IRC operated by Serco in the UK had sometimes meant that the particular needs of their organisation had not been fully appreciated or met. In particular, they referred to the process under which the bid for the contract renewal in 2014 was made. Serco modelled its bid, particularly in relation to the staffing arrangements, on HMP Ashfield, a category C prison run by Serco and accommodating elderly sex offenders. The centre manager said:

"The population [at Ashfield] is similar when you compare it to levels of incidents, levels of self-harm and that's right...you can't argue with that. But...there's a lot more to this type of work. This contract doesn't compare to any other immigration centre. Any male immigration centre doesn't come [to] the same level.Yarl's Wood is by itself, you can't compare it to a Gatwick, or Colnbrook, or Campsfield, they are just not the same."

6.55 The assistant director of governance said:

“Anyone who has worked in this contract will tell you it’s a very hard contract to work in, and I don’t think it gets the credibility it should do when we hold such complex people...”

6.56 She went on:

“Immigration has developed that much now that we shouldn’t even be putting it in the same category [as prison] at all, yet there is still an element of that. You can’t put Yarl’s Wood in the same category as Colnbrook that holds males, it’s completely unique and a different form altogether”.

6.57 Serco managers we spoke to acknowledged that running Yarl’s Wood involved unique challenges but some suggested that the overall challenges were no greater than those in other parts of their custodial estate. Be that as it may, the matters set out in this section demonstrate the significant and singular nature of the demands made of those who manage and work at the centre.

Our conclusions

6.58 Yarl’s Wood is managed as part of Serco’s custodial operations along with six prison contracts. It was made plain to us that management arrangements at Yarl’s Wood draw heavily on prison practice and experience. There are obvious parallels but also important differences between the role and purpose of an IRC and those of a prison and the demands and needs of their respective residents. Serco managers should ensure that they adequately acknowledge those differences; that they differentiate the practices, policies and the staffing and training arrangements of their IRC; and that they support managers and staff at Yarl’s Wood to cater for the particular requirements of an IRC.

The role of Serco staff

6.59 We were struck at many points in our investigation by a conflict between the various roles that Serco and other companies running IRCs are required to perform. They are responsible for housing and caring for the residents in their IRCs but at the same time they are inevitably involved in or identified with immigration removal processes in a way that undermines their relationship with residents.

6.60 Some HOIE staff work in offices on IRC premises and liaise with residents but the caseworkers managing and deciding on individual cases are located elsewhere in the country. The IRC staff (DCOs) are the only face of officialdom that residents see daily. As a result, they inevitably face questions from residents about their immigration cases and have to try to help residents understand and cope with the implications of decisions made by immigration caseworkers. But DCOs are untrained and unconnected to the casework processes and expressly forbidden from providing advice to detainees on legal or immigration casework matters.

6.61 Equally, the IRC staff are required to ensure that residents due for removal from the UK are presented to escort services at an appointed time, by force if necessary. A number of interviewees told us that the use of force to effect removals undermined trust and damaged the relationship between staff and residents at Yarl's Wood. The assistant director of governance, speaking about the effects of an incident in April involving the use of force against a number of residents, said:

"... doing that shift for an officer not only is hard to do physically and emotionally for yourself, but the relationship after that with the residents... It's never the same again, and if it is we've done a good job, but it endlessly damages relationships and it's hard to get that engagement back."

Our conclusions

6.62 Blurring of the lines between the roles of Home Office and IRC staff is likely to cause confusion in the minds of residents and staff and to contribute to the climate of

mistrust identified by Professor Bosworth and others. It is an obstacle to maintaining appropriate cultures and behaviours in IRCs.

Recommendation

R4 Serco should consider with the Home Office whether the escort service can take responsibility for ensuring that residents are presented to HOIE for removal. This would include escorting residents from their room in Yarl's Wood.

7. Understanding of the role and purpose of Yarl's Wood and the new contract

7.1 Rule 3 of the Detention Centre Rules 2011⁵ defines the purpose of detention centres:

“(1) The purpose of detention centres shall be to provide for the secure but humane accommodation of detained persons in a relaxed regime with as much freedom of movement and association as possible consistent with maintaining a safe and secure environment, and to encourage and assist detained persons to make the most productive use of their time whilst respecting in particular their dignity and right to individual expression.

(2) Due recognition will be given at detention centres to the need for awareness of the particular anxieties to which detained persons may be subject and sensitivity that this will require especially when handling issues of cultural diversity.”

7.2 And rule 39 states:

“Security shall be maintained but with no more restriction than is required for safe custody and well-ordered community life.”

7.3 We found some further assistance in our search for the official view of the role and purpose of detention centres in the Home Office Detention Services Order 07/2013,⁶ which deals with welfare provision in IRCs. Under the heading “Background” it says:

“Detention imposes limitations on detainees and their ability to conduct activities associated with concluding any personal affairs relating to their stay in the United Kingdom and in helping to prepare for their return and reintegration to their country of return. Part of the role of removal centres, in addition to providing as much purposeful activity as possible, is to support detainees prior to their removal. In addition IRCs should seek to minimise any unnecessary stress factors and to ensure that the transition from detention, to removal, through to

⁵ The Detention Centre Rules 2001, Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 238 Immigration. HM Stationery Office. London

⁶ Detention Services Order 07/2013 (29 November 2014). UK Visas and Immigration, Detention Service Orders

resettlement is as supported as possible, leading to detainees feeling more prepared, more informed and better able to accept the outcome of their application to remain in the country. In some cases a period spent in detention may not result in removal but in release. This welfare DSO additionally seeks to provide detainees with support to return to life in the community.”

7.4 We asked the director of returns HOIE for the Home Office view of how to characterise immigration detention. She acknowledged *“there is an element of ‘punishment’ in inverted commas, because of the deprivation of liberty”*. She acknowledged too that immigration detainees were *“being kept in a place with not much regard to [their] own wishes”*. Nevertheless, the director of returns was clear that *“It is not punishment in the sense of being held in prison is”*. She went on:

“The regime tries, as much as possible, not to replicate the restrictions that are placed on people in a prison regime, so in terms of access to mobile phones, open visiting hours and even what is called the “regime”, which is of course the same word as there is in prison,...we do try and talk rather more about ‘activities’, people talk about the regime because it is a word that everyone understands... the degree of sanctions to deal with what I would call non-compliance, again are quite different [from prison]....immigration detention is predicated on much shorter stays [than prison]”.

7.5 Managers and staff at Yarl’s Wood and at the other IRCs we visited told us that until relatively recently IRCs operated more restrictive regimes and were more like prisons than they are today. All the IRC managers and senior staff we spoke to talked about their continuing efforts to introduce a more relaxed environment into their IRC, with a focus on offering their residents care and support with as much freedom as possible, and more in keeping with the rules we refer to.

Yarl’s Wood under the new contract

7.6 Members of the Serco management team responsible for devising and implementing the new eight-year contract to run Yarl’s Wood awarded in November 2014 explained to us that the vision for Yarl’s Wood that underpinned their contract bid was of a “hotel model”

aimed at “empowering residents” and offering them greater freedoms to manage their daily life. The bid project’s executive summary describes the approach:

“Serco will extend a culture of responsibility and self-determination, where residents become responsible for the day-to-day matters affecting their lives, much as they would in any community. This will be achieved through a combination of process, technology and cultural change.”

7.7 Serco managers involved in the bid for the new contract were keen to emphasise that the design of the bid was informed by more than the need to offer a competitive price. They said that in evaluating responses to the tender process the Home Office had attributed a 45 per cent weighting to the bid price but 55 per cent to its qualitative aspects. Alan Stannard, Serco’s Home Office account director, told us:

“Quality is important, you have to meet minimum standards, but generally speaking you should be meeting those minimum standards for quality. Minimum is probably a bit unfair, it sounds a bit low level. However you have to hit a certain barrier. If you are not in that barrier you are not going to win. Once that is done, price is going to be key...This did not, in my opinion, ever appear to be a race to the bottom. This did not feel like “Take another two per cent off, let’s find a way of winning it,” because that is not the way the tender worked. We put in a price and an operating model that we thought we could a) operate and b) was competitive”.

7.8 Nevertheless, the contract bid summaries and our discussions with managers suggest that it had still been a significant driver of the vision for Yarl’s Wood to reduce staff workload and staff numbers, and thereby cut costs. For example, the high-level bid strategy document states:

“We will explore current best practice innovative technology to support our solutions, empowering residents to take greater responsibility for planning and controlling their own day whilst driving down cost to the customer.”

7.9 The principle technological innovation introduced as part of the new bid was the enhanced multi-lingual computer kiosks or ATMs which allow residents to order from the food menus and from the onsite shop, book visits and appointments and manage the

money in their accounts. Biometric finger scanners allowed residents to identify themselves and to be matched to pre-ordered meals in the unit dining rooms, replacing a system under which a DCO ticked names off a printed list at each meal.

7.10 The centre manager explained to us further measures he had introduced to reduce the restrictions on residents and soften the regime at Yarl's Wood. Among these were opening locked gates in the centre so residents were free to attend interviews with legal representatives; residents arriving at night no longer had to go through a series of locked gates as they were taken to their first-night accommodation; and ending two of the four daily roll counts and replacing them with reliance on the biometric finger scans at meal times. The centre manager told us he was in the final stages of agreeing with the Home Office ending routine three-monthly room searches in favour of intelligence-led room searching. He also told us of his plans to put a Rapiscan x-ray machine in the reception unit to search the luggage of new arrivals at Yarl's Wood. He hoped this would reduce the time officers spent searching luggage and the time new residents spent being processed through reception.

The staff perspective

7.11 Managers, and most staff we met appeared to welcome the official position that detention centres are not prisons and that detainees should not be subject to punitive and unnecessarily regimented regimes. They also welcomed the practical steps taken at Yarl's Wood to offer residents greater freedom of movement and a more relaxed regime. One long-serving DCO, asked to comment on the changes she had seen in the way Yarl's Wood was run, told us:

"I've never worked in a prison and I've never been to prison so I don't know what it is like, but seeing it now, yes, it was more prison-like in a way because there wasn't so much freedom inside for [the residents] to mix with each other. There were a lot more walls, which personally I don't think they needed. Looking back on it from now, they didn't need those walls because it works better now from then. Because it is more relaxed now, because they have, in my words, softened it a lot and opened the doors, especially since Serco took over, it has relaxed a lot more".

7.12 Another long-standing DCO recalled Yarl's Wood in the days before Serco managed the centre:

"Almost every single door you came across was locked. To be honest, compared to what it is like now, I didn't like how it was previously. The residents had very little space in which they could move about and there was the potential for residents to get bored, without being stimulated enough. They didn't have much to do, apart from access to the library and the cinema, but there was nothing compared to how Serco have opened everything up. Since Serco came in, it has become more open association, and I very much welcome that."

7.13 However, some staff seemed unsure about the type of regime that had been introduced and the role they were expected to play in it. Some staff said they preferred working under the more restrictive and prison-like regime of previous years. They said staff then had fewer problems in asserting their authority when necessary and that it was easier under such a regime to ensure the security and safety of residents. One DCO told us:

"I did prefer the old regime, but I can see the plus points in the new regime, because obviously while they are here they need to express themselves. They don't need to be walked about like we used to walk them about back in the day. However on the minus side, say for instance we have somebody on ACDT⁷ and I'm in the unit on my own, which does happen a lot, I have to lock up the unit up, inform control, put the cameras on in the unit and then I need to go and search for that lady or male... When it was self-contained you knew where they were. You had like an exit board, so you knew that someone had taken them to the visits or healthcare...but now they could be anywhere throughout the centre....to them [the residents] it is insignificant really, but to us it's massive because if I can't find them I have potentially 200 doors to knock on. By that time the clock is ticking and they can be quite vulnerable."

⁷ ACDT- stands for Assessment, Care in Detention and Teamwork. It is the procedure prescribed in the Detention Service Orders issued by the Home Office under which detainees at risk or self-harm or suicide are subject to a care plan which includes frequent, and sometimes constant, observation.

7.14 Another DCO said:

“...it’s definitely shifted. I’ve been here 10 years and there’s definitely less power. There is no segregation, yet there wasn’t much. We used to have enhanced and standard people, where ...enhanced used to get more than standard people. Let’s say the role count “just go back to your room, let’s count you, dealt with quickly and go back to your room for now” and now it’s “what are you going to do about it?” And what can we do about it: nothing.”

7.15 A few members of staff expressed open disagreement with the current regime at Yarl’s Wood.

7.16 One DCO told us:

“At the moment it’s far too soft, it’s far too soft but that’s come from people saying to me ‘We run it like a hotel’. Is it a hotel or is it a detention centre? I don’t know... I raised a question a few weeks ago that it’s getting like Holiday Inn or a Travelodge because unless there is an incident, we’re not DCOs really. When there’s an incident, then we are DCOs and we need to switch on to that”.

7.17 He went on:

“Basically when I first joined it was run like a category B prison. Every unit was independent; it had its own library, it had its own association room and everywhere residents wanted to go you had to escort them. If they wanted to go to social visits, you escorted them, if they wanted to go to the gymnasium, you had to escort them, so there was no free association at all. It wasn’t until Serco got the contract until they opened the doors up that they have open association, which sometimes is great, sometimes it isn’t.”

7.18 We found matters we felt might add to confusion or ambiguity about the role and purpose of Yarl’s Wood and pose a risk to ensuring the development of an appropriate culture and attitude among staff. These include the ambiguity and tension we identify in the previous section between the roles of caring for residents and their engagement directly or indirectly in the immigration removal processes.

7.19 We also found that a number of policies or Centre Manager’s Rules for managing the centre were evidently modelled on or imported wholesale from the prison system, and did not adequately acknowledge the differences between a prison and a detention centre. One example is the Room Sharing Risk Assessment rule, which directs staff attention to the fact that residents may over time become better adjusted to life in Yarl’s Wood but does not acknowledge that residents with an unknown removal or release date are just as likely to become more distressed and anxious over time.

7.20 Much of the training material used in the induction programme for Yarl’s Wood staff comes from Home Office prison training, and is labelled as such. Many staff told us that their training did not give them an adequate understanding of the needs and circumstances of the residents. In particular, they told us that they would like a better understanding of how to deal with the many residents who had mental health problems.

Our conclusions

7.21 If Yarl’s Wood is to offer “humane accommodation” in a regime as unrestricted as possible, and if it is to support residents as envisaged by the Detention Centre Rules and Detention Services Orders, then all policies and processes throughout the organisation must reflect those purposes and staff must be properly equipped for those purposes. We consider the particular training needs of staff in more detail in other sections and particularly section 14.

The design and implementation of the new contract

7.22 Even among the majority of staff who appeared to welcome the greater freedoms for residents at Yarl’s Wood as promoted by the new contract and recent management initiatives, it was clear that there was a significant degree of cynicism and concern about the new contract and how it would work in practice. Their cynicism appeared to be based on the fact that the bid was modelled, at least in relation to staff numbers, on a prison and staff thought it did not reflect the needs and realities of managing an IRC. It was also based on their perception that the primary consideration in the design of the new contract bid had been cost-cutting. It was compounded by the fact that they did not feel they had been given adequate opportunities to offer their insights and input to the design and

planning of the new contract, and by what they felt about the way they had been informed of the changes arising under the new contract.

7.23 We interviewed members of the bid team about the way the new contract to run Yarl's Wood was bid for and implemented. Davie Tanner, Serco bid director, led the bidding process. Ray Duckworth, Serco's contract operations director at HMP Ashfield, was an adviser and the transition director with responsibility for implementation of the new contract at Yarl's Wood from December 2014 until March 2015. They explained that the new bid, and in particular its "staffing solution" for Yarl's Wood, were modelled on HMP Ashfield. Ashfield is a category C prison run by Serco and designed to accommodate 400 adult male sex offenders. The total staffing complement at HMP Ashfield is ■■■ of whom ■■■ are prison custody officers. Ray Duckworth told us the prisoners served by HMP Ashfield had complex needs and the prison and its staffing levels were an appropriate model for the Yarl's Wood bid:

"...most of them have personality disorders. There is a lot of mental health issues, a lot of learning disabilities in my population. Again it is about dealing with people, it is a culture. If you can set the culture right then you can do things very effectively and efficiently".

7.24 But staff and managers at Yarl's Wood said a bid model based on HMP Ashfield and the staffing levels envisaged under it were not appropriate for managing residents at Yarl's Wood. They pointed out that Yarl's Wood was not run as a prison, residents could not be locked in their rooms, they were not subject to the restrictions of a planned daily regime, including periods at work; they came from a wide variety of backgrounds and many spoke little or no English; many were distressed and levels of self-harm and mental health problems were high. The assistant director of governance put it as follows:

"...this bid was based on HMP Ashfield [which] holds sex offenders [who] are male...we hold residents who don't have an end date to their sentence, who are vulnerable, who have completely different complex needs to what a male does, and have massive emotional needs...I don't think that is reflected in the bid at all...I don't think [the staffing model] meets the needs of what our residents need."

7.25 She went on:

“It is very easy for the bid team to say what they want it to be, when in practicality and in real life it won’t work. I like the idea of the hotel. I like the fact that residents can access things they need to access and do what they wish to do within this environment when they want to, that’s a fantastic thing to do. What I don’t think they thought about is the needs and the vulnerability of the population, which massively impacts on everything in comparison to a prison”.

7.26 The fact that the core bid team came from a prison management background added further fuel to the view that those who designed the bid did not understand the needs of Yarl’s Wood. Davie Tanner addressed this by pointing out that a number of people with experience in running IRCs had been involved in offering “challenge” to the bid and that the assistant director of operations and a DCM from Yarl’s Wood had been seconded to work on the bid team. However, the assistant director and the DCM in question told us that they had been deliberately excluded from any meetings or discussions concerning staffing levels.

7.27 As for disquiet among staff about the level of consultation and engagement with them about the new contract, Davie Tanner said:

“I think if I had run a thousand focus groups, given it was affecting people’s jobs, they would probably say there weren’t consulted enough. My own view was that there is a sensitivity, because when you are bidding to a certain extent you can run focus groups around “what do you think of x and would this improve”, but from a bidders perspective, you can’t have an open forum and divulge exactly what is going to be in the bid. Some of them have partners who work for competitors who are bidding, so you are slightly curtailed.”

7.28 Ray Duckworth, who was responsible as transition director at Yarl’s Wood for the implementation of the new contract until March 2015, explained that staff had not been given details of the planned new hotel model until he spoke at a mass staff briefing on 7 January 2015. The slides presented at the meeting made clear that certain roles would be removed. Staff said they had heard that other roles would be lost in answers to questions put to Ray Duckworth at that meeting. Ray Duckworth was clear, however, that he did not go into detail at the meeting about the scale of any redundancies, nor did he identify

which particular members of staff would lose their jobs. But he accepted that staff might have jumped to their own conclusions about these matters.

Our conclusions

7.29 Most staff and managers welcomed the idea of moving away from a prison-like regime and of providing residents with as much freedom of movement and as much control over their daily lives as possible. Some did not.

7.30 Whatever the practical realities of the new contract may have been and whatever its benefits or disadvantages (which we consider elsewhere), it was modelled, designed and implemented with little input from staff and managers at Yarl's Wood and with little regard to their concerns and anxieties. The process for the design of the new contract and the way in which it was presented to the staff and managers did not give them adequate opportunities to offer their insights into the needs of the residents of Yarl's Wood and the demands of running the centre, including staffing levels.

7.31 In any event, the process left staff feeling "done to", disillusioned and aggrieved. The sense we gained from most staff we talked to was that they did not "buy into" the new contract and in particular the staffing levels provided for. We believe there is a need for managers to undertake development work to restore staff morale and their commitment to working arrangements at Yarl's Wood.

7.32 We were struck during our visit to HMP Bronzefield by its strong positive ethos and culture. Staff were guided by a clear, well-articulated and widely understood strategic vision and values for their work which was captured in their mission statement "Changing lives for the better - safety, dignity, opportunity". This vision informed all their work. Managers told us that the values of the organisation ran through all its training and staff performance reviews were based on how staff performed in relation to those values. We saw it at work throughout the organisation. We were particularly impressed by the way the vision had been adopted in the segregation unit, where staff had moved away from a punitive approach to one of engagement and reintegration. Yarl's Wood would benefit from more obvious and embedded vision, values and culture along the lines we encountered at HMP Bronzefield.

7.33 Managers at Yarl's Wood should put in place a programme of organisational development work, involving all staff, to devise a clearer and better shared understanding of the centre's mission, role and purpose and the culture and arrangements that will ensure the appropriate care of Yarl's Wood's residents.

7.34 Such a programme should seek to ensure that staff and managers can share their insights and engage in devising plans for management of the centre in the best interests of residents and staff.

7.35 Managers at Yarl's Wood should also ensure that all the centre's policies, its recruitment criteria, training, and appraisal system and the regime at the centre are consistent with the agreed mission, role and purpose.

Recommendations

R5 Managers at Yarl's Wood should put in place a programme of organisational development work involving all staff, to develop a clearer and better shared understanding of the centre's mission, role and purpose, and the cultures and arrangements, including staffing arrangements that will ensure the appropriate care of residents. Such a programme should allow staff to share their insights and engage them in devising plans for how the centre is managed in the best interests of residents and staff.

R6 Managers should review the centre's policies, its recruitment, training and appraisal arrangements and the regime at the centre to ensure they are consistent with its mission, role and purpose.

8. The culture of Yarl's Wood: relationships and behaviours

Relationships between staff and residents

8.1 We observed interactions between staff and residents at Yarl's Wood on many occasions over a number of months. We also questioned staff, residents and others, such as the members of the IMB, the Befrienders and local HOIE staff, about the behaviours and attitudes of staff, the relationships between staff and residents and their views on recent allegations of abusive and inappropriate staff behaviour, in particular those in the Channel 4 News reports.

8.2 Residents at our resident focus groups said most staff treated them appropriately. They named some DCOs they thought highly of and praised for being especially caring and *"approachable"*, but they criticised some for being less empathetic: they described them as *"more like doing the job just to get paid," "thoughtfulness part is really missing", and "not everyone is wired to do it...need to be very patient"*. The residents said DCOs were overworked and stressed and as a result some could be offhand or *"snappy"*. In a few cases, they said, poor attitude went beyond this and had been disrespectful. They said the behaviour involved *"deliberate power play"*. One resident said she had been in the reception area where she heard a DCO making a disrespectful remark about residents. She said another DCO had been embarrassed to hear it and had made a despairing gesture.

8.3 We asked residents we encountered informally about their views of the DCOs. Most were largely positive about their relationships with staff; some were complimentary about DCOs and appreciative of their efforts.

8.4 Most of the staff we spoke to talked of having good relationships with residents. They mostly referred to female residents as *"the ladies"* and talked spontaneously about their role as being one of *"caring"*. One DCM who had worked at Yarl's Wood for eight years told us:

"One thing that has continued to come out about Yarl's Wood is that we are disrespecting to residents, we don't listen, all this stuff continues to come out, I have never witnessed it...I know this has all come out, so there has to be some truth in it. However all I have ever seen is us supporting residents. We have a

laugh. It is not “I am going to disrespect you because I am a guard”. It is not like that. It is really not”.

8.5 Another said:

“I have a laugh with the ladies, they find me approachable because of the way I talk to them... one lady saw me today and said “good, you’re working today” ...they are not your friends but it’s the way you talk to residents, and I see the staff talk exactly the same as I do, we have a laugh with them and we talk to them with respect.”

8.6 All staff we spoke to were shocked to learn of the disrespectful and abusive comments alleged in the Channel 4 News reports. They said they had not seen or heard similar things and the reports were not an accurate portrayal of Yarl’s Wood. Many suggested that the comments must have been taken out of context.

8.7 Alice Gerlach, a member of the academic research team from the Department of Criminology at Oxford University undertaking research into IRCs, spent a month at Yarl’s Wood in March 20015 during the time Channel 4 News broadcast its report. She told us:

“I don’t think that the people working there are in the most part bad people. Like you see on Channel 4 when they are talking about women being beasts, I don’t think they are like that. But staff are very busy. So you have nice well-meaning characters, but one of the biggest complaints that I had from the women was that, no matter how nice a member is, they don’t have the time to help you and provide the care you need....they don’t have the time to perform all the tasks that perhaps they should.”

8.8 We asked if residents ever complained about staff being disrespectful. Ms Gerlach said:

“It was something that came up and some of the examples of various staff members, it was things like if they ask for something, staff would just say no rather than taking time to talk to them to explain why they couldn’t have a certain item or do a certain thing”.

8.9 We asked Mary Coussey, chair of the IMB, for her observations on the behaviour of staff. She said:

"I haven't personally observed anything that I would be unhappy about; obviously I'm not there all the time. When we go in we talk to staff, we have lunch, those sorts of relationships look fine but we get detainees raising things with us and complaining about individual members of staff".

8.10 She also said:

"It's not a rotten culture. There are too many checks and balances, there are people coming in and out all the time like us and the Prisons Inspectorate and MPs come in. We probably all think there should be more people coming in but the Home Office is not as open to that".

"...my people were very shocked at the [Channel 4 News] TV programme because we recognised the voices and that didn't fit with our personal experience but of course they wouldn't say anything to us, would they?...My overall take would be that it functions reasonably efficiently....there are complaints mechanisms. The [Home Office Professional Standards Unit] comes in...Our concerns have always been more about why people were in there and under what circumstances and how long they've been kept because it's not Serco's responsibility".

8.11 Jane Leech, former chair of the IMB and who currently sits as the immigration detention state representative on the IMB National Council, gave us her impression of Yarl's Wood:

"You can walk around and staff and residents will be chatting to each other, there will be the best atmosphere there can be in that situation. This happened to me when I was on a rota visit a couple of weeks ago and everything seems to be going all right. Then all of a sudden something flares up and they have to make people do what they don't want to do, and it is incredibly distressing to see that. It is distressing to see the use of force on women in particular...it can suddenly turn, and then there's a massive amount of rebuilding to do. How can you say you are caring for people when you do that?"

8.12 We interviewed a number of senior Serco managers with overall responsibility for Yarl's Wood. Their attitude towards the residents and their care appeared to be respectful and appropriate.

Our conclusions

8.13 We found many good staff at Yarl's Wood doing a complicated job with great dedication, trying hard to offer residents the care they needed and maintaining friendly and supportive relationships with them. We saw them handle difficult situations and distressed residents with sympathy and sophistication. We were struck by how often they referred to their role as 'caring' and the extent to which they discussed and expressed concern for the vulnerability of the residents. Nearly all DCOs we spoke to were quick to acknowledge and emphasise their responsibility for the safety, care and support of residents.

8.14 We also encountered some staff, especially those struggling with their workload, who were on occasion offhand or distracted. A few staff appeared to be disaffected, cynical and disengaged and to lack sensitivity and empathy in their dealings with residents. On one occasion we witnessed a member of staff behaving in an overbearing and unreasonable manner. We did not witness any behaviour or hear any remarks that were overtly inappropriate, abusive, or disrespectful.

8.15 Our evidence suggests that overall behaviour by staff at Yarl's Wood and their relationships with residents are good. But the attitude and commitment of a minority makes them unsuited to work that requires such a focus on care and on occasion demands subtle and sophisticated handling of people with complex needs, often in great distress.

8.16 As we will describe in more detail in section 10, we found that arrangements for the appraisal of staff were not robust. Managers must identify and address shortcomings in the attitude and commitment of staff if they are to maintain an appropriate culture. They must be given the time, training and support they need to undertake robust and meaningful staff appraisals.

Recommendation

R7 Managers should review the appraisal process and ensure that those who undertake appraisals have the time, training and support they need to appraise staff in a robust and meaningful way.

Raising concerns and whistleblowing

8.17 We questioned staff and managers about whether staff felt able to raise concerns and were supported to draw attention to poor or inappropriate behaviour by fellow staff members. Their answers suggested that practice at Yarl's Wood in relation to raising concerns and whistleblowing was inconsistent and underdeveloped.

8.18 Some staff, especially those with more experience, said that if they witnessed a colleague behaving in an unacceptable manner towards a resident they would challenge them directly. One said:

"We're here to do a job. We have a duty of care and if I see officers not [exercising] their duty of care, first of all I would tell them on a one-to-one which I have done many times".

8.19 The assistant director of governance also told us that staff raised issues relating to security breaches or incidents involving colleagues via the reporting systems, including the Security Information Reports (SIRs) or the whistleblowing policy. She said:

"We have the security hotline, whistleblowing policy and then also the ethics hotline...that would go straight to head office and they would manage it appropriately. We've had one or two, one on me. I had a whistleblowing four months ago that was used on a senior member of staff, it was whistleblowing on me potentially about leaving an unlocked door that I wasn't aware of.I can evidence quite a lot of SIRs relating to staff, if they have seen something that's security information or that they perceive as security information, that would be documented as a SIR and that process is in place and managed."

8.20 The governance lead also told us about a recent increase in staff self-reporting on security issues.

8.21 We pressed the governance lead and the assistant director of governance on the willingness of staff to report concerns about other colleagues' attitudes and behaviour towards residents or fellow staff, and what the outcome of raising such concerns would be. They were less positive. The assistant director of governance said:

"I think staff would raise that verbally to a manager; "his attitude stinks". On that sort of level I think they would do that quite happily. I don't know whether our first line managers would ignore that as just a moan and a groan or take it seriously, document it and continue to follow up on or whether that was an actual behavioural issue or attitude of that person that was impacting their work and their colleagues."

8.22 A number of staff and managers we questioned about attitudes towards reporting incidents of staff misconduct or inappropriate behaviour cited an incident in 2014 when a DCO became emotionally attached to a resident. A fellow DCO reported concerns about the relationship. The matter was investigated internally and by the Home Office's Professional Standards Unit. The investigations revealed that other colleagues had been aware of the relationship for some time but had not raised it as a concern. Equally troubling, the assistant director of governance, told us that staff found out which DCO had raised the matter and he was subjected to adverse comments from colleagues and made to feel uncomfortable. The assistant director of governance told us:

"I think it got out to staff who it was that officially reported that, and I think that member of staff was made to feel quite uncomfortable".

8.23 And the centre manager told us:

"Nobody had done anything. Nobody had nipped it in the bud...when it had got out [who had spoken out] he told me openly that certain people were making his life, not really difficult but it was almost like " We know you have told on so and so and that is why he is not here..."

8.24 We spoke with two DCOs who told us of their own unsatisfactory experiences of raising concerns by whistleblowing. One said she and others had raised a concern about the behaviour of a colleague towards other staff that had eventually led to his dismissal. The person dismissed had found out who had reported him.

8.25 The DCO in question told us:

“... I had to say something because it was a big problem and the person did get the sack for what they did...It led to action and the person was dismissed straightaway...the person who was dismissed found out somehow what we had said ..Even though we did what we thought was right, we did do what was right, it came back on us that he found out and the only way he would have found out was from the management”.

8.26 Another DCO said he had raised a matter through the whistleblowing procedure and had heard nothing more about it, which caused him to lose faith in the process. Others raised doubts about whether matters raised about colleagues would remain confidential. One DCO said:

“Matters that relate to a colleague or management: nothing stays with management. We have more trust with DCOs than the management level”.

8.27 The centre manager acknowledged that the culture of raising concerns and whistleblowing was not as strong as it should be:

“It is evident that staff probably do feel two things: one is if they want to speak up they want to know they will be protected...I have raised it with my line manager...do they have to see the other person’s statement if it goes through a disciplinary hearing?...The other thing... is that staff should feel confident to speak up straightaway and not just dismiss things for whatever reason because they don’t feel comfortable.....It is something we have to tackle with staff because you look at the relationships staff have with each other here, they work closely in this environment and they know each other out of work, and it is never an easy decision to say “I am going to report somebody” because they know what the potential repercussions are.”

8.28 The centre manager acknowledged that managers needed to devise and implement plans, including staff training, aimed at developing and supporting the culture of reporting by staff.

Relevant policy

8.29 We looked at the policies current at the time of our investigation aimed at ensuring appropriate behaviours and encouraging the reporting of matters of concern.

8.30 The whistleblowing policy (Centre Manager's rule no 1.21) is confusing. It contains contradictory references to the type of matters that can be reported. In some instances these suggest a whistleblower must have a level of knowledge and belief about matters to be reported, which we think would discourage people from raising genuine concerns. For example, the policy says it is designed to enable the raising of "*genuine and good faith concerns*" which an individual "*believes shows malpractice and impropriety*". It says it is intended to cover concerns "*which are in the public interest*". On the other hand, it also refers to employees being able to "*raise a reasonable suspicion*", and says staff must challenge and report "*any possible suspicion of misconduct*".

8.31 The policy needs redrafting to make it clearer and consistent and to ensure that it encourages the raising of all genuine concerns about the management of Yarl's Wood and the behaviours of those living and working there.

8.32 The internal policy (Post Order S054) on Security Information Reports (SIRs) says they are the main source of security information in the centre. The introductory paragraph describes the type of matters that should be reported as an SIR. It refers to "*unusual associations between individual residents, conversations with residents, conversations overheard between residents, unusual occurrences within the centre...residents actions which are out of character.*" The policy makes plain that these examples are not exhaustive but it does not explicitly refer to the need for staff to report matters of concern involving staff.

8.33 The Centre Manager's Rule (no 4.8), which is the violence reduction policy, sets out its aim:

"At Yarl's Wood IRC all residents, staff and visitors should feel safe and able to live in and visit the centre free from fear of violence, threatening behaviour and intimidation or bullying."

8.34 Paragraph 4.2 says:

"Staff can report unacceptable behaviour verbally/written to their line manager or any senior member of staff via the SIR process."

8.35 This policy, like the SIR policy, is open on the question of whose actions or behaviour might be reported. It does not make explicit that staff should report violent, intimidating and bullying behaviour by colleagues.

8.36 The assistant director of governance and the governance lead told us that staff had used the SIR process to raise matters of concern about colleagues and to report themselves, but we think the SIR and the violence reduction policies should be amended to make explicit the fact that they should be used to report concerns about fellow staff members.

8.37 In mid-October 2015, Serco managers told us that they were requiring all their sites and operations to use Serco's standard "Speaking Up" whistleblowing policy. They told us *"this may need local additional material and direction"*.

8.38 The Serco standard policy, while comprehensive and consistent, is formally worded and employs legal terms that ordinary members of staff may not easily understand. It contains process instructions for managers on the handling of individual whistleblowing complaints and is too long. It does not explicitly refer to the need to report incidences of sexual impropriety, nor does it describe the persons whose activities may be reported. We think a simpler, more user-friendly local policy will need to be drafted to accompany and explain the standard policy to staff at Yarl's Wood.

Our conclusions

8.39 Managers should review and amend local policies relating to the raising of concerns and whistleblowing.

8.40 Staff had little confidence in the arrangements for reporting concerns about colleagues. The senior management team acknowledged that they needed to do more to encourage staff to come forward and to build a system of reporting or whistleblowing in which staff could have confidence. Such a system must protect staff from repercussions, must result in appropriate management action and provide feedback to staff that demonstrates that management respond to concerns.

Recommendation

R8 Managers should undertake a review of present local policies and arrangements for whistleblowing and reporting matters of concern. They should devise policies and arrangements that staff can easily understand, that command their confidence and encourage and support them to report colleagues whose behaviours are inappropriate or below standard.

Privacy and dignity

8.41 One of the most common criticisms about the treatment of residents and a frequent feature of allegations against staff was their failure to respect the privacy and dignity of residents. In particular, there have been complaints by residents and criticism from interest groups and in the media about officers entering female residents' rooms unannounced, watching them in bathrooms and in states of undress, or undertaking searches in an insensitive fashion.

8.42 Mary Coussey, chair of the IMB, told us she thought that staff had become more sensitive to issues of privacy and dignity:

“I think they have become better because there have been so many complaints about that issue and the management put out instructions and reminders and so

on. A lot of it is captured because there is CCTV in the corridors and there is this business about body cameras which will provide more safeguards...it was more of an issue and I think they have tightened up on it."

8.43 Pastor Lonnie Haye, the chaplain at Yarl's Wood, also thought that matters had improved. He said:

"I think the staff, especially the male staff, are beginning to learn that you do have to give that extra time because they are women and they may be in a vulnerable position at the time you are calling. So, for male staff, they have learnt lessons that way. There are boundaries that they cannot cross over."

8.44 The current policy on staff entering residents' rooms (post order R054) sets out the procedure. Staff must knock on a resident's door and allow time before opening it. Male staff are required to announce "male officer" and wait for a response from the resident. Some longer-term residents told us that most staff had become more sensitive about entering their rooms. Nevertheless, residents said some staff still entered without knocking. We note that the HMIP team during their recent inspection saw staff walk into rooms during roll calls without knocking. Managers should continue to ensure that they repeat and re-enforce expectations that staff should at all times respect the privacy and dignity of residents and should not enter rooms without giving residents the opportunity to ensure they are not in a state of undress or otherwise in a vulnerable position and are in a position to receive a visitor.

The use of force and segregation

8.45 HMIP's recent report on Yarl's Wood,⁸ set out its findings on the use of force and segregation there. The inspectorate concluded that most use of force at Yarl's Wood was proportionate, although they said governance should be strengthened to provide assurance that force was always used proportionately and as a last resort. HMIP had concerns about one incident involving the use of force on 9 April 2015. We too have our concerns about that incident, which we detail in section 9.

⁸ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2015) *Report on an unannounced inspection of Yarl's Wood IRC 13 April-1 May 2015*. HM Inspectorate of Prisons, London

8.46 The Detention Centre Rules 2001 make clear that persons detained in an IRC are not to be removed from association, under rule 40, or put in temporary confinement, under rule 42, as a punishment. Representatives of the charity Medical Justice told us that residents in Yarl's Wood who were difficult to manage, including the mentally ill, were dealt with in a punitive way, including by segregation. However, Mary Coussey, chair of the IMB, told us:

"I think some of my colleagues would say that it is used for punishment. Personally, when I've been on duty and gone to see people in Kingfisher [the segregation unit], I can always see why they are there, because their behaviour is quite disruptive and they won't talk to you."

8.47 Jeanette Hall, an inspector with HMIP who was part of the team that recently undertook an unannounced inspection at Yarl's Wood and inspected the use of force and segregation, told us:

"In each case [of segregation] I think it is true to say that the initial reason for segregation seemed reasonable to us, or the initial reason for separation was reasonable to us. It was more in terms of managing the effect on the rest of the regime and the rest of the women there. Whether segregation, or separation as it was called there, was the right place for some of the women, given their health, is another question and one which they didn't have the resources to deal with".

Our conclusions

8.48 We found no evidence of a punitive culture at Yarl's Wood. Overall, the evidence suggested that staff and managers understood and adhered to the rules and correct procedure on force and segregation. Nevertheless, in addition to our concerns about the incident on 9 April 2015, which resulted in disciplinary proceedings against a DCO, we were also made aware of one incident in late June 2015 when a female resident was removed from association and was subject to the use of force. We saw the body camera film and written reports of the incident, as well as the evidence of the member of the IMB present at the time. They suggested that the matter may have escalated unnecessarily and that the use of segregation and force could have been avoided.

Other issues

8.49 We deal elsewhere in this report with other matters within our terms of reference which we believe have an adverse effect on the overall culture of Yarl's Wood and the wellbeing of residents. Among these are the lack of activity, the arrangements in relation to food and access to open space. However the issues that residents were evidently most concerned and upset about were the handling of their immigration cases and the healthcare provision. These matters are not Serco's responsibility and are outside our terms of reference.

9. Allegations and incidents

9.1 Allegations of misconduct and inappropriate and disrespectful behaviours by staff have been a feature of media reports about Yarl's Wood since it opened in 2001. The most prominent and widely publicised allegations and incidents have been:

- Between November 2010 and January 2011: sexual harassment and abuse of a 29-year-old Pakistani resident, known in the press as Sana, by a male nurse, which was alleged to have happened on three occasions. Sana took legal action against the Home Office, Serco and Bedfordshire Police. Serco made a settlement payment to Sana without admission of liability.
- December 2010: a resident become pregnant as a result of a relationship with a DCO. The DCO was dismissed.
- December 2012: resident had sexual relationships with a number of DCOs. Three male DCOs were dismissed. A female DCO was dismissed for not disclosing information about the matter.
- March 2015: Channel 4 News reports of staff using racist, abusive and disrespectful language about residents, poor healthcare, failure to ensure the safety of residents, unspecified reports of sexual abuse, and inhumane and degrading treatment of women residents. Six DCOs were suspended. Disciplinary proceedings were commenced against four of them with the following outcomes: one was dismissed; one was dismissed for misconduct on a previous occasion; one received a final written warning and subsequently resigned; no action was taken against one of the DCOs. There was insufficient evidence to proceed to disciplinary hearings against the remaining two DCOs who had been suspended.

9.2 The governance lead at Yarl's Wood provided us with a copy of her log of allegations ("the log"). It had initially been prepared for a House of Commons Home Affairs Select committee hearing in June 2014. The log contained only allegations against staff since Serco took over Yarl's Wood in 2007 that involved, or could be perceived to involve, an element of sexual impropriety. The governance lead told us that since September 2014 she had noted any incident that involved or might be perceived to involve inappropriate behaviour between staff and residents.

9.3 The log identifies the parties involved in any allegations or incidents; it describes the allegations and incidents; the actions and investigations resulting, including whether the police were informed; and the outcome of any resulting investigations and disciplinary hearings, including by the Home Office's Professional Standards Unit (the PSU). The allegations and incidents detailed range from matters such as officers entering residents' rooms without knocking or an officer putting his hand on a male resident's shoulder to serious allegations of sexual impropriety including sexual intercourse between residents and staff. The log includes all the incidents in paragraph 9.1 above.

The handling of complaints and allegations

9.4 Residents can make a complaint of mistreatment or misconduct by staff, or raise any complaint or allegation using a DCF 9 form. The forms are printed in a number of languages. The forms and the box in which they are deposited are in the laundry rooms. They are out of sight of the CCTV cameras and complaints can therefore be submitted anonymously. DCF 9 forms are collected by the on-site HOIE staff and submitted to the HOIE Detention Services.

9.5 Staff raise matters of concern by submitting a Security Information Report (SIR) form. They can also use the internal whistleblowing and violence reduction policies or they can call the Serco central whistleblowing hotline or its ethics line.

9.6 Complaints about discrimination are raised using a Discrimination Incident Report Form.

9.7 Home Office officials and the centre manager told us they expected managers to tell HOIE Detention Services directly about any serious issues or incidents involving staff they become aware of.

9.8 HOIE Detention Services determine whether a matter involves serious misconduct by a member of staff that needs investigation by the Home Office Professional Standards Unit, which is part of a separate directorate at the Home Office. HOIE Detention Services also sends complaints back to Serco's governance staff at Yarl's Wood for internal investigation. Serco's governance staff submit more serious cases and complaints for consideration and advice to Serco's central investigation unit. Other matters are

investigated and dealt with by managers at Yarl's Wood. Home Office officials and the governance lead at Yarl's Wood explained that the HOIE's Immigration Manager at Yarl's Wood undertakes sampling checks on the internal investigations of managers at Yarl's Wood. Checks of internal investigations have also been undertaken recently by a second member of HOIE's Detention Service's contract monitoring team.

9.9 The log of allegations of misconduct and inappropriate behaviours shows that incidents have come to light not only through DCF 9 forms completed by residents and as a result of staff reporting other staff on SIR forms but also in the last year through staff using SIRs to self-report.

9.10 The log shows that investigations of allegations and incidents have resulted in the following outcomes for the staff involved:

- Dismissal: 10
- Final written warning: 2
- Advice and guidance: 8
- Resignation or redundancy: 6
- Reinstatement subject to training and performance review 2

9.11 At the time of writing one DCO is suspended pending appeal against a Home Office decision to revoke accreditation as a DCO.

9.12 The log records that all reports involving staff and residents were reviewed after the incident in December 2012 that led to the dismissal of three DCOs. All staff were issued with a safeguarding booklet that included the policies on whistleblowing and relationships between residents and staff. The policy on knocking on doors and entering residents' rooms was refreshed and was the subject of a training DVD played at staff briefings. The governance lead confirmed this but told us that the booklet was no longer being relied on and the recently recruited DCOs were given a new professional standards training programme.

The prevalence of misconduct

9.13 Our interviews with a wide range of interested parties, including the IMB, groups and legal advisers representing the interests of residents and ex-residents of Yarl's Wood, journalists and residents revealed no serious allegations of inappropriate behaviour that had not already been identified on the log of the governance lead at Yarl's Wood. All the more serious incidents had been reported to the media by residents and ex-residents and widely and repeatedly publicised.

9.14 We asked staff for their responses to comments some of their colleagues were heard or reported to have made in the Channel 4 News reports. They did not believe the alleged behaviour was commonplace at Yarl's Wood. The responses were for the most part shock and disbelief. Many suggested that the words must have been taken out of context. Most told us that if they had heard such language being used, they would have challenged it. Staff said:

"I couldn't quite believe it because I have been here ten years and I've not heard anything like that before. I couldn't believe it; I'm watching it and I'm like "Really? No". Honestly, I couldn't quite believe it....I was quite shocked because I don't know if it was staged, if you like and they sort of led them into it. I know the officers, I know the managers and they are good people, very very good people. I have had no problem at all with any of them, so it was a real shock to me". (a DCO)

"It was more of a shock and then sadness, it was gross misrepresentation of what really goes on around here. That was the biggest point...As a result of this, the whole centre, the residents and us, would be viewed wrongly because that really didn't represent the goings on here". (a DCO)

"I have never heard a staff member talk to a resident in a bad way...what I would do if I did see that, if it was a colleague of mine and they spoke [in front of me like that]I'd speak to them and ask them why they felt like that, what was the problem. If it wasn't resolved from what we talked about then I'd speak to the manager about my concerns". (a DCO)

Our conclusions

9.15 Staff at Yarl's Wood have been involved in a number of serious incidents of inappropriate or abusive behaviour towards residents. And those supporting or acting for residents have criticised the way some of these incidents have been investigated and managed. Nevertheless, evidence from staff and others, including staff reactions to the Channel 4 News reports, and the evidence of the recent increase in staff self-reporting incidents of concern, suggest to us that staff understand well what constitutes appropriate behaviour and appropriate relations between staff and residents.

9.16 Furthermore, we heard of no serious incidents or allegations of misconduct and inappropriate relations involving staff that had not already been identified in the media and the records kept by managers, and subjected to the investigation processes we describe. Accordingly, we do not believe there is a hidden problem of serious misconduct or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour by staff, nor that misconduct or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour is widespread or endemic in Yarl's Wood.

Specific allegations and incidents

9.17 The serious nature of the allegations and comments in the Channel 4 News report prompted this investigation so we considered them. We also considered the event of 9 April 2015 because we had the opportunity to talk to a number of witnesses about it and believe that it offers useful lessons. In respect of both matters, however, any allegations of inappropriate behaviour by individual members of staff have been investigated by Serco's corporate investigation unit. In some cases this has led to disciplinary proceedings, in others there was insufficient evidence to proceed to disciplinary hearings. It would have been inappropriate for us to get involved in those investigations. Accordingly we have not been able to make our own findings about the behaviours of individual officers and whether the allegations of misbehaviour are true. Nevertheless, we reviewed relevant internal investigation reports and we discussed the investigative and disciplinary processes with managers at Yarl's Wood, Serco's internal investigator and Home Office officials. We have no reason to believe that those processes were not thorough.

The Channel 4 News reports

9.18 ITN, the producers of Channel 4 News, declined our request for a meeting to discuss their news reports on Yarl's Wood. We viewed the film as broadcast reports and noted what staff at Yarl's Wood were recorded as having said and the further incidents and allegations about the treatment of residents at Yarl's Wood referred to in the commentary to the news reports. Our note is at appendix H.

9.19 Six staff alleged to have been involved in the Channel 4 news reports were suspended. Four were subject to disciplinary proceedings. These proceedings resulted in one DCO being dismissed for an earlier unrelated matter, one was dismissed, one received a final written warning and subsequently resigned; and no further action was taken in respect of one of the DCOs.

9.20 We offer the following comments and findings on other specific incidents and issues referred to in the commentary in the Channel 4 News film that come within our terms of reference. We do not comment on the allegations that relate to the roles of G4S or HOIE.

Allegation/incident as described in Channel 4 news reports	Findings from our investigations
Freedom of Information Act request showed only one self-harm incident requiring medical treatment in 2011, but in 2013 this had risen to 74.	The commentary of the Channel 4 news film did not identify who made the Freedom of Information Act request or when the request was made. As a result, managers at Yarl's Wood told us it was not possible to verify what information was given in response. Managers believe that the request and information given related to residents requiring hospital treatment in 2011 as a result of self-harm. The figure given for 2013 relates to all incidents of self-harm. Managers told us that that figure was revised to 78 incidents of self-harm after a review.
Serco confirmed three incidents of residents jumping from a stairwell. In one case a	Managers at Yarl's Wood confirmed that there had been three incidents of residents

<p>resident broke her back and had to use a wheelchair as a result. Serco say thorough reviews took place to prevent those women further self-harming but have decided nets or barriers would be ineffective in preventing self-harm.</p>	<p>jumping into a stairwell. They said all took place on the stairs in the Avocet unit, not the unit identified in the Channel 4 News film. On the first occasion in July 2012 the resident involved was admitted to hospital. According to managers she had sustained a back injury and had to wear a back brace. Managers were not aware that the resident had had to use a wheelchair. On the second occasion in April 2014 the resident involved was taken to hospital but was uninjured. On the third occasion in November 2014 the resident was taken to hospital. She was diagnosed with bruising. As we saw for ourselves, the stairwells in all the residential units were boxed over after the Channel 4 News reports.</p>
<p>The film says there have been years of allegations of sexual abuse, inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees. It reports allegations of male members of staff walking into residents' room unannounced surfaced at the beginning of the 2015.</p>	<p>The log shows one allegation of a member of staff walking into a resident's room unannounced in 2015; the officer in question has been dismissed. See elsewhere in this report our findings in relation to allegations and incidents of sexual abuse, the treatment of residents, the privacy and dignity of residents.</p>
<p>The film comments on reductions in staff numbers.</p>	<p>See elsewhere in this report our findings in relation to staffing levels.</p>
<p>A pregnant woman who had collapsed the previous day and been taken to hospital but returned to Yarl's Wood pressed the alarm button in her room and was taken to the healthcare suite. The film commentary says Serco staff recorded that she refused to wait her turn in the healthcare suite and was spoken to about using the alarm button. She was offered an appointment at</p>	<p>Managers told us that the resident in question had continually pressed the alarm button in the waiting area of the healthcare centre. Two DCOs explained to the resident that use of the alarm button required DCOs to attend the area but could do nothing to help her because she had a medical issue and medical staff were already aware of her presence in the healthcare centre.</p>

10.30 am but declined. An ambulance was called three hours after she arrived at the healthcare suite. She was taken to hospital where she was found to have lost the baby.	
Two residents were smoking a legal high called spice. Two ambulances were called. The offenders spent time in the segregation unit. Serco have said that class A drugs have only been found once at Yarl's Wood in the past 12 months.	Managers told us that two residents were believed to have smoked spice. They had demonstrated a reaction and had told officers that they had smoked spice. In response their visits were supervised, their mail was screened and they were shown a film and given information about the dangers of using spice. Managers told us that in the period March 2014-March 2015 there was one find of a Class A drug. Drug paraphernalia were found in a resident's room in January 2015. In September 2015 a white powder was found in post sent to a resident. The powder had not been identified at the time of writing this report.

Forcible break up of a sit-in on 9 April 2015

9.21 A sit-in by eight residents took place on 9 April 2015 in the room of a female resident whose removal from the UK was planned for later the same day. The sit-in was brought to an end by Yarl's Wood officers in full personal protection equipment including helmets (PPE), some carrying riot shields, forcibly removing the residents from the room. We were not at Yarl's Wood on the day in question. Managers told us about the incident shortly after. They were concerned that one officer had used his shield inappropriately during the break-up of the sit-in. They told us they would undertake an investigation of the whole event and that they had reported it to the Home Office.

9.22 We viewed the video footage of the incident. As well as questioning the centre manager who authorised the use of force to break up the incident on 9 April 2015 and other managers and DCOs involved in it, we also considered it with Jeanette Hall, a former senior manager in the prison service and now an inspector with HMIP. She had also viewed

the footage and had discussed it with managers and staff as part of the HMIP inspection in April 2015.

9.23 Managers and staff told us that the sit-in had been instigated by two residents, both foreign national ex-offenders, who had been responsible for a number of previous incidents of rule-breaking and unruly behaviour at Yarl's Wood. One of the residents had assaulted a DCM causing a hairline fracture to his jaw. Managers told us that at the time that the decision was taken to break up the sit-in by force they suspected that the residents had implements taken from the dining room that could be used as weapons. They said they had been under pressure from HOIE to present the resident due for removal at the reception, for picking up by the Tascor escort service within a few hours. Managers told us that two residents had suffered bruising to their legs and feet as a result of blows from a riot shield during the break-up of the sit-in.

9.24 It was clear from our interviews with managers and staff that there had been some uncertainty about where overall control of the incident lay and whether the planning and management of it had been sufficiently robust. They told us that the incident had not been subject to a formal, documented planning process. Jeanette Hall also expressed her concerns about these matters:

"I think this is probably the most serious incident that Yarl's Wood had dealt with in a little while...I would certainly expect there to have been something very clear about who was in charge....Normally what happens is that a Command Suite, which is not necessarily a room, but somebody gets around the desk and says, "Right, I'm in charge of this incident, you are in charge of that bit and you are in charge of that bit"...in terms of the decision that they ultimately made to remove that group of women on that day, then they should have had a senior manager clearly in charge of that incident and I am not persuaded that that was the case."

9.25 Ms Hall was also concerned that the use of force had been premature:

"...this was not a removal [from the country] which had been tried previously and failed, or even tried twice previously and failed, this was the first occasion and there were lots of women involved. I think my reflection is that it had not really reached as far down the road in negotiation to justify the force that was used."

9.26 Ms Hall went on:

“...this was not in the sense of what I would understand to be formal negotiation. There was nobody there keeping a log, there was no one controlling access to the door, you would expect for the same person to be there constantly going at it, keeping people talking and trying to build up a rapport, in order to persuade them of what need to happen. It is a skill, negotiating in that environment, and it needs to be done in the correct way and I didn’t see anything structured or specialised about what was happening at Yarl’s Wood and I don’t think they gave that negotiation phase anything like sufficient time or commitment”.

9.27 Besides questions about whether the incident had been properly planned and led and whether enough effort had been put into negotiation, we were struck by the fact that it was not made clear to the residents sitting in how they were to be removed. Ms Hall shared our concern:

“... It was my understanding when I was at Yarl’s Wood that the people there are not well versed in life in custody and don’t automatically know what to expect. I think there more than anywhere else it was important to make absolutely clear what was likely to happen and I would expect that as part of the negotiation process...they maybe needed to be much more explicit about what that was going to look like and what that was going to feel like.”

9.28 The residents might have decided to leave voluntarily if officers involved in the negotiations had told them about the force that would be used or shown them the officers in riot gear.

9.29 Managers told us that 10 DCOs at Yarl’s Wood are advanced control and restraint (“C&R”) trained; they receive annual refresher training that includes the use of PPE (but not shields). Most DCOs and many of those deployed in the incident on 9 April do not receive training in PPE and shields as part of their basic annual C&R refresher training. They are unlikely to have put on PPE or used a shield since their induction training. None of the managers and staff who gave evidence could recall another incident at Yarl’s Wood in which PPE or shields had been used.

9.30 A DCO deployed on 9 April told us of her experience of having to put on PPE for the first time since her training many years earlier and take part in ending the sit-in. She said it had made her feel vulnerable:

“I am very uncomfortable with it, very uncomfortable. I get very nervous...I think what it came down to is they wanted females there and the other people that might have been available were males. Because I actually asked somebody if they wanted to swap with me and they said, “No, I’m not allowed”.”

9.31 This DCO said she had not felt able to tell managers of her anxieties about being involved in the operation.

9.32 Ms Hall told us it was important that staff involved in using PPE felt familiar and comfortable with it. She said:

“I think that the very act of putting all that PPE on, which by definition implies that you, as somebody that is intervening, or is in some sort of danger and that is why you are putting it on, just heightens all of that and you need to be practised and you need to have thought that one through and you need to have been in that place in order to do it safely”.

9.33 She went on:

“in prisons, lots of people are trained to do C&R techniques, but when it comes to a removal like that what you would tend to do, as a duty governor, is find the people who you know are most proficient, perhaps those who are the most enthusiastic, those who keep up their training and show an interest in it, those who are well practised; for a difficult thing you choose your best people. They didn’t have that capacity at Yarl’s Wood, because they are not practised in doing that particular type of occasion, and they were dealing with such large numbers of women, all at once, that once they had made that decision to remove they were going at it a bit “half-cocked” is the expression I want to use”.

9.34 We found no evidence that managers who decided whether and how to bring the sit-in to an end took appropriate account of the inexperience of officers at Yarl’s Wood in the use of PPE and in some cases their reluctance to use it. Even if it was appropriate to

use force, the officers deployed should have been given the opportunity, however brief, to practise and familiarise themselves with the use of the equipment. These were further weaknesses in the decision making and planning for the incident on 9 April 2015.

9.35 The senior management team agreed with us that it had been wrong to end the sit-in as they did. They need to ensure that the issues that arose in the handling of the incident on 9 April are thoroughly examined and considered. The learning arising should be shared with all relevant managers and staff, and used to inform training and development plans, both for individual managers and staff and more general training and development at the centre. It should also be used as the basis of a review of the plans and checklists for future operations involving the use of force at Yarl's Wood.

9.36 A member of the security team viewed the video of the incident to check whether it was handled according to the correct procedures. But managers told us that the officers involved in the incident had not viewed the video together so that they could discuss and learn from it. Managers assured us that this would happen once the disciplinary process concerning a DCO involved in the break-up of the sit in had been concluded.

10. The new contract in operation

Staffing

10.1 Davie Tanner, bid director, who led the bid for the new contract awarded in November 2014, explained the thinking that underpinned the proposed staffing arrangements under the new contract. He told us that existing staff numbers and the way they were deployed were outdated and reminiscent of a traditional prison model of 10 years before. He said:

“A traditional model for me, a prison model ten years ago, was that you had staff who were predominantly fixed posts, and they all sat in their own areas, and this case residents, but in the old prison case, when prisoners moved around the estate they were passed on from one fixed group of people to another fixed group of people, and even when the accommodation area emptied, when people would go to activities, they would not move with them. So my view was it wasn’t dynamic, it wasn’t flexible, and the staff did a good job, but in my view it was extremely inefficient. I didn’t think we were empowering the residents to take some level of self-determination for their daily routine.”

10.2 Davie Tanner and others involved in the bid told us they were influenced in designing the staffing model by a desire for staff to work more flexibly across the units and areas of the centre, rather than being attached to specific units or areas. They also envisaged staff spending less time working in offices and instead mixing with residents as much as possible.

10.3 Serco started a voluntary redundancy programme at the beginning of 2015 as part of the implementation of the new contract. Under that programme, DCO numbers were to have been reduced from ■■■ ■■ ■■, but after the programme had begun to be implemented, the centre manager asked for the compliment of DCOs to be increased ■■■ ■■■. One senior post, the deputy centre manager, was made redundant, leaving a senior management team of three consisting of the centre manager, the assistant director of operations and the assistant director of governance. The middle tier of management - five operations manager posts - was made redundant. Under the old contract 11 detainee custody managers (DCMs) were split into two groups, one responsible for a unit or area, the others undertaking operational management duties across the whole centre. Under the

new arrangements, there are three DCMs with administrative management roles and seven operational DCMs who manage specific units and areas and also do duty on a rota as the centre duty operations manager (DOM).

10.4 The table below shows the staffing numbers under the old and new contracts.

	Old contract	New contract
Senior management team	■	■
Operations managers	■	
DCMs	■	■
DCOs	■	■
OSO	■	
Others	■	■
Totals	■	■ ⁹

10.5 Cost to the Home office was reduced by approximately 25 per cent.

10.6 During our investigation, DCO staff numbers were significantly short of the planned ■. In early May 2015 there were ■ full-time DCOs and ■ agency staff who had recently been employed on a temporary basis. In July, the number of permanent DCOs available for work was ■, and at the end of September there were ■.

10.7 The senior management team explained that several factors had affected permanent staff numbers. Six staff (two DCMs and four DCOs), had been suspended after the Channel 4 news reports, and three others had been suspended for separate reasons. The redundancy programme itself had prompted greater numbers of staff than those identified for redundancy to look for work elsewhere, and further resignations had been prompted by the ending of a recruitment freeze by the local police force. The centre manager told us:

“...the problem is when you go through this process and you say to staff, “You are now all at risk” then everybody starts looking for jobs. Even those who don’t take voluntary redundancy, all of a sudden, they’ve started looking for jobs and they start thinking “you know what, it’s probably not a bad time for a change and if the

⁹ Under the new contract there are also eight facilities staff, two drivers and 1.5 outside visits staff who were not in the old contract.

numbers are going down, I don't think I want to be part of the new world" ...so we lost a lot more staff than we thought we would..."

10.8 He went on:

"We then get the Channel 4 broadcast and six staff in one go, we pulled them out straight away. It's a big hit here on top of some other suspensions as well. The worst it got was about nine staff who were suspended, so that hit us and then there's that never ending circle of because if you are short of staff that way then sickness goes up as well, so you lose a few more."

10.9 An initial training course for new DCOs began in June 2015 after a recruitment campaign. Eleven women started work as DCOs in August 2015 but four soon resigned. ■■■■■ DCOs worked at the centre in the second week of October 2015.

The deployment of staff

10.10 Whatever is actually achieved in terms of recruiting the planned full complement of staff, the evidence we received suggested that management's plans for the way that staff were actually deployed and the numbers in which they were deployed under the new contract were in any event problematic.

10.11 The staffing model under the new contract meant a marked reduction in the number of DCOs on a shift. The model provided as a minimum for ■■■■■ on each residential unit, apart from Crane induction unit, which was to have ■■■■■. However, the officer managing the staffing detail told us that he tried to provide for ■■■■■ on each residential unit during the day. In keeping with the bid team's vision for a more fluid staffing arrangement, DCOs were no longer to work exclusively in certain areas but could be moved anywhere in the centre.

10.12 The shift patterns agreed as part of the implementation of the new contract meant that most DCOs worked a 12-hour shift, either from 9am or from 9pm. The usual pattern was four days on, four nights on and four days off.

10.13 Staff shortages meant it was sometimes difficult to fully staff all rotas and staff were working significant amounts of overtime. In September, 2015 a total of 1,915 hours of overtime¹⁰ were worked by 58 staff. One DCO told us she had worked 122 hours overtime that month, and we heard of another who had worked 170 hours. On daytime visits to the centre, we often found [REDACTED] working on each residential unit.

10.14 We asked the centre manager in May 2015 whether he felt that his agreed revision of the planned number of DCOs would in the end offer the staffing levels he needed. He was equivocal:

“It’s hard to gauge whether the final number of [REDACTED] is right or wrong. It is far too early in the process to do that now...”

10.15 He also said:

“...to actually make a decision now and say do I think [REDACTED] [DCOs] is enough or not, when I’ve sat with the team and looked at the model I think it is pretty good. I would never turn down more staff if somebody offered them to me, of course I wouldn’t”.

10.16 The centre manager told us that the recently introduced technological and other innovations described in section 7, which had offered residents greater opportunities to manage their own affairs and a less restrictive regime, had also reduced demands on staff time. He also explained how a new central post room saved staff time. Previously, staff on each unit had often spent many hours per shift in the unit offices sending and receiving faxes on behalf of residents to and from their legal advisers. They had also spent a lot of time handing out items such as washing powder tablets, bin liners, hairdryers, and post. The new post room provided a central facility where residents could send faxes under the guidance of a trained and paid resident and the supervision of a single DCO. The DCO also handed out the items named above. The central post room also housed a post box for each resident for which they had their own key and from which they could pick up their own post and faxes. Male residents on Hummingbird unit, however, did not have access to the post room and DCOs working there told us they still spent a lot of time faxing documents on behalf of residents, and that their work load was added to by the need to

¹⁰ These hours included overtime for training purposes.

escort male residents who wanted access to facilities in the central area, such as the hairdressing salon or the healthcare centre.

10.17 We asked one member of staff with significant understanding of the process of the staffing arrangements at Yarl's Wood about the adequacy of the model and the proposed number of DCOs under the new contract. He replied:

"I think there will still be stretch here, because there are a lot of things that go into planning this place that aren't considered: things that go down as unforeseen circumstances, however they are not unforeseen...For example, the hospital escorts- there are always at least one or two every day for hospital appointments that have not been factored into the numbers that we need...there might be two spread out over the day, so it might be the case that two officers go out with one resident and when they come back they can take the others so it may only be two staff but that is generally a day to day occurrence... That is just one example. On Thursdays we have the market and that's not accounted for in the numbers. On night shifts, for example they are far too tight."

10.18 A DCO working on Bunting unit, which accommodates the single male residents, gave us a persuasive account of the inadequacy of staff numbers there:

"Some days we have days where it is fine, but most of the time-you're aware with the Calais problems and that, we've been busy virtually ever since the changeovers. Sometimes it leaves us short [REDACTED]"

[REDACTED] and on the odd occasions when the staffing is so bad, we've not only had to do that but somehow you've got to manage these legal interviews."

10.19 The DCO explained that the night staffing arrangements on Bunting unit tended to be even more problematic:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

10.20 Despite all the time-saving measures which had been introduced, all Yarl's Wood managers and staff we spoke to felt that the staffing model under the new contract did not meet the needs of caring for the residents. They felt that staff were often stretched and could not adequately engage with residents and offer them the support they needed.

10.21 The assistant director of governance told us:

"We hold residents who don't have an end date to their [detention], who are very vulnerable, who have completely different complex needs to what a male does, and have massive emotional needs...I don't think that is reflected in the bid at all, which obviously has an effect on staffing. I do think the staffing model could work for a different population of people, but I don't think it meets the needs of what our residents need...Clearly you see staff run off their feet, they're busy, they don't have that time to engage with residents, let alone themselves."

10.22 She also told us that staff were:

"Fed up, burnt out, tired. Frustrated is probably the biggest one because they want to do a good job here... The frustrating side of it for them is that they want to engage with residents, they know it has worked, it's worked before. That's where it probably pulls at their heart strings, that they can't do the things they want to do to be able to make someone feel better during detention here."

10.23 She went on:

"The problem is the staffing model doesn't give us that human element that you think you are coming into...You're doing the robotic stuff. You go and check on someone but you don't have that conversation with them, "Are you OK?" "Yes", "Great, okay, bye". There's no how are you today, how are you getting on. ...I'm not saying it's completely gone, but it's limited."

10.24 One DCO spoke about the previous staffing arrangements, where DCOs were allocated to particular units:

“...you went home with a sense of achievement. You went home thinking that you had helped that person. Whereas now, I come in and I know I have to do this, I know I have to do that and that, and you just do it every single day. There is no interaction, no nothing. The workload is so high that you don’t have a chance. However, before, if you had a resident come into the office and they had a problem and you could see they were visibly upset, you knew them - you knew their background and their history and you could sit down and talk to them and calm them down. You could see them go out the office a different person.”

10.25 He went on to stress the importance of the relationship between DCOs and residents:

“To me, that is what this job is about. We keep being told we are here to look after the residents. We are here to safeguard them, and everything like that, and that isn’t just by walking around, making sure they are not hurting themselves - it’s about talking to them. It is about having a chance to help them sort out their problems. We are not doing it right.”

10.26 Many other staff echoed the concern about their inability to give residents the attention they needed. Here are some examples of what they said:

“They’re far too low, the numbers, far too low...say somebody had a legal visit and they had bad news, or on a social visit they get bad news, before you had time to sit with them like us here, talk to them, calm them down and try and assess the situation.

However, now you don’t have that time at all. The next thing you know they could be self-harming, they could be ACDT, potentially on constant watch so you don’t have that time to nip it in the bud, if you like, talk to them and just calm it down.”

“For me personally, when I first started there were more officers and you were more able to do a caring role; the job I’m doing now, I’m being rushed off my feet

going from A to B, I have no time to speak to residents about their problems, their issues, and I feel they're not being dealt with properly in the environment they are in at the moment, given the amount of staff there are.... now officers don't have enough time to see to that individual's problems, and it is getting left for the next shift, for the next person, and it's not being dealt with. In the end they are getting angry and aggressive with the staff."

"... I think it is just down to money. That's my personal opinion... They know how much work we did but they've still put in whatever figures and cut the staffing levels. Even though we're told that the regime is going to change, we've still got the same number of residents that we're here to look after and support. Just because the odd door here and there is left open for them to get that little bit further on their own, and giving the residents themselves more responsibility, I don't think should affect the number of staff that we have working on the shop floor. I think it is appalling".

10.27 Residents who attended our group meetings agreed that the centre was short-staffed. They told us that officers had too much to do, were rushing their work, were too busy to help them and seemed "very tired". Residents and staff told us that the pressure on staff sometimes made staff "snappy" in their dealings with residents.

10.28 In addition to their concerns about the numbers of staff on duty, some of those we interviewed also expressed their concerns about the fact that the redundancy programme had led to the loss of some more experienced staff. They suggested that this had added to the pressures in the centre. The assistant director of operations told us:

"You do need people here who don't just come in and see it as a function and a job because you are dealing with people. Everyday there are different pressures. Someone will come in, someone you have never come across before, or behave in a certain way that is quite challenging and you have to try and manage that. So I think it is a loss to us losing the experience of some of our staff."

10.29 Some staff also told us that the fact that staff were no longer attached to certain units or areas in the centre meant that they sometimes had to undertake roles they were not familiar with and did not feel competent to do. Staff also said that their being moved

around the centre meant they were not able to work efficiently and had an impact on the residents. One DCO, who is part of the activities team, said:

“The time before this [the new staffing arrangements] all happened you had certain members of staff on that unit, which was good... On the actual units it would be certain staff and you even had their pictures [put] up there. [I think] that was better for the residents because they knew the staff, whereas you are getting different people and the residents don’t know them.

...It’s flexibility but it is confusing and annoying, because you come in, you see where you’re going to be for the day and you set yourself up to say, work in the gym, and I’ll tell the ladies the day before “I’m in the gym tomorrow girls, I’ll give you a gym induction”. But then I could be moved to somewhere else and somebody else put in my place who can’t do gym inductions, and then it is letting the residents down, and then I have not angry ladies... disappointed.”

10.30 We heard that staff shortages had also resulted in staff being deployed in roles they felt ill equipped to undertake. This included administrative DCOs being asked to take on operational tasks of which they had no recent experience.

The effects of the staffing arrangements on residents

10.31 The overwhelming concern of managers and staff about the new staffing arrangements was that they did not allow them the time to care adequately for and answer the needs of residents. We also saw how reduced staffing levels affected residents in practical ways. We witnessed or heard of how, as a result of staff shortages, there had been long delays for residents in the reception area; the Hummingbird activity centre had been shut on occasions; certain activities, including weekly discos and bingo sessions, had not been run as regularly as planned; and some sessions in the cultural kitchen, where residents cook for themselves, had been cancelled. One DCO told us that residents had started to complain of being bored. We were also told that as a result of pressures on staff time ACDT assessments and planning were often rushed and poorly documented, though two we inspected during an unannounced visit appeared to be well documented. We heard how some residents had not been given adequate or timely inductions. A DCO gave us an example:

“Just today... I went onto Crane Unit, the induction unit, and I could see loads of inductions on the board, and there’s an officer sitting there, and she’s stressed out, she says “I have 37 inductions to do, and some of these women are due off the unit to come to the bigger units”. Once they’ve been inducted, we know they can do everything, they can be transferred to a bigger unit because we know they will be all right independently. She said “I’ve managed to do two all morning, and they keep asking me to do other things”. I said “You can only do what you can do” and she said “Yes, but then it comes to the stage where I’m rushing things, and I am just making sure they can order food, and they know nothing else about the centre, and they’re going out”. She said “It’s not right; they don’t speak English”.

The staffing model: our observations and conclusions

10.32 We had the opportunity to be in Yarl’s Wood regularly over more than six months. We accompanied and observed staff at work throughout day and night shifts in different areas of the centre and spoke with many staff and residents. Sometimes staff had time to shut the door to their unit office and chat with colleagues but more often they had so much work that they were fully occupied for most of their shifts and at times stretched, especially when they worked alone on the units, as they often did.

10.33 Many staff said and many residents agreed that they did not have time to manage the residents’ problems or to engage with residents and offer them the care and support they needed.

10.34 The population of Yarl’s Wood is complicated and diverse, it includes highly vulnerable people, many of whom have experienced and continue to experience fear, trauma and stress, and increasingly includes many with more severe mental health problems. Staff need time to engage with residents and to answer their needs for care and support including emotional support. Providing such support is a key to maintaining good and effective relationships between DCOs and residents and to the successful management of Yarl’s Wood. Present staffing arrangements, and in particular the numbers of staff available on residential units, do not always allow for this. A DCO gave us a particularly vivid example of the problems that have arisen and give us cause for concern:

“I can take an example this morning: on the unit on my own, and I have to close the unit to leave it so there is no officer on there, a family unit, and I come off and escort two residents to healthcare. When I get there, there is a resident who is a known drug addict who is trying to come down off a certain substance, and she is shouting and screaming she’s not getting her medication. I don’t really have enough time to deal with her. I spend five minutes with her trying to calm her down so it doesn’t escalate into something else but normally I’d like to chase it up, because I know the resident quite well. I know there is another element to it, there’s another reason why she is the way she is, but I don’t have time to go back and find her and find out what her issues are....I spent five minutes and that’s all I could really spare, and she sensed that because they were getting me on the radio to do another task, that I didn’t have enough time to spend with her. She was getting more and more wound up about the situation as well.”

10.35 The assistant director of governance summed up our conclusions in relation to the present staffing arrangements:

“In real terms of how the contract has been bid, it has been bid in a hotel form. I think it works for a hotel type institution, where there is not that complex need, with all that worry and anxiety. I think it would be ample staffing for that definitely, but not for Yarl’s Wood”.

10.36 James Thorburn, former managing director, home affairs, said Serco had initiated a review of staffing at Yarl’s Wood. We raised with him our concerns about whether staff had adequate time to deal with the emotional, as well as the practical, needs of residents. He suggested that the solution might be to provide *“a counselling service that is not there at the moment, or to provide a different type of staff, or as the Chief Inspector recommends to [have] more third party and third sector organisations within Yarl’s Wood.”* However, residents with emotional or mental health issues need support when they have a problem, and staff must have the time available to offer it. The ability to make appointments with counsellors is desirable but it does not answer the more immediate, everyday emotional needs of residents.

10.37 We welcome the review of staffing. We urge those undertaking it to consider how to address the matters arising from inadequate staff numbers we refer to in paragraph 10.31 and to recognise that some areas of work require staff to have special knowledge and

understanding. Above all, they should address the question of how staff can best be given the time needed to engage with residents and meet their emotional, as well as practical, needs.

Recommendation

R9 Managers undertaking the current staffing review should address the question of how staff can best be given time to engage with residents and meet their emotional and practical needs.

Management capacity

10.38 We found a significant lack of management capacity in the centre after implementation of the new contract. This applies to frontline managers, DCMs, and the senior management team.

10.39 A DCM explained that new arrangements meant that operational DCMs were responsible for running their own unit or area as well as taking responsibility on a rota basis for running the whole centre. He said:

“Now we have all been shoved in together, basically we are all dual working, which is no fun, in point [of fact] it is a nightmare...Most of the shifts you do you are covering the officer [DOM role] so if you are running the centre you have no time to go and run your unit.”

10.40 He went on to say that pressure on DCMs had been increased by the significant increase in auditing and key performance indicator (KPI) requirements under the new contract:

“I am slowly getting up to speed, but there will be things late. Like we have internal audits as well, they range from 30 to 50 pages of audit stuff, and obviously these are all KPI time bound as well, so basically it gets to the point where you do not have enough hours in the day.”

10.41 HOIE's contract manager at Yarl's Wood confirmed that the KPIs had increased from 30 to more than 120 under the new contract, although the KPI requirements can be changed during the life of the contract.

10.42 DCMs told us that other work commitments and new shift patterns meant they did not have sufficient time or opportunities to carry out thorough appraisals of the staff they line managed. One DCM said the appraisal system had "*broken down*". One DCO told us he had not had an appraisal meeting since 2012, another not since 2013.

10.43 The pressures on management capacity also appeared to have resulted in the catering manager taking on an incoherent portfolio of responsibilities including catering, staff training, HR, managing shift patterns and rotas, and cleaning, under the title of Central Services Manager.

10.44 Many DCMs told us of the pressures they felt they were under. They told us some of their colleagues had been off work with stress. We saw that DCMs were extremely busy and that one was showing signs of stress.

10.45 DCMs said that faced with competing demands on their time, they would put the operational demands of the centre and the needs of the residents before less pressing management duties. Nevertheless, those duties involved important issues such as the development and appraisal of staff. Such matters affect how the centre runs, its culture and the care of residents and should not be compromised.

10.46 The senior management team told us that the lack of front-line managers had significantly added to their workload. They gave the example that in July 2015, as a result of two DCMs being on sick leave, the assistant director of operations had had to cover two night shifts as a DCM. Her colleague, the assistant director of governance, told us the senior management team had discussed the need to recruit an extra DCM and whether there was money in the budget to do so:

"We are looking at [DCM staffing] constantly because it massively impacts [the assistant director of operations] and me. We had [a DCM] off sick - he had fainted on the Friday night and [the assistant director of operations] then had to do the night shift because there was no one else to do it and then I had to come in on my weekend off to deal with a protest. It is not just about me and [the assistant

director of operations] and how it affects us, however... it has a huge impact on us, having assistant directors working DCM shifts... That is not productive at all."

10.47 The senior management team also told us that losing the assistant director post as a result of the new contract had put more strain on the team: they sometimes had to work long hours. They also said that lack of management capacity had meant that certain management functions had been neglected. The matters they cited included strategic planning, governance arrangements, training and development of staff and the resident's education programme. The lack of attention to these matters is evident from findings we discuss elsewhere and from the findings of the recent HMIP report.

10.48 The centre manager told us in May that he had been in discussions with Serco about the need to recruit another assistant director. We were told at the beginning of October that the position would soon be advertised.

Management capacity: our conclusions

10.49 The management teams in Yarl's Wood were overstretched and could not adequately fulfil all the demands upon them. This poses a risk to the good management and governance of the centre and the care and wellbeing of the residents. The current review of staffing must consider the present problems with management capacity and address them.

Recommendation

R10 Managers undertaking the current review of staffing should rectify the problems with management capacity.

Female staff numbers

10.50 All recent reports on Yarl's Wood have highlighted the lack of female staff and the tensions and problems that arise with male officers working with the predominantly

female resident population. The executive summary of the bid for the new contract acknowledged the problem and set out Serco's response to it:

"Serco's innovative staffing solution will ensure that all resources are focussed on the care and welfare of residents. To address the needs of a predominantly female population we will increase the overall ratio of female staff to the highest level possible, taking into account the employment rights of current employees and the local labour market. Our overarching aim is to increase the female operational staffing ratio to a minimum of 60 per cent by the end of 2015. In support we will undertake an audit of the occasions when it would have been desirable to use, or a resident would have preferred to deal with, a female member of staff."

10.51 James Thorburn, Serco's former managing director, home affairs, said the figure of 60 per cent female staff was not an obligation under the new contract but a goal he had set the Yarl's Wood management team. The director of returns at the Home Office said it was a target the Home Office expected Serco to reach.

10.52 The senior management team told us in early May 2015 that a recent recruitment process and initial training course (ITC) was about to begin. 17 of the 20 new recruits were female and the centre manager said he believed the 60 per cent target would therefore be reached. However, we learnt in August that some recruits had failed the ITC or had resigned and that only ■ new female DCOs were available for deployment, so the percentage of female DCOs was a little under 50. In the second week of October 2015 there were ■ female and ■ male DCOs.

10.53 Like those who undertook investigations or inspections before us, we identified occasions when the lack of female officers meant that male DCOs carried out inappropriate tasks, including constant watches of female residents, doing ACDT checks on residents in their rooms, and all-male teams undertaking roll counts. We consider elsewhere in this section how male staff have sometimes felt the need to work in a way that undermined the care of female residents.

10.54 In relation to the need to use male DCOs to do constant watches, the assistant director of operations, told us that managers tried to ensure that female DCOs took over at the most sensitive times. But she acknowledged that even this was not always possible:

“...in an ideal world, would it be ideal and the right thing to do? I think, yes to have only females doing the constant supervisions, but there are times, unfortunately where at the moment, there are other roles where the females are needed so there is not always enough.”

“I would say the ideal is that we would definitely like to use females [to do constant watches]. We also always try to push that with the managers and I know that I have raised it with them a few times...If there’s a male and the resident wants to use the toilet or have a shower they will call for a female, but it is about being a bit more sensible to the things such as first thing in the morning you know a resident is going to wake just as we do and going to want to go to the toilet, so should we put a male in there? No. We should try and make sure that’s always a female. At night when it is quiet time, when they are going to want to get undressed and go to bed, to make sure that that’s a female. So where there are times when we can’t always make it female, just to try and be a bit more sensible about the certain times there are female there”.

10.55 We raised with the centre manager the need to undertake an audit, as recommended by HMIP, of the roles that only female staff should fulfil. He said it had not been done. He doubted that such an audit could give a true picture of how many female officers were needed. He said:

“We haven’t done it yet, but there is also an element of it that is difficult to measure. Whereas it’s easy to measure searching of a female resident or doing a constant watch, what you can’t really capture is how do you put a percentage or a rating on a female resident just wants to have a chat with a female member of staff? That is obviously a big part of the work as well...it is very hard to measure”.

Female staffing levels: our conclusions

10.56 We identified a need for more female staff at Yarl’s Wood. Whatever the complexities of auditing the roles that require a female DCO and of identifying the true extent of the need for female staff, it is possible and it would provide a foundation for a staffing plan that more appropriately answers the needs of the residents of Yarl’s Wood

than present arrangements. This work should be undertaken as soon as possible and should inform the current review of staffing.

Recommendation

R11 Managers should undertake an audit and assessment of the roles that only female staff should undertake and how many female staff are required at Yarl's Wood to answer the needs of residents. Managers should develop a staffing plan based on that audit and assessment.

Staffing at night

10.57 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

10.58 Other members of staff raised concerns about the inadequacy of staffing levels at night both in relation to individual units and across the centre as a whole. The new contract requires a minimum of [REDACTED] DCOs to be on duty at night across five residential units, the control room, and reception. But we were told by managers that they tried to ensure that [REDACTED] DCOs were on duty, which allowed for [REDACTED] DCOs manning reception and the induction unit, [REDACTED] on each residential unit [REDACTED]. But we

were also told that as a result of staff shortages sometimes only ■■■ officers had been on duty at night.

10.59 We raised our concerns about staffing levels at night with the centre manager. He told us:

“Certainly one of the things I am looking at is having an on call system for staff on evenings, but again we are not talking huge numbers there. It’s where we have two staff who are on call...

But I’m happy in this particular environment with the level of risk that is posed by the residents and the nature of the relationships between staff and residents. The numbers are okay on an evening, but should an incident go, yes, of course I would want more resources. What would normally happen with that, is there would be a lot of phones ringing and people would get here quickly, areas would be locked off whilst measures were in place.”

Staffing at night: our conclusions

10.60 Given the complexities of the residents of Yarl’s Wood and the problems many of them have, staffing arrangements that require units to be locked and left unstaffed regularly are unacceptable. We are concerned too that not enough staff are on duty to deal safely with an incident, such as the need to escort a resident to hospital, while running the centre safely. This presents a risk to the wellbeing of staff and residents. So far as planning for any more major incident is concerned, as the centre manager appeared to accept, managers needed to consider what alternative staff resources could be called upon. Accordingly, we recommend that risks presented by the arrangements for staffing at night should form part of the current staffing review.

Recommendation

R12 Managers undertaking the current staffing review should in particular consider and address weaknesses in the night staffing arrangements.

Defensive practice by male staff

10.61 A particular problem with the present staffing levels is that male staff sometimes have to undertake tasks on their own which put them in compromising situations and at greater risk than usual of becoming the subject of allegations. Male DCOs told us that the fear of allegations of inappropriate behaviour caused some to take a defensive approach to such tasks in which they put self-protection before the needs of residents. One male DCO described the problems male DCOs faced:

“I remember when I was working on the units and doing nights. I can’t remember the resident’s name at the time but she would routinely be very much wrapped up in the blanket, facing the wall, because there is a very dim light, like a night light, that you can turn on so you can see any movement and it doesn’t really disturb people if they’re sleeping. If they’re wrapped up facing the wall, there is little you can see from there, and the DOM on the week nights didn’t particularly like me because we were short staffed, I was in the unit on my own, and so I called him every time that I needed to do an ACDT check on her, because I would have to go into the room and I am not going into the room on my own. So I would call him every time, he would come to the door, hold open the door.”

10.62 We asked other male DCOs what they would do in circumstances like those described by the DCO above. We received a variety of replies. Some said that if they had concerns they would enter the room alone and switch on their body camera. Others said they would try to view the resident from the door and would not enter the room, regardless of the fact that the resident might be concealed under blankets and they might not be able fully to ascertain whether the resident was all right. One DCO said:

“...because of the way the rooms are laid out if you are on your own in the night, as a male you don’t want to be going into the room. You’re visually seeing them behind the blanket, what are they doing? They could be cutting up, I’m just saying they could be but there’s no point where we can go into the room. The minute you go into the room there could be any kind of allegation made because in the room there are no cameras and there shouldn’t be cameras in the room. I’m not saying there should be, but however you’re supposed to safeguarding them and how are we safeguarding them?”

10.63 Nearly all the DCOs we spoke to said they would be unlikely to try to get another officer, male or female, to support them in such circumstances because they knew that no one would be available.

10.64 The Yarl's Wood Post Order R054 (internal policy) headed "entering resident rooms" and dated November 2014 states:

- *"During the night state, if a member of staff requires to open a resident door for a routine check for example an ACDT observation or a 1st night custody check, they are... required to knock on the door firmly enough for the resident to hear but not too loud as to disturb the other resident..."*
- *If the staff member does not get a reply after the correct procedure, there are torches available for staff to use if necessary, to ensure staff do not have to fully enter a resident's room on their own to complete required observations...*
- *If it becomes necessary to interview a resident in their room, staff should be mindful of the number of staff in the room and how the resident may feel about this. Where such occasions occur there should always be a member of staff present of the same gender as the resident in the room. If a female DCO is not available, a female member of staff from another area should be utilised.*
- *A member of staff should never fully enter a resident's room on their own unless they have another member of staff with them except in case of emergency or a 1st response."*

Our conclusions

10.65 Staff shortages meant that male DCOs night-time checks were sometimes undertaken in a defensive manner and inadequate. Given the current staffing levels, the policy on entering residents' rooms is unrealistic in its assumptions about the availability of other staff to support those who need to enter residents' rooms, especially at night. It does not provide clear and universally applicable guidance to staff to ensure that residents at risk are thoroughly and appropriately checked at night.

Recommendation

R13 Managers should review policy and procedure in relation to entering residents' rooms and interviews with and checks on residents, particularly at night, to ensure that interviews and checks are as thorough as necessary and carried out consistently by all staff.

Handovers

10.66 Shifts under the old pattern overlapped by 15 minutes to allow for handover. Under the new pattern, however, most DCO shifts in the residential units end at 9am or 9pm, with no provision for handover. The centre manager at Heathrow IRC told us that their shift patterns allowed a 15-minute handover and that this was the "industry norm". He thought the lack of a handover posed a risk to the care of residents.

10.67 Managers at Yarl's Wood told us that staff were expected to come in early so that they could take over from the outgoing shift and in particular receive necessary briefings about residents on ACDT plans. The assistant director of operations described this arrangement as "*a bit of a gentleman's agreement*". She told us that each residential unit also had a handover book in which staff were expected to note any matters key to managing the unit on a particular day and anything relating to individual residents on ACDT.

10.68 We saw some staff arrive early for an informal handover but we also witnessed occasions when this did not happen. Staff told us that proper handovers rarely happened and some suggested that they were in any event too tired to do handovers at the end of a 12-hour shift. One DCO said: "*Handovers have become more or less non-existent*".

10.69 We found that the entries in the handover books on residential units amounted to only a sentence or two and offered no reliable commentary on the condition and progress of residents on ACDT plans or otherwise giving cause for concern.

10.70 The assistant director of governance shared our concerns about the handover arrangements:

“The whole agreement of putting this four/four [shift pattern] in place, was that they would have to come in 15 minutes early to do their own handover and make sure that they are fully briefed prior to starting a shift at 9am or 9pm. Quite clearly that isn’t happening”. She also told us “If these handovers don’t improve, then we would obviously review it”.

Our conclusions

10.71 Staff on residential units should have the information they need to manage and care for all residents on their unit. In particular, if they are to manage the risks relating to those residents on ACDT or otherwise giving cause for concern, they need up-to-date reports on the behaviour and progress of such residents. This information was not being handed over in a systematic or reliable way. Staff handover arrangements should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation

R14 Managers should review staff handover arrangements as a matter of urgency.

11. The physical environment, facilities, food and activity

11.1 Yarl's Wood stands on the Twinwoods business park, in open countryside about six miles from Bedford. The centre comprises a number of interconnecting two-storey buildings. The buildings at Yarl's Wood are owned by the Home Office. Serco maintains them but cannot alter them without permission.

11.2 The buildings that house residents are surrounded by two rows of metal and wire fences. These fences were topped with rolled razor wire but much of it was removed after discussions between managers at Yarl's Wood and the Home Office. Managers told us that some was left to satisfy the demands of local villages. The centre manager said the removal of the razor wire and other changes to the physical arrangements at Yarl's Wood were part of his efforts to make Yarl's Wood a "softer" and less prison-like environment, where residents had greater freedom, which he considered more appropriate for immigration detention. He told us:

"There has to be some element of security, of course there has to be, but I am careful here. I'm not one of those people that has come as a prison governor grade, has dropped in here and is going to enforce this kind of thinking of prison because I'm totally detached from that... I really want to soften the centre."

11.3 He added:

"...in my opinion there's far too much razor wire in the establishment and the worrying thing...is the majority of areas don't have razor wire but when you come into this side of the building [housing the administrative offices and the visitors centre] you look out of the window, all you see is razor wire. It certainly gives the wrong impression of the site".

11.4 The administration block, housing the administrative offices, the visitors' centre and the entrance to the residents' reception area are at the front of the centre facing the car parks. The residential units are behind them. Crane unit houses residents for the first two or three days of their stay at Yarl's Wood; Bunting unit houses single male short-term residents; Hummingbird unit houses family groups; Avocet and Dove units house single women.

11.5 Residents are brought to Yarl's Wood by the escort service operated by Tascor Limited. They are driven through secure double entrance gates and into the Yarl's Wood reception area where they go through initial assessment and booking-in. The reception area has an open room with a counter of desks used by DCOs. New arrivals wait in three separate glassed in areas. Each waiting area has a television that plays an introductory film about Yarl's Wood. There are toilets and showers for arriving residents. There is a small kitchen and a fridge containing sandwiches and snacks. New residents are offered food and drinks while they go through the reception process. A nurse carries out a medical assessment in a side room.

11.6 A long wide corridor, known as The Avenue, runs from the administrative building and reception area to the residential units. The corridors running from the reception area to the Crane residential unit have eleven gates and doors along their course. These used to be locked at night, so residents arriving at night, as many do, experienced the locking and unlocking of many prison like gates and doors as they were taken from reception to a residential unit. Senior managers told us they were concerned about the impression this gave to new arrivals. The assistant director of operations, said:

"We say it is not a prison... Although you are in a secure environment and you can't leave at the end of the day, once you are inside it is much more relaxed...and then there are a lot of locked doors to go through. So we say one thing, and then... when they go through [the Avenue] they see something different...so now we are having a lot more ladies coming in at night and we need to rethink that and open those doors back up."

11.7 The Home Office agreed after discussions that the gates could be left open all the time from June 2015, though the gate at the entrance to each residential unit is still locked at 9pm.

Residential units

11.8 Each residential unit has an office used by the DCOs on duty. The units have long central corridors with no natural lighting. Doors along the corridors are kept open unless they are needed to contain certain areas or in the case of fire. The corridors in the

sleeping areas are lined by uniform rows of doors to the residents' rooms. The paintwork of the residential units is scruffy in some places and in need of redecoration.

11.9 Residents on the two single female units share two to a room. The beds are hard and narrow. They and the single wardrobe in each room are bolted to the floor. Each room has a television with built-in DVD player that can also play CDs. Each room has a built-in wet room with shower, basin and toilet. The main door into the room opens directly into sight of the bathroom area, so anyone entering the room can see into the bathroom if the door is open. Each room has a window that can be opened to a limited width. Residents are free to leave their rooms.

11.10 Residential units have a laundry room with machines and driers so that residents can do their own washing. The laundry rooms also have hot water points that allow residents to make hot drinks for themselves. Residents told us that they were given towels and sheets that were sometimes stained from previous use. They said they received only one towel and sometimes had to use it as a bath mat or to wipe up water when faulty showers sprayed onto bedroom floors. The cleaning manager told us that her staff tried to remove stained or torn bed linen from use but she conceded that problems sometimes arose because some residents hoarded linen.

Cleaning

11.11 Residents who attended our meetings complained vociferously and consistently about cleaning. They said the cleaners did not clean their rooms thoroughly. They complained in particular that showers, basins and toilets were left dirty and lime-scaled. They said cleaners used the same water and unwashed cloths to clean many rooms. Residents also complained about the standards of cleaning in other parts of the centre and particularly the dining rooms.

11.12 Ray Duckworth, the transition lead for the new contract acknowledged the importance of a clean environment for Yarl's Wood. He said:

"The most important thing for people in custody with regards to who you are is that you have somewhere to call your own... Your space; somewhere that you can

say “It is a safe haven and it is mine”. You have to protect that at all costs. It’s important to keep your space clean.”

11.13 The cleaning manager explained that there were five fewer cleaners in her team than a year or so ago, but she said that all common areas were cleaned daily and each resident’s room was cleaned once a week. Four staff had 2.5 hours to clean a corridor of rooms. One unit, Dove, has 42 rooms on a corridor. It is clear therefore that the time allowed for cleaning each room and bathroom is limited.

11.14 Residents could borrow buckets and mops from unit offices for use in their own rooms. There was a floor cleaning fluid dispenser in the laundry rooms. Residents who attended our group discussions told us they would have liked access to more cleaning products and cloths so that they could clean their own rooms. The recent HMIP report made a recommendation to this effect and in response residents were given access to a bathroom cleaning product and a general-purpose product and cleaning cloths. We welcome the fact that residents have been given greater opportunities to clean their rooms as they wish.

11.15 We found that most common areas were cleaned satisfactorily, apart from the dining rooms. We also found what appeared to be dirty cutlery in cutlery baskets in the dining rooms. The manager responsible for catering and other facilities explained that the dining rooms were cleaned by employed residents. He conceded that they had not been adequately supervised. He said the melamine cutlery in use was subject to staining from the spices used in cooking. He conceded that he needed to dispose sooner of such items.

11.16 Given how important good cleaning standards are to residents, they should be closely monitored.

Recommendation

R15 Managers should closely monitor standards of cleaning throughout the centre.

Access to outdoor space

11.17 Each residential unit has access to a garden. The single female units Dove and Avocet have courtyards with areas of grass, shrub beds and seating. They are fairly big but they feel hemmed in because they are overlooked on three sides by the centre buildings and on the fourth side have a brick wall as high as the buildings covered by garish murals. Washing lines are pinned to the walls in the gardens for residents' use. Bunting unit has a courtyard garden with a games pitch. This is the only designated outdoor games facility at the centre. It is not available for residents other than the short-stay male residents of the Bunting unit.

11.18 The Hummingbird unit has a courtyard garden that gives access to a larger hard-surfaced area, on one part of which stand two disused hard games pitches. A large wooded cabin in the corner houses the activities rooms used by the male residents of the Hummingbird and Crane units. Female residents of Avocet and Dove units do not have access to this larger open area behind Hummingbird.

11.19 The centre manager told us of his plans to allow residents access to an area of the Yarl's Wood site with polytunnels so they could grow things. He also spoke of plans to reinstate the games pitches behind the Hummingbird unit for all residents to use.

11.20 Our visit to Dungavel gave a less obvious impression of visiting a custodial environment than Yarl's Wood. It comprises a large Victorian baronial-style house that accommodates 14 female detainees in two dormitories and a number of purpose-built low buildings housing 235 male detainees. The buildings do not have prison-like gates or doors and the modern residential units have wide corridors, albeit without natural lighting, that have the feel of student accommodation. The centre manager at Dungavel told us that the only significant physical security was provided by the single perimeter wire fence and that security was otherwise based on good relations. Male and female residents are allowed to mix and have the run of the site, including all outside areas. Residents can look out at the countryside beyond the centre. We heard anecdotal evidence that detainees who had been in Dungavel and other immigration centres preferred Dungavel. We believe this must in part be attributable to its less oppressive physical environment and in particular the fact that residents have greater access to and an outlook onto open spaces.

The physical environment: our conclusions

11.21 As we describe above, open spaces and gardens available to residents at Yarl's Wood are limited. We welcome the plans to allow residents access to the outside games pitches and to undertake gardening activities in the polytunnels on the site. There is a lot more unused space around the buildings to which residents have no access. A large part of the site lies derelict since the fire in 2002. We cannot determine how feasible it would be for arrangements to be made to give residents access to further open spaces, but we believe that doing so would greatly enhance the feel of Yarl's Wood, and residents' health and wellbeing and experience of being there.

11.22 We welcome the fact that managers at Yarl's Wood are seeking to soften the environment at Yarl's Wood as much as possible and are seeking to move towards a more relaxed regime with as much autonomy, freedom of movement and association as possible. This is in keeping with the purpose of detention as set out in the Detention Centre Rules¹¹ and is clearly in the interests of the wellbeing of residents.

11.23 Notwithstanding managers' efforts, Yarl's Wood has the unmistakeable look and feel of a prison or custodial environment, albeit softened in places by bright decoration and lively information boards. We urge managers to continue to look for opportunities to further soften the centre and to discuss with the Home Office whether they can give residents access to more extensive, less hemmed-in gardens and whether they can increase natural light in the corridors and common parts of the centre. Serco should routinely redecorate those parts of the centre showing wear and tear.

Recommendations

R16 Managers should continue to look for opportunities to improve the physical environment at Yarl's Wood and make it less prison-like. In particular, they should discuss with the Home Office whether they can give residents access to more open space and whether they can increase natural light in the corridors and common parts of the centre.

R17 Serco should routinely redecorate parts of the centre showing wear and tear.

¹¹ See rule 3 The Detention Centre Rules 2001, Statutory Instrument 2001 No 238 Immigration. H.M Stationery Office

The care suites and the segregation unit

11.24 The centre has its own healthcare centre, managed and operated by G4S. A small enhanced-care unit at one end of the centre has five rooms. The enhanced care suite is operated by Serco, whose staff are responsible for the care of its residents. The enhanced care suite is used to house residents who may need to be cared for or treated in isolation. It is sometimes used to house residents with mental health issues when it is felt to be in their interests or in the interests of other residents. The enhanced-care suite is isolated, gloomy and cramped.

11.25 Managers opened a new care suite in August 2015 to meet the need for more appropriate accommodation for residents with mental health or other issues requiring more care or who need to spend time away from the main residential units. It comprises a separate unit with a day room with a television, a table and chairs, and soft seating area; a bathroom; and two bedrooms one with a single bed, the other with a twin. The unit is attractively furnished and decorated and feels calm and homely.

11.26 Managers hope that giving certain residents the opportunity to spend time in the new suite will prevent their state of mind or behaviour from deteriorating and will mean that fewer people will need to be confined or removed from association in the segregation unit. We, believe that the unit provides an opportunity to improve the wellbeing of some residents.

11.27 The segregation unit at Yarl's Wood, known as the Kingfisher unit, accommodates those removed from association or those subject to temporary confinement under the Detention Centre Rules¹². The unit is more prison-like. It has corridors with no natural light, lined by rows of heavy metal doors with spy holes. Rooms, or cells, for those removed from association have fixed beds and wooden furniture, as in the ordinary residential units. The rooms or cells for those in temporary confinement have only a bed and shelving, both part of the structure of the room. Neither type of room has a separate bathroom - only a fitted toilet and sink. Those removed from association have their rooms left unlocked and have access to a small sitting area with a television and books and board games.

¹² Ibid. rules 40 and 42.

Food

11.28 Serco's contract with the Home Office requires it to *"provide a varied, balanced and healthy menu to take account of the detainees' religious, dietary, cultural and medical needs."* The contract goes on to say that each resident should receive *"three balanced nutritious meals a day"* and Serco must *"ensure meals are varied, sufficient in quantity and of a good quality"*. Serco must provide menus that include two main choices, one vegetarian choice, one vegan choice and one Halal choice. Serco is expected to develop and implement a system to prevent food waste.

11.29 Food produced most comment and most complaint during our meetings with residents, second only to handling immigration cases and healthcare, which are not Serco's responsibility. Residents we spoke to were almost unanimous that it was poor: menus were unbalanced and unvaried; rice and chips or rice and pasta often featured on the same menu; they were offered curry too often; they were not offered enough fresh vegetables, and vegetables were over-cooked.

11.30 Residents must order their meals at least three days in advance using the ATM machines on their residential units. Residents who do not want their pre-ordered main dish are offered a single piece of fruit as a substitute.

11.31 Notices in the dining rooms define the size of the portions of each item of food residents are allowed. They complained about the strict portion control, and some said they sometimes did not get enough to eat. They said they were not allowed more food, even though left-overs were thrown away.

11.32 The catering manager told us that menus and portions were designed to offer residents an appropriate number of calories. He said that leftovers were not offered to residents because this had led to arguments between residents. He stressed that the provision of food was constrained by budget. His daily spend of £4.20 per person had been reduced to £3.90 and following the new contract was likely to be reduced further. He said:

"since the rebid, we are aiming it at peak £2.89 up to £2.90 per spend head. That will be a 28-day rollover menu throughout the estate of prisons and immigration."

So it will be a menu produced by procurement, rolled out....it will probably go down to £2.90 in line with prisons.”

11.33 We ate in the residents’ dining rooms several times. We found lunches heavy in carbohydrates and unappetising. On one occasion the choice was pasta, a wrap or a baguette. On another it was a baguette, a toasted baguette with tomato and cheese, or a pasty filled with mince. These choices were offered with an accompaniment of a bag of crisps or chips. A small, rather uninteresting salad was always available. A piece of fruit was also on offer. Jane Leech, a current member and former chair of the IMB, told us: *“We’ve noticed a big deterioration, a carbing up of the lunch”*. Staff told us they too found lunch of poor quality. They described the food as *“stodgy”* and *“sometimes greasy”*.

11.34 The evening meals, which are meant to be the main meal of the day, seemed better. On one occasion the choice was beef stir-fry, vegetable curry or fish and chips with mushy peas. There was no separate fresh vegetable.

11.35 Serco told us that the quality and variety of food at Yarl’s Wood should improve in the near future. They said they had developed with Brakes, their grocery and fresh food suppliers, a new set of recipes that would apply across their custodial estate. The purpose of this is to improve the quality, variety and consistency of meals served in the IRC and prisons. Serco told us the recipes had been tested and tasted by local catering teams who thought they were good. Brakes have provided instructions and training on preparing the food. The menu selection appears varied.

Food: our conclusions

11.36 We found that residents were not being offered adequate fresh fruit and vegetables to encourage them to meet the five-a-day recommendation. We think it bad for relations and wasteful that residents are denied second helpings even when leftovers would only go to waste. We believe staff should be able to manage any problems this causes. We are also concerned about the limited alternative food available to residents who may not be inclined to eat a meal that they had ordered three days earlier.

11.37 Food takes on a disproportionate importance in the life of the residents in an institution who have relatively little to do. Poor food provides a further potential source of discontent. We heard of a number of residents who refused to eat. In some cases this was because they disliked what was on offer but in others it appeared to be a response to their distress and anxiety about their circumstances. Improved food might help improve the appetite of vulnerable residents and encourage them to eat.

Recommendations

R18 Managers should ensure that menus:

- offer adequate appetising fresh fruit and vegetables and encourage the consumption of five portions of fruit and vegetables a day; and
- offer a better-balanced choice of foods at lunchtimes.

R19 Leftovers that would otherwise go to waste should be offered to residents.

Opportunities for self-catering

11.38 Yarl's Wood has two "cultural kitchens", where groups of up to six residents can prepare meals for themselves. Ingredients are ordered from a list and supplied by the main kitchen. Residents have access to herbs and spices kept in the kitchen. One of the kitchens is on Dove unit and is for female residents. It is open for two sessions a day. The other kitchen on Hummingbird unit is for family groups. It is open for two sessions a week. The cultural kitchens are popular, with long waiting times to secure a booking. Recent staff shortages had meant that some sessions had been cancelled.

11.39 A small shop where residents can buy a limited range of tinned or dry packaged foodstuffs, cold drinks and other items such as shampoo opens every day. It does not sell fresh fruit, vegetables or other fresh foods. Residents receive an allowance of 71p a day to spend in the shop besides any money they receive from relatives and friends.

11.40 Each unit has a microwave oven in the dining room for cooking food bought in the shop. Residents are not allowed to take cooked food to their rooms. Staff told us this was

to prevent residents from having food that might go off and cause food poisoning or unpleasant smells.

11.41 Residents complained that the limited number of microwaves and the limited nature of the food available to them in the shop severely restricted their ability to cater for themselves. One resident said “*You’ll become a noodle fan*” in Yarl’s Wood.

11.42 In contrast to Yarl’s Wood, the residents at Dungavel appeared to have more opportunity to buy and make food for themselves. The centre manager told us:

“...there are various cooking facilities available to residents outside the normal canteen options. Predominantly there are: toasters, panini machines and microwaves around residential units. We also offer kettles and refrigerators in these locations for food storage and making hot drinks or snack meals.

There are many choices available from the shop, including rice, vegetables, noodles, fresh milk, eggs, fruit for detainees to purchase and cook on their accommodation unit. We also provide bread, spreads jams free of charge in the kitchen areas around the residential units.”

11.43 Staff at Dungavel told us that residents receive food handling and hygiene training on arrival in order to avoid problems with keeping or eating rotten food.

11.44 Residents at Yarl’s Wood told us they often did not want to eat the meals offered in the dining rooms because of the stress they had experienced. Any resident who misses six meals is placed on ACDT assessment. A significant number of residents on ACDT at Yarl’s Wood have refused to attend meals in the dining rooms. Staff told us that the constant monitoring of residents who were on ACDT for food refusal and staff efforts to encourage attendance in the dining room could cause tensions and resentment. ACDT residents who ate tinned food bought from the shop were likely to have such foods removed because cans are deemed to be an instrument with which they could self-harm.

11.45 We asked the Home Office about the Detention Service Order (DSO) (no 03/2013) which has been interpreted as requiring residents who do not eat six meals in the dining rooms to be automatically subject to the ACDT process. Officials responded in writing:

“The current DSO on food and fluid refusal (FFR) is under review. The proposed revision will refine the definition of FFR to exclude those detainees who are eating/drinking from sources other than meals and/or covertly, and remove the mandatory requirement to open ACDTs in all cases (replacing with a less formal multi-disciplinary team approach to case management).”

Our conclusions

11.46 Giving residents more opportunity to cater for themselves would alleviate some of the eating difficulties they experience and help staff to encourage residents to eat properly. It would also be in keeping with the stated aim of managers to “empower” residents and to offer them greater freedom and control over their lives in detention.

11.47 Jane Leech, former chair of the IMB, agreed with us about the benefits of offering residents further opportunities to prepare food for themselves:

“That is a huge thing because it is completely disempowering to have somebody hand you a plate of stodge, even if you have a few choices of stodge. We would endorse that. The cultural kitchen is great.”

Recommendations

R20 Serco should consider how residents might be given greater opportunities to cater for themselves, including by expanding the cultural kitchen facilities, the choice of foods in the shop and providing facilities for residents to store and cook food and make snacks for themselves.

R21 Serco should work with the Home Office to ensure that the current DSO on food and fluid refusal is appropriately amended to make it explicit that residents who prefer to cater for themselves can do so without automatically being subject to ACDT.

Facilities and activities

11.48 Yarl's Wood has the following facilities and activities available to the female residents:

- a sports hall where the DCOs who make up the activities team organise various sporting activities. Residents themselves can also arrange to play various games, such as volley ball;
- outside instructors provide a weekly yoga class and two dance classes;
- a gym with a range of gym equipment;
- an arts and craft room with a number of sewing machines. This facility is managed by a talented activities DCO who offers instruction in various arts and craft activities;
- a library stocked with books in a number of languages and daily newspapers. The library also offers residents DVDs they can borrow and play in their own rooms;
- a cinema that shows two films a day;
- a hair dressing salon staffed by an employed hairdresser and a number of residents;
- an ITC room;
- a weekly market operated by the charity HIS Church selling clothes, toys and other items;
- activities staff put on discos and bingo evenings fairly regularly, though staff told us that staff shortages meant these were less frequent;
- an education officer provides basic English lessons. Occasional courses offer other training and skills, a recent example being a touch-typing course;
- the charity Music in Detention offers weekly music sessions on a termly basis; and
- another charity Brass has on a few occasions provided more specialist classes to individual residents in the visits hall.

11.49 Visits by an Avon lady were recently discontinued when the centre moved to operating on a cashless basis. This was a popular service with residents.

11.50 Residents have opportunity to undertake paid work in Yarl's Wood. They are employed in the kitchens, serving and cleaning in the dining rooms, in the hairdressing salon, as meeters and greeters of new residents, and in the new post room where they principally help other residents to fax documents to their legal advisers. Residents are

paid for such work at the rates set by the Home Office¹³: £1 per hour for routine work and £1.25 per hour for specified projects. The centre manager told us in July 2015 that the centre had 60 paid roles and he was confident that this would soon increase to the 65 roles committed to in the new contract. There are waiting lists of residents who hope to be offered a paid role.

11.51 Serco gives each resident a basic mobile phone when they arrive at Yarl's Wood. They pay for calls on a pay-as-you-go basis. Residents are not allowed devices that can access or download material from the internet. Some residents complained that the DVD players in their TVs did not work and the only means by which they could play music was by borrowing the single separate CD player on each unit.

11.52 Staff told us the residents' main cultural and religious festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Diwali were marked. Charity days had taken place, which had included a Race for Life event in which residents joined activities staff in running around the perimeter. Occasional large events such as a Jubilee celebration in 2012 and also a summer barbecue and fête had once taken place. No such event had been held this year because of staff shortages. The assistant director of governance explained that the larger events had been popular with residents and staff and had provided a sense of community. She said not holding such events had undermined the "community feel" of Yarl's Wood:

"It would be hard if we wanted to put on a big summer barbecue, purely because it's transition and we are currently really reduced in staffing. I couldn't say in June we'll put on a summer barbecue, we'll have this many staff in and all the residents will be invited to it. I couldn't do that right now because I don't have the staff to do it, or I may have the staff to do it but I can't tell you what my staff's going to be because it is that restricted at the moment."

11.53 The activities staff and other DCOs told us that activities had been increasingly curtailed because of staff shortages and recent Home Office restrictions on the use of money from the general purposes fund generated by the shop at Yarl's Wood. Although Home Office evidence was that it had only refused permission for the funding of a first aid training course. Staff told us activities were the first thing to be cancelled when they were called to other duties.

¹³ Under Detention Service Order 01/2013 Paid Work. (26 March 2013) Home Office UK Border Agency (now UKVI).

11.54 One of the DCOs on the activities team told us that residents had complained to her of being bored. Residents complained to us too about the lack of meaningful activity. They told us *“There is nothing to stimulate you here”* and that they *“just roam around”*. One resident told us that boredom encouraged her to cause trouble. Residents said they would like more opportunities to undertake paid work and more interesting and appropriate opportunities for training and education.

11.55 DCOs were sympathetic to the residents’ complaints about being bored. One said *“Everyday is the same at Yarl’s Wood.”* Ali McGinley, director of the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID), explained how the problems of boredom and lack of meaningful activity particularly affected longer-term residents:

“... the regime in prison is geared towards being there for a long time. A lot of the regime obviously in Yarl’s Wood is based on people being there for a short time. When you have been there for a long time you have exhausted the education. You’ve read all the books in the library.”

11.56 Gillian Kelly, consultant nurse with secure services West London Mental Health NHS Trust, highlighted for us the importance of meaningful activity for individuals, and of reducing tensions and maintaining harmony, in secure mental health settings. She indicated there might be lessons in what she said for the management of Yarl’s Wood:

“... the other part of de-escalation is about... structure. It is about how the day is spent, whether there’s a meaningful day for people, whether there’s stuff for people to do. If you don’t have a familiar structure, then again it all activates the disturbance, whereas if you have a clear structure it keeps that contained far more. I don’t know what’s invested in Yarl’s Wood in terms of the structure there, the activities... and opportunities, but that is another big part of how we work with the women and give them meaning and hope...That really helps people to have a meaning again.”

Activities and facilities: our conclusions

11.57 The activities and facilities available at Yarl's Wood keep residents occupied for only a limited part of their time. We formed the impression that most residents were under-occupied and spent a large part of the day just wandering about or chatting.

11.58 Providing activities and worthwhile and engaging training, education and work opportunities for a population as diverse as that at Yarl's Wood is a challenge, especially when people can choose whether or not to participate. The education and training challenge is increased by the fact that, unlike a prison where inmates are subject to fixed sentences and their needs can be planned for with some certainty, residents at Yarl's Wood are detained for uncertain periods, and usually for no more than a few months.

11.59 Nevertheless, the present training and education programmes must be reviewed to offer greater opportunities for more able residents as well as those lacking basic skills. Serco should review what further opportunities could be made available to residents to undertake paid work and how to increase the activities offered to them.

Recommendation

R22 Serco should review the activities, education and training programmes available to residents to ensure they allow them adequately to occupy their time and provide meaningful activity, education and training, even for the most able residents.

Religious provision

11.60 A full-time pastor heads a lively and well-regarded chaplaincy at Yarl's Wood. The pastor oversees and manages a part-time team of eight who come to the centre to minister to the various religious groups. The team includes Anglican and Catholic priests, two imams, a Buddhist priest, a Chinese Christian Pastor and a Coptic Priest. The female residents at Yarl's Wood have access to a chapel, a Muslim mosque, a Buddhist temple, a Sikh and Hindu temple. Services are conducted daily in the chapel. A Sunday service in the main visits hall is open to all residents and well attended.

12. Safeguarding

The safeguarding of adults

12.1 The Care Act 2014 sets out for the first time in primary legislation local authority duties and responsibilities for protecting adults with care and support needs. The act and the statutory guidance issued under it¹⁴ are unclear on whether local authority adult safeguarding responsibilities cover IRCs (they do not cover prisons). The director of children and adult services at Bedford Borough Council told us there was “*some confusion as to the status of IRCs*”. He made it plain that the local authority acted on the basis that adult safeguarding at Yarl’s Wood was principally the responsibility of Yarl’s Wood managers, but he was unable to provide us with clear authority for this approach.

12.2 In any event, the statutory guidance defines and offers guidance on best practice in relation to adult safeguarding, which we think managers at Yarl’s Wood must adhere to if they are to fulfil their responsibility for the proper care of residents. The Care and Support Statutory Guidance explains the meaning of adult safeguarding:

*“protecting an adult’s right to live in safety free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action...”*¹⁵

12.3 The guidance warns against taking a restricted view of what might constitute abuse or neglect. It offers an illustrative list of types of abuse and neglect and suggests that exploitation is a common theme among them. The list includes physical abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and modern slavery, which encompasses human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.¹⁶

¹⁴ Department of Health (October 2014) Care and Support Statutory Guidance

¹⁵ Ibid. para 14.7

¹⁶ Ibid. para 14.17

12.4 The guidance says:

“In any organisation, there should be adult safeguarding policies and procedures. These should reflect this statutory guidance...and are for use locally to support the reduction or removal of safeguarding risks, as well as to secure any support to protect the adult and, where necessary, to help the adult recover and develop resilience. Such policies and procedures should assist those working with adults how to develop swift personalised safeguarding responses.”¹⁷

12.5 We are not aware of a specific policy at Yarl’s Wood that covers managing adult safeguarding risks. The policies that deal with keeping residents safe are the Safer Detention and ACDT policy, which focuses on managing the risks of self-harm and suicide at the centre and the violence reduction policy which sets out procedure for managing any instances of violence, including bullying. These policies and the training material relating to them and used in the DCO initial training programme draw heavily on policy and practice in the prison service. They contain, for instance, little or no acknowledgement of the particular concerns, issues and vulnerabilities of those in immigration detention, including the uncertainty over their immigration status, the indefinite nature of their detention, and the mixed population in an IRC like Yarl’s Wood. Furthermore, the policies and training relating to keeping residents safe do not consider or address the fact that there may be features of residents’ lives outside Yarl’s Wood which threaten their safety or place them at risk of harm, either while still in Yarl’s Wood or on release. For example, they may be at risk of trafficking or enslavement. Staff said they understood adult safeguarding only in terms of the prevention of self-harm and suicide at the centre.

12.6 We have not had access to evidence from the Home Office or elsewhere of the numbers of residents at Yarl’s Wood who have care and support needs or the extent to which they are at risk of exploitation and abuse and in need of protection. But research by campaign groups¹⁸, our own observations and anecdotal evidence suggests that matters of adult safeguarding in the widest sense are of some relevance in relation to the residents of Yarl’s Wood.

¹⁷ Ibid para 14.41

¹⁸ See Girma.M, and others, (January 2014) Detained: Women asylum seekers locked up in the UK. Women for Refugee Women. London. And see Girma. M, and others, (January 2015) I Am Human: Refugee women’s experiences of detention in the UK. Women for Refugee Women. London

12.7 Adult safeguarding policies and training at Yarl's Wood are based on a partial definition and understanding of the requirements of adult safeguarding, do not address all the risks Yarl's Wood residents are likely to face and are not in keeping with the guidance issued under the Care Act 2014.

Contact with the safeguarding adults board

12.8 IRCs are not required to be represented on the local authority safeguarding adult board (SAB) and, unlike prisons, they are not specifically designated under the Care and Support Statutory Guidance as a relevant partner of the local authority for adult safeguarding purposes. However, a number of provisions of the statutory guidance suggest that managers at Yarl's Wood have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in its safeguarding work. For instance, paragraph 15.15 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance says:

"All public organisations should work together and cooperate where needed, in order to ensure a focus on the care and support (including carer's support) and health and health-related needs of their local population".

12.9 In any event, we believe it would be good practice and in the interests of residents for managers actively to engage with the SAB and local authority safeguarding team for the purposes of information sharing and having access to their expertise and support.

12.10 We found some confusion between the local authority and senior managers at Yarl's Wood about the need for contact with the SAB. Senior managers told us that representatives of the local authority safeguarding team had visited the centre some time ago and had had discussions with the then deputy centre manager. They believed the local authority had consequently taken the view that although the residents of Yarl's Wood were vulnerable adults, they were in a safe environment and that the centre did not need to engage regularly with the local authority and the SAB. Senior managers said they understood that they could refer an individual case to the SAB if necessary. The director for children and adult services and the assistant director of adult services at Bedford Borough Council told us that the meeting with the then deputy centre manager had been part of an attempt to establish continuing contact with Yarl's Wood. The assistant director of adult services told us:

“We tried in the last couple of years to actively engage; our safeguarding team went there and provided information and advice to the managers, and gave them a list of numbers [for] who they could ring for specific advice and support from the local authority and from the mental health safeguarding links that we have. They didn’t follow up our offers of support around general awareness of safeguarding and in fact they showed us, and they shared with us their safeguarding book. It wasn’t a policy it was a book. The safeguarding book that they were referring to gave cause for concern to us because it didn’t talk about safeguarding in the sense that we would understand it as a local authority.”

12.11 Nevertheless, in early July 2015, once we had raised our concerns about safeguarding arrangements at Yarl’s Wood, the acting head of training arranged a meeting between himself, assistant directors at Yarl’s Wood and the local authority safeguarding team to seek advice about safeguarding. They were given the details of the local authority Learning and Development team who could suggest names of independent safeguarding trainers. We interviewed the acting head of training in August 2015. He told us there was uncertainty about who would be taking on the permanent role of training manager at Yarl’s Wood and when work on devising a new training programme including safeguarding training would begin.

12.12 In light of the statutory guidance on adult safeguarding, the safeguarding risks to the residents of Yarl’s Wood and the weaknesses in the adult safeguarding arrangements at Yarl’s Wood we describe, managers at Yarl’s Wood should seek further guidance from the local SAB on developing appropriate adult safeguarding policies and practices, including staff training, and implement that guidance as soon as possible. We believe there should be ongoing contact between Yarl’s Wood managers of appropriate seniority and the local authority safeguarding team and the SAB.

12.13 The director of children’s and adults’ services at Bedford Borough Council confirmed to us in correspondence in September 2015 that he was meeting the centre manager in the near future.

Recommendations

R23 Managers at Yarl's Wood, in consultation with the local safeguarding adults board, should devise appropriate adult safeguarding policy and practice, including staff training.

R24 Managers at Yarl's Wood should actively engage with the local authority safeguarding team and the safeguarding adults board and establish appropriate and ongoing information sharing to secure the safeguarding of the residents of Yarl's Wood.

The safeguarding of children

12.14 Section 55 Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 places a statutory duty on Serco, as a provider of services that discharge the Secretary of State's immigration, asylum and nationality functions, to ensure that those services are provided *"having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in the United Kingdom"*.

12.15 Statutory guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under section 55¹⁹ makes plain that Home Office staff and contractors are required to protect not only children with whom they have direct contact but also any children they know about who give cause for concern. This would include the children of IRC residents living in the community. For instance, the statutory guidance sets out a framework for making arrangements to safeguard children that emphasises the need for information sharing:

"Effective information sharing by professionals is central to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It is therefore essential that effective arrangements for sharing information about a child and their family within each agency and between agencies are in place"

¹⁹ *Every Child Matters, Change for Children* (November 2009) Home Office UK Border Agency and Department for Children, Schools and Families.

12.16 It goes on:

“...the lack of an information sharing agreement between agencies should never be a reason for not sharing information that could help a practitioner deliver services to a child”²⁰

12.17 In relation to the obligations of Home Office staff and the staff of contractors undertaking functions of the Home Office, the statutory guidance says that senior managers are directly responsible for monitoring the actions of their staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It says *“this includes ensuring that children are listened to appropriately and concerns expressed about their or any other child’s welfare are taken seriously and responded to in an appropriate manner.”*

12.18 The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*²¹ defines what all professionals and agencies should do to keep children safe. Section 55 says:

*“... no professional should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe. If a professional has concerns about a child’s welfare and believes they are suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should share the information with local authority children’s social care”.*²²

12.19 The Yarl’s Wood’s child protection policy, set out in the Centre Manager’s Rule on Child Protection (rule no 4.12), identifies the forms of abuse that children might be subject to and sets out procedures for staff who have concerns about, observe or receive evidence of abuse. But the statement of policy requirements, the policy itself and the appended terms of reference for the Safer Detention Committee (all of which are set out in the Centre Manager’s rule), include differing and confusing definitions of the children for whom staff have a safeguarding responsibility.

12.20 For instance, the statement of policy requirements begins by saying that its purpose is to outline the duty and responsibilities of staff and volunteers merely in relation to child protection procedures *“to those children who are visiting Yarl’s Wood*

²⁰ Ibid. para1.9h

²¹ HM Government (March 2013) *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. The Stationery Office, London

²² Ibid. p.15

IRC". However, it goes on to refer to the responsibility of staff to safeguard "...the children who are not detained in their care but with whom staff have routine contact- when in contact with those children, e.g. visiting children" and it also refers to the obligation to minimise "*the risks of harm to children in the community by detainees...*" The policy refers too to safeguarding responsibilities "*to those children who are visiting Yarl's Wood*" and "*children with whom staff have routine contact- Visiting children*" as well as children in the community at risk of harm from residents. The terms of reference for the Safer Detention Committee add to the confusion by referring to Yarl's Wood's role in safeguarding as (among other things) "*The protection of children who communicate with detainees via phone calls, letters and visits*". In any event, the Centre Manager's Rule on Child Protection fails to make clear that staff have a duty to share any information they receive in the course of their work which suggests that any child is at risk of harm or abuse, whether or not in direct contact with a resident at Yarl's Wood.

12.21 The various documents in the Yarl's Wood Centre Manager's Rule identify different managers as the person to whom staff should report safeguarding issues and concerns. The documents should be reviewed and amended to ensure consistency on this point.

12.22 The statement of policy requirements says the child protection policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the local safeguarding children board and Home Office, but the latest version of the policy we were given was out of date and should have been reviewed in September 2014.

12.23 The Yarl's Wood initial training course (ITC) materials we saw indicate that safeguarding is covered only briefly in the ITC and does not address the question of the responsibility of staff to be alert to and share information relating to children in the wider community who may be at risk of harm or abuse. Staff are not given refresher training in safeguarding. Staff told us that they had only limited understanding of safeguarding and did not see it as part of their safeguarding responsibilities to pass on any information that might suggest a safeguarding risk affecting children other than those they saw and supervised on visits at Yarl's Wood.

Our conclusions

12.24 The safeguarding of the children of residents is central to the welfare and wellbeing of residents. It is highly pertinent issue, especially given that some residents may have sought to hide the existence of their children or may have had to make hasty, ill-considered or unorthodox arrangements for their care. As an example, managers of the welfare and resettlement charity Hibiscus told us that a resident had recently told their staff that she had concealed the existence and whereabouts of a child for fear that the child would be removed from the UK. Staff at Yarl's Wood, including the staff of third-party organisations such as Hibiscus, have close engagement with residents and they are uniquely placed to find out about their children. Yarl's Wood should have clear and consistent safeguarding and child protection policies that outline for all staff their responsibility to identify and report on all matters of concern. Yarl's Wood should also ensure that staff have regular training to equip them to understand and meet their safeguarding duties.

Relations with the local safeguarding children board

12.25 *Working Together to Safeguard Children* outlines the pivotal role that local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) play in developing and coordinating procedures for keeping children safe in their area. Among the responsibilities ascribed to them is:

“Local safeguarding children’s boards should maintain a local learning and improvement framework which is shared across local organisations who work with children and families. The framework should enable organisations to be clear about their responsibilities, to learn from experience and improve services as a result.”²³

12.26 The UK Visa and Immigration section of the Home Office (UKVI) is not a statutory member of the LSCB but the statutory guidance in section 55 says:

“In support of effective interagency working, the UK Border Agency (now UKVI) should participate in LSCBs where appropriate and invited to do so, and should

²³ Ibid p.65

seek to contribute in accordance with “Working Together to Safeguard Children”.”²⁴

12.27 We interviewed Jenny Myers, chair of the Bedford LSCB. She knew of no contact between the LSCB and Yarl’s Wood. She told us that while she would not expect a representative of Yarl’s Wood to attend the LSCB, she would expect Yarl’s Wood to refer to LSCB policies in its own safeguarding children policies and procedures, to adhere to recruitment and training standards (including regular refresher training for staff) and to access local training provision. Ms Myers emphasised Yarl’s Wood’s obligation to inform relevant local authorities about any child about whom there might be cause for concern, for instance under a private fostering arrangement:

“As far as I am concerned, they have a duty to share information. There is plenty of information around good information sharing. The children’s’ interests are paramount, and it is about what good practice looks like”.

12.28 She went on:

“When I worked for Bernardo’s we had experience of this when we were setting up the Cedars [pre-departure accommodation]. There was reluctance by others around not really seeing it as anything very important because these people are there for very short periods of time. However they do hold information and they can actually improve both the experience of people there, and children who are visiting, but they also have a responsibility about the wider [community of] children and where they are living”.

12.29 Ms Myers recommended that managers at Yarl’s Wood meet her to discuss their child safeguarding obligations and what needed to be done to develop their safeguarding arrangements, including staff training. We met the centre manager shortly after our interview with Ms Myers to urge him to contact her for this purpose, which he agreed to do.

²⁴ Home Office UK Border Agency and Department of Health (November 2009) *Every Child Matters, Change for Children, Statutory Guidance to the UK Border Agency on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* p.19

Recommendations

R25 In consultation with the LSCB, managers should review and redraft Yarl's Wood's child protection and safeguarding policies to ensure that they clearly and consistently identify the extent of staff responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, including children in the community, and conform to the requirements of the LSCB.

R26 In consultation with the LSCB, managers should review the training of staff in relation to safeguarding and child protection to ensure that they are given regular training to help them understand and meet their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children.

R27 Managers should agree with the LSCB on arrangements for reporting concerns and on the pattern and frequency of future contact between the LSCB and Yarl's Wood.

13. Health and disability

13.1 The contract to manage healthcare services at Yarl's Wood, which used to be provided by Serco, was awarded to G4S Justice Health in November 2014 and falls outside our terms of reference.

13.2 However, the healthcare of residents directly and significantly affects their wellbeing and their experience of being in Yarl's Wood. It has an impact on the needs and demands of the residents, and in turn on the work of the Serco staff and managers trying to look after them. We felt able to consider and comment upon the outcomes and effects of the healthcare arrangements.

13.3 The residents, staff, managers and representatives of other organisations interested in the welfare of the residents of Yarl's Wood all raised with us concerns about its standards of healthcare. All pointed out the high levels of health-related issues affecting residents, particularly the high incidence of depression, anxiety and other mental health problems. Healthcare was important to residents. They complained to us about it more than any other matter except the handling of their immigration cases. The most common complaints about the healthcare service were:

- long waits for appointments to see a doctor and the fact that residents had to have an appointment with a nurse first;
- reliance on locums;
- residents not always notified of appointments or appointments changed without notice;
- medication not ordered or dispensed in a timely fashion;
- residents not allowed to keep and administer their own medication;
- lack of privacy and confidentiality in the healthcare reception;
- healthcare staff said to be rude, disbelieving and disrespectful;
- staff did not listen to residents in relation to symptoms, histories and preferences with regard to medication; residents not being allowed the medication they had received in the community;
- healthcare staff failed to undertake necessary checks and tests;
- healthcare staff did not support Serco staff by responding to requests for help in dealing with residents' health needs; and

- lack of a counselling service.

13.4 We note criticisms of healthcare in the recent HMIP inspection report and that the Care Quality Commission served three “requirement to improve” notices on G4S after the inspection in April 2015. We saw for ourselves the distress among some residents about the service they had received. We also heard from Serco staff about their lack of confidence in and frustrations with the healthcare service.

13.5 One DCO told us:

“I feel very passionately angry, annoyed and opinionated about this, because it breaks my heart to hear [about healthcare at Yarl’s Wood]. The ladies are frustrated and the DCOs are frustrated...”

“I heard many of these complaints from the ladies but all we can do is tell them to write a complaint saying that they were dissatisfied with healthcare. My understanding is that we cannot influence what healthcare does or does not do.”

13.6 Another said:

“It’s a shambles...We can sit in reception waiting for ages, we’ve done our work, and I don’t know, for some reason they’ll disappear and not come back for ages and ages. The ladies are sitting there waiting and waiting and waiting, you have people going out... [and] they are just not coming to see them. They bring the wrong notes, things like that, you’re trying to do your job and they’re just hindering you.”

13.7 We witnessed an occasion when a nurse on duty at night and with no other patients to attend to refused a DCO’s request to visit a resident on a unit. The nurse knew his refusal meant the DCO had to lock the unit and leave it unattended while she took the resident in a wheelchair to the healthcare suite and stayed with her during the consultation.

13.8 We asked the centre manager what was being done to improve the provision of health care. He said a weekly conference call had been taking place between him, the Home Office and the NHS commissioner of the services at Yarl’s Wood to discuss the

findings and recommendations for improvement made by HMIP and the care Quality Commission. He explained that Serco, as the contractor responsible for the buildings and facilities at Yarl's Wood, was undertaking work to redesign the healthcare centre to allow greater privacy, to remove the glass partitions between residents and staff in the waiting area and to develop a new pharmacy suite. He and the former Serco director of home affairs offered assurances that they would continue to do what they could to work with G4S and the NHS commissioner to improve health services.

13.9 We urge the centre manager and more senior managers in Serco to continue to engage at all levels with the healthcare commissioners and the provider to ensure that concerns are addressed.

Recommendation

R28 The centre manager and senior Serco managers should continue to engage at all levels with NHS commissioners and G4S to ensure that concerns about healthcare provision at Yarl's Wood are addressed.

The management of residents with mental health issues

13.10 We did not have access to medical records or official data on the incidence of mental health problems among residents at Yarl's Wood, but many residents and staff, including nursing staff, spoke of the high levels of depression and anxiety of residents. We note that the survey of residents by HMIP inspectors in April 2015 found 49 per cent said they had felt depressed or suicidal when they first arrived at Yarl's Wood.

13.11 As set out in section 6, we learnt from managers, staff and the IMB that the number of residents arriving at Yarl's Wood with severe mental health problems had recently risen noticeably.

13.12 The assistant director of governance told us:

"We are definitely having more mental health residents, without a doubt. Let me define that a little for you. I would say there are the more severe, obvious mental

health conditions which require closer management and supervision. Obviously mental health means a massive spectrum...we are having many more residents with mental health at the opposite end of the spectrum [from low level anxiety and depression] who are incredibly challenging. They are violent, they are aggressive and they require us to manage them much more closely..."

13.13 During our investigation there were invariably one or two residents who had been assessed as needing care in a mental health hospital. They were held at Yarl's Wood for a number of weeks, in one case over six, while waiting for a bed.

13.14 Managing residents with mental health problems, especially severe mental health problems, is demanding. Their presence at Yarl's Wood has implications for the management of the centre as a whole.

13.15 As Jane Leech, former chair of the IMB, put it:

"...they take up an awful lot of resources at Yarl's Wood, so the healthcare manager is spending a lot of time trying to get them moved into secure accommodation. Then, of course there's managing that person on the unit, they very often end up in the segregation unit. I think the [new] care suite is up and running now but that's taken far too long, so they end up in this awful segregation unit, Kingfisher."

13.16 The assistant director of governance gave us an insight into the challenges staff faced when managing residents with significant mental health problems:

"I think the main part is the unpredictability of the behaviours that are being shown, and that makes anyone nervous and anxious-even me. When I go down to review them, what will I be met with? Will I be going through this door and they will be literally in my face? You don't know how to manage them. You don't know whether the right thing to do is to put your arm around them and guide them into a room, just so that you can walk past. You don't know whether you can't touch them at all, or you can't even talk to them because you don't know- it is that. There is a massive lack of understanding."

13.17 The assistant director of governance thus hinted at an issue raised by many of the staff we talked to: their lack of understanding of the wide range of mental health issues they were required to deal with. They spoke of their need for further training in how to identify residents with mental health issues and to give them the skills and confidence to manage those residents appropriately. One DCO told us:

“We have very basic mental health training. I had it as part of my [initial training course] when I started. I think it was a couple of hours near the end of a really long week, and you don’t really take any of it in. To be honest I probably don’t even remember a lot of it now...We’re getting more people come in now with mental health concerns, especially over the past couple of years compared with what we did...and, even more so, we do need much more in-depth [mental health training]”.

13.18 All staff at Yarl’s Wood should be given improved and continuous training to help them identify and manage appropriately residents with mental health problems. We make a recommendation to this effect in section 14.

13.19 Staff and managers told us that residents with significant mental health needs whose behaviours were challenging or disruptive had often been involved in incidents that resulted in their being put under rule 42 temporary confinement or rule 40 removal from association in the segregation unit. The HMIP inspectors noted an increase in the duration of segregation since their previous inspection and accepted that the rise in temporary confinement was explained by the increase in the number of residents with more severe mental illness, as well as ex-offenders with challenging behaviours.

13.20 During our investigation a series of residents with mental health assessments awaiting transfer to a mental health hospital were housed in the enhanced care suite at the back of the healthcare centre. This suite of five single rooms is managed by Serco and is not part of the healthcare centre. The suite is Spartan and slightly dingy. The unit is isolated from the rest of the centre. When necessary, a DCO is on constant watch but the residents in the suite often spend much of the time unattended and reliant on a call button. If they ring, a controller in the control room asks a member of staff to attend. Staff told us that the healthcare staff had sometimes been asked to attend a resident in the suite because they work nearest to it. Serco DCOs and G4S staff told us that the healthcare staff had on occasion refused to do this, which had caused resentment among

DCOs. This suggested to us that some Serco employees misunderstood their responsibility to staff the enhanced care suite or were reluctant to do so. Managers told us that Serco staff had recently been sent an email making clear that they were responsible for looking after residents in the enhanced care suite.

13.21 The senior management team acknowledged that the segregation unit and the enhanced care suite were unsuitable for accommodating residents with mental health problems. The centre manager told us that he had developed the new care suite in order to provide a more appropriate environment for those with significant mental health issues:

“...if I was to go back and start looking at segregation numbers over the year, the vast majority of people who have been in segregation have had a mental health condition and they’ve been there because they have been assessed under the [Mental Health] Act and they are awaiting a bed in an appropriate unit. That usually takes about two weeks, for two weeks they will end up living in segregation and that is not ideal, but this environment would be.”

13.22 The new care suite, which had been designed as a more attractive and unthreatening environment, came into use in August 2015. However, the enhanced care suite will still have to be used to house residents if the new care suite is already occupied by a resident who needs to be isolated.

The management of residents with mental health issues: our conclusions

13.23 Whatever provision is made for their care, Yarl’s Wood is not a suitable environment for people with severe or significant mental health problems. It is not in their interests to be detained there. Furthermore, detaining people with severe or significant mental health problems places burdens on the staff of Yarl’s Wood that they are not equipped to meet and undermines their ability to provide a suitable environment and appropriate care for other residents.

13.24 We were concerned about the use of the enhanced care suite for accommodating residents with mental health problems, or indeed any residents. It is unsuitable and its isolation, and the confusion surrounding responsibility for its management, present risks to residents.

Recommendation

R29 Serco should open discussions with G4S, NHS England and local mental health care providers to consider how best to meet the needs of detainees with severe mental health issues and ensure that they are assessed and receive care and treatment in a timely and appropriate fashion.

The care of pregnant women and disabled residents

Pregnant women

13.25 Serco records show that 99 pregnant women were held at Yarl's Wood during 2014. We met some there.

13.26 The Yarl's Wood internal policy on the management of pregnant women (Post Order no R060) refers to a number of arrangements designed to make the stay of pregnant women at Yarl's Wood "*more pleasant and comfortable.*" It provides for pregnant women to be given two extra pillows; an extra carton of milk and one extra piece of fruit at meal times; and a pack of food, consisting of a sandwich, fruit and milk, to have in their rooms at night. The policy stipulates however that pregnant women who complain that the smells in the dining room make them nauseous may only take their meals out of the dining room after assessment and authorisation by healthcare staff: we consider this requirement unsympathetic and over restrictive.

Recommendation

R30 Pregnant residents should be allowed to eat their meals away from the main dining rooms without having to obtain permission from healthcare staff.

13.27 The policy on the management of pregnant women also provides for the appointment of two designated Pregnancy Liaison Officers (PLOs). These officers have received training in relation to the care of pregnant women and are responsible for recording the presence of pregnant women at Yarl's Wood. They are also responsible for

holding monthly classes to support pregnant detainees by telling them about symptoms, the screening and tests they should receive and baby care. The policy says weekly yoga sessions are available for pregnant women and that the community midwife will attend the healthcare suite weekly to see pregnant residents.

13.28 We spoke to the DCM responsible for the management of pregnant women in Yarl's Wood. He told us that staff shortages had meant that the PLOs had not been able to hold monthly classes for pregnant residents for some months but that the other arrangements specified in the policy were in place.

Disabled residents

13.29 The internal policy providing for managing disabled residents is set out in the disability policy (Centre Manager's Rule 4.4) and the policy for the disability liaison officer (DLO) role (Centre Manager's Post Order No A005). These policies say that only healthcare staff may diagnose a resident as being disabled.

13.30 The disability policy provides clear and comprehensive guidance aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities are not discriminated against and are able to integrate and take part in daily life at Yarl's Wood. It provides for residents with a disability to have a care plan and that their needs are subject to continuous assessment and are communicated to all staff involved in their care.

13.31 The disability liaison officer policy makes that officer responsible for offering advice and guidance to staff and residents on legislation and available support for disabled residents.

13.32 The DLO is also responsible for drafting care plans, devising personal emergency evacuation plans for disabled residents and for communicating with other staff about disabled residents' requirements for extra support. The DLO is responsible for assessing whether a disabled resident needs to be accommodated in a disabled room.

13.33 Managers told us that in accordance with the policy on Individual Needs Assessment Meetings (Daily and Weekly), (Post Order No GL27) residents subject to ACDT, care plans, pregnant residents and those with complex medical needs and welfare issues are the

subject of discussion at the multidisciplinary assessment meetings. These are held each Friday and attended by members of the senior management team, the welfare officer, a representative of HOIE, DCMs and the healthcare manager.

13.34 In October 2015 we were told by the assistant director of operations that there had been two DCOs acting as DLO but one had recently resigned and the other was on long term sick leave. A DCM had responsibility for the management of disabled residents.

13.35 Most witnesses we spoke to thought that in general staff at Yarl's Wood did their best to look after and support disabled residents. This accords with our own observations. Any criticism in relation to the care of disabled residents was largely centred on decision-making by healthcare staff about their support needs and in particular whether they were to have access to a wheelchair. Jane Leech, former chair of the IMB, told us:

"For the disabled residents the policy is that they are put on a care plan. Once they get on that plan, by and large that's all right...The problem is that there is what we call this culture of disbelief in that some residents will say they have, say, higher needs than healthcare will allow. You get this terrible tension...it just goes on and on and promotes enormous bad feeling. We have quite a few examples where the resident will swear blind they need a wheelchair, and healthcare will say they don't need a wheelchair, they need to be walking around, they can manage with crutches or a stick. The poor staff are stuck in the middle because they have to act on what is in the care plan...I did meet a resident the other day who was quite disabled and walked with some difficulty with a stick, and she was quite happy with what she had. She had a ground floor room and the staff were being very helpful. I think she needed assistance to get up stairs, so she went in the lift so that was fine. I did question her about whether she had been left a long time and she said no, it was all fine."

13.36 Staff told us that they had a number of practical difficulties in managing residents with physical disabilities. First, staff shortages meant they sometimes struggled to get residents who needed to be pushed in a wheelchair or accompanied in the lift to dining rooms or to appointments on time. They also complained that maintenance issues meant the centre did not have enough functioning wheelchairs. We spoke to the centre manager in October 2015 when he conceded that wheelchair maintenance had been a problem. He

said a Serco facilities team had been found who could service wheelchairs and he assured us that wheelchair access was no longer a problem.

The detention of pregnant women and people with a disability

13.37 Many people we interviewed said the detention of any pregnant women and anyone with a significant disability was unacceptable. Decisions to detain such people are a matter for the Home Office. Their detention places an undue burden on the staff at Yarl's Wood. We were troubled to learn that people had sometimes been sent to Yarl's Wood with disabilities that made them unsuitable for detention there and which staff could not in any event adequately manage. The assistant director of governance told us about one such person who was recently detained, albeit briefly, at Yarl's Wood:

"We had a resident not long ago, who was living with her family. She was completely wheelchair bound and needed a great deal of support. Coming into this environment, we could not give her what she needed at all...she wasn't an abscond risk. Bringing her in to this environment where she had to stay overnight, I think she came in about 12.30 am and she was bedbound until 6.30 the next morning...if she was awake we would have assisted her to the toilet and so on but there is stuff that our staff aren't trained to do, and neither are the healthcare staff because they are not community nurses. They are not taught how to lift people appropriately and so on. We have much more of that."

The care of pregnant and disabled residents: our conclusions

13.38 Overall, we found appropriate policies in place at Yarl's Wood for the care of pregnant and disabled residents. However, staffing pressures meant PLOs had not been able to put on classes for pregnant residents. And the absence of the DLOs suggested that the management of disabled residents may not have received the attention it required. In addition, in October 2015 we were told that the DCO responsible for safer detention had given up that role. Managers should address these staffing issues to ensure that pregnant and disabled residents, and residents at risk of harm are properly managed and cared for.

14. Training and development

14.1 Staff at Yarl's Wood undergo a seven-week initial training course (ITC). Annual refresher training for all staff in security, equality and diversity, safer detention (which largely covers the management of self-harm and suicide risks) and health and safety/fire awareness is mandatory. Staff undertake a mandatory two-day first aid refresher course every three years.

14.2 Nearly all the staff we spoke to said their training had been deficient both in subject matter and the way it had been delivered. They had not found training sessions engaging and had had difficulty retaining what they had been taught.

14.3 Senior managers agreed that training programmes had not met the needs of staff and needed to be redesigned. The assistant director of operations said:

“Our whole training needs to be reviewed. I think it is one of those things that is put in place, and it just carries on and no one really stops to look back and ask, “Is it really fit for purpose now”. The centre has changed a lot. The role of a DCO has changed a lot. So that is something that needs to be a priority for us to look at”.

14.4 We reviewed the training materials used for initial training courses at Yarl's Wood. Much of the material was drawn from the Ministry of Justice training programmes for prison officers and contained references to prison officers and prisoners. This included the material used in mental health awareness training and the safer detention training (referred to as safer custody). Prison officers and detainee custody officers share many training needs but there are important differences between the circumstances of prisoners and detainees, how they react to those circumstances and how they should be managed and cared for. The training material we saw did not sufficiently acknowledge those differences. For instance, neither the mental health awareness material nor the safer custody material make reference to the distress caused to detainees by the uncertainty of their immigration status and the possible outcome of their case. Furthermore, the reliance on training materials badged as being for prison officers and based on the custodial estate undermines the message that Yarl's Wood is to be as unrestricted an environment as possible and that DCOs are not prison officers running a custodial regime.

14.5 Managers at Yarl's Wood said the training programme would be redesigned once a new head of training had been appointed. In the meantime, the acting head of training was developing connections with potential new training suppliers. These included the Poppy Project, a charity that offers advice and support in relation to the trafficking of women. He was also developing databases and electronic portfolios to track the training needs of staff and available training resources.

14.6 Staff told us about a number of matters on which they felt they needed more training and we found further areas in which we felt staff had not been appropriately or adequately trained. Most of the areas in which staff needed more or better training are referred to elsewhere in this report but we set them out here in one place. The following list of identified training needs should be taken into account by managers in the re-design of the training programme.

Mental health awareness

14.7 Staff felt most strongly that they needed better training in mental health awareness. At present, this takes up a day of the ITC and includes an introduction to the most common mental health conditions and some of their symptoms and triggers. Staff told us they needed a greater understanding of the conditions they had to cope with and the strategies for managing them. As one experienced DCO put it:

"ITC only touched on [mental health]. It would be good to try and not to relate to [those with mental health problems] but at least to try to think what they are thinking; what's the next stage if this isn't dealt with".

14.8 We spoke to Gillian Kelly, consultant nurse in the women's secure services at the West London Mental Health NHS Trust. She explained the skills that staff managing people with mental health problems in a secure setting needed to ensure a safe and caring environment. She stressed that they needed to understand the boundaries of behaviour that should be expected and role-modelled; how to ensure that residents did not relive distress and traumatic experiences; and that staff received the support and guidance necessary to protect themselves.

14.9 Given the demands on staff in terms of looking after residents with mental health problems which we discuss elsewhere, managers should offer staff more mental health training. Such training should be regularly updated. We suggest that in devising training managers should seek advice from a specialist organisation such as the Institute of Mental Health.

Understanding the backgrounds and vulnerabilities of residents

14.10 The staff training programme involves a brief overview of people trafficking. Staff and managers and those involved in supporting immigration detainees agreed that staff needed to be better able to identify and understand a wider series of issues likely to affect residents and to be relevant to their care and treatment. These include trafficking, forced labour and sexual and domestic abuse. Staff also said they would welcome greater instruction in the cultural issues and sensitivities relating to the different nationalities of residents.

Interpersonal skills

14.11 The care of residents at Yarl's Wood and the good order of the centre depend to a significant extent on staff being socially adept; good at handling awkward situations; and employing de-escalation techniques. As one staff member put it:

“ ...[Interpersonal skills are] I would say, 85 per cent of the job, the way you talk to people and the way you react as well, body language, all that sort of stuff.”

14.12 At present, the interpersonal skills training forms a part of the day's training in conflict management. We believe that training must be more extensive.

Safeguarding

14.13 We consider in section 12 the deficiencies in staff awareness and the training of staff at Yarl's Wood in relation to both adult and child safeguarding. We also refer to the need to ensure that all staff receive regular refresher training in safeguarding children.

Immigration processes

14.14 Many staff told us they would like to understand more about the immigration processes residents go through. They said it would help them to better understand and care for the residents. They also said it was the subject which residents most wanted to talk about and on which they most asked for help. Staff explained that refusing to discuss immigration matters with residents led to their feeling disgruntled; it made them view staff as unhelpful. One DCO told us:

“We don’t deal with the immigration side of it and I have ladies come up to me asking this and that and [I have to say] “I don’t know sorry I can’t help you.”

14.15 Some more experienced staff said they sometimes pointed residents to where they might get help with their case and what they could do to pursue it. We saw staff having such conversations with residents. However, staff appeared to understand and accept that they should not and could not offer specific advice on individual cases.

14.16 We raised the question of staff being trained in the rudiments of the immigration process with the director of returns HOIE. She gave this reason for resisting training DCOs in immigration processes:

“I entirely take the point but it is still quite hard to know enough about the system to give advice that is meaningful. It may be possible, but all I can say there is always the fear, the fear is the worst one, that people who don’t want to be responsible for doing that will inadvertently, and through all the best intentions, give advice that is not right”.

14.17 It may nonetheless be possible to offer DCOs training on immigration processes that allows them to guide residents while avoiding the details or merits of individual cases. Some staff are in any event giving such guidance, so it would be better that their understanding was correct. Serco should consider with the Home Office the extent to which it would be possible to offer some training aimed at giving staff at Yarl’s Wood a better understanding of immigration processes.

Recommendations

R31 Serco managers should undertake a thorough review of the initial training course and the refresher training programme to ensure that they enable staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. The review and any consequent redesign of staff training should ensure that staff are adequately trained in mental health matters affecting residents at Yarl's Wood; the backgrounds and vulnerabilities of residents; interpersonal skills including de-escalation techniques; and adult and child safeguarding.

R32 Serco managers should consider with the Home Office the possibility of providing training to give DCOs a better understanding of the rudiments of immigration processes.

15. Reputation and public image of Yarl's Wood

Public image of Yarl's Wood

15.1 Yarl's Wood is on a business park about six miles from Bedford. It is well signposted and easily accessible by car. The business park has a staffed security gate but visitors passing through it are not routinely checked. We often reached the front entrance without security checks. However, the entrance to the centre is secure and no one can gain access without permission and relevant documents. Residents can arrange visits from their family, friends and advisers with relative ease. Visitors undergo identification and security checks before they meet residents in the centre's visits hall.

15.2 Channel 4 News reports broadcast on 2 and 3 March 2015 referred to Yarl's Wood as "*Britain's most notorious and secretive immigration centre*". The opening scene of the report showed the lit centre filmed at night through trees. This slightly sinister introduction added strongly to a sense of secrecy, inaccessibility and lack of accountability, which were themes of the news report.

15.3 Yarl's Wood has often been in the news since it opened in 2001.

15.4 During our investigation the centre received publicity about the unannounced inspection by HMIP, the death from natural causes of a male resident, the break-up of a sit-in on 9 April 2015 and the publication of the HMIP report. Media coverage included national press and the local paper.

15.5 The centre has a largely negative image in the public mind. Senior managers we interviewed said Yarl's Wood had a uniquely difficult and controversial public image and attracted media attention in a way no other Serco service did. A number of on-site demonstrations in support of the closure of the centre have taken place during our investigation.

15.6 Media concerns largely focus on four interconnected issues:

- the policy of detention especially of women;
- Serco's involvement in providing the service, given that it is a private sector organisation;

- the day-to-day running of the centre - particularly incidents of misconduct by staff; and
- shortcomings in healthcare (which is provided by the company G4S).

15.7 Coverage does not usually distinguish between the responsibilities of the Home Office, Serco and G4S. Serco is usually held responsible for any deficiencies.

15.8 Serco does not have a communications strategy specifically for the centre, despite the media attention it receives.

Stakeholders' views of Yarl's Wood

15.9 We discussed Yarl's Wood with Richard Fuller MP (Bedford and Kempston) and Alistair Burt MP (North East Bedfordshire), who is also a health minister. Both argued in favour of making the centre more open. Mr Burt thought this would allow anyone interested to see how it operated and how residents lived. He felt that restricting access allowed rumours to flourish and inaccurate information to go unchallenged.

15.10 We interviewed Councillor Louise Jackson, who sits on Bedford Council. Councillor Jackson is a member of the local adults and health overview and scrutiny committee and until recently chaired the Yarl's Wood health review committee. She lives in the nearby village of Milton Ernest. She became interested in the centre after joining Yarl's Wood Befrienders, an organisation that arranges visits to residents at their request.

15.11 She described local people's reaction to the centre:

"I think there has been a bit of suspicion, but there's also a lack of understanding about what Yarl's Wood is."

15.12 We spoke to seven NGOs and others with an interest in Yarl's Wood. Some of these organisations are campaigning to close Yarl's Wood and to stop the detention of women.

15.13 Many of these organisations and individuals said they had never visited Yarl's Wood or, if they had done so, had been only to the visits hall. This lack of access had sometimes led to misconceptions about the removal centre.

15.14 Serco's communications team to manage relationships with stakeholders was disbanded in 2014.

Impact of campaigning and media coverage on staff

15.15 Staff we interviewed also felt the impact of the negative publicity and reputation of Yarl's Wood. Some said it affected both their work and home lives and were considering different employment. A small number said that they would not admit where they worked, preferring to say they worked in 'security'.

15.16 One DCO said:

"They still care, but at the moment you don't know who is watching your back and with this publicity going on, there is a lot of things going on in the media... Then the issue of family life; my family life is affected because of this because people ask questions and it's having an effect on my family, I'd rather just get out before I get sacked or something. Something might go wrong and then I might get sacked."

15.17 Other staff were clearly proud of their work and felt a great commitment to the residents and the centre but recognised that Yarl's Wood had a poor public image. Some thought the image was not justified:

"I take enormous pleasure in telling people how well-run this place is, and I say that I wouldn't be happy working here, if I thought this place wasn't well run. You just know that any report, Channel 4 or in the paper, it is not even a gross exaggeration but it is just misrepresenting the true picture of what it is like here. It just makes me mad more than anything."

15.18 The centre's pastor spoke of the public image of Yarl's Wood and the need for openness:

"I think the more people see this place, it is not a zoo, it is not a place where we just come and look at people or view people as if it is a tourist attraction but, at

the same time, I still believe the doors should be opened much more...let people come to a service, let them see the inside of what really happens, and how we are trying our very best.....we are only facilitators, but we have nothing to hide...I am proud to talk about Yarl's Wood."

15.19 We asked him how he thought Yarl's Wood could be improved. He said:

"...allow people to come in....I am thinking of those very groups that are anti this place. Yes, because if you don't let them in they make up their own stories."

Serco's handling of media and stakeholder relations

15.20 We interviewed Charles Carr, Serco's director of media relations. He has managed media relations for Yarl's Wood since 2012 and handled many press enquiries, many from *The Guardian* and *Observer*, Channel 4 and the local media, including the free paper *Beds on Sunday*.

15.21 Mr Carr said his approach to media and stakeholder relations is to be open about Serco services. He said that Serco have been *"keen to allow people more access"* to Yarl's Wood:

"everyone who goes and visits Yarl's Wood goes there with a particular perception based on what they've read and they come away with a very different feeling about it, much improved. That can only improve by showing more people."

15.22 He said some groups so opposed the policy of detention that more openness on the part of Serco and the Home Office was unlikely to change their mind.

15.23 Mr Carr said the Home Office press office was less keen on his approach. His explanation for their stance was protection of the residents. However, he also thought that lack of openness fuelled the view that *"There must be something bad going on there because nobody will let us in."*

15.24 Our investigation made us aware of the significant gap between the perception and the reality of Yarl's Wood. Some of the misperceptions and misunderstandings arise from

the closed nature of the IRC. Insularity and lack of openness undermine the staff and add to the difficulties of managing Yarl's Wood and IRCs in general.

Recommendations

R33 The Serco director of media relations should form and maintain a regular stakeholder group.

R34 Serco should seek to agree with the Home Office a new strategic communications plan for Yarl's Wood based on the principles of transparency and openness.

R35 Serco should seek Home Office approval for a programme of visits to the centre. Visitors should include officers and politicians from the local council, interested MPs and groups providing services. The purpose of the programme would be to show them the work and facilities and brief them.

16. Overall conclusions

16.1 The population of Yarl's Wood is diverse and vulnerable. It comprises time-served foreign national offenders (TSFNOs), asylum seekers, and people thought to have no legal right to enter or remain in the UK. They come from all parts of the world. Many speak little or no English. Some have suffered traumatic experiences before arriving at Yarl's Wood. Residents exhibit anxiety and distress as a result of their detention and uncertainty about their future.

16.2 The management and care of residents pose significant challenges for managers and staff at Yarl's Wood. These challenges are exacerbated the fact that their work is the subject of much negative public comment.

16.3 We found that the issues that most concerned residents were the handling of their immigration cases and the healthcare provided to them. Neither of these matters are within Serco's control, but they clearly have a significant bearing on the wellbeing of residents and their experience of being in Yarl's Wood.

16.4 We observed staff at work and saw the nature of their relationships with residents on many occasions at all times of the day and night. We talked freely with many staff, residents, and others with insight into life at the centre. We considered the prevalence of inappropriate behaviours and mistreatment of residents by staff, and how specific incidents and allegations had been managed.

16.5 Overall, we found the behaviour of staff towards residents and the relationships between staff and residents were good. Most staff appeared to be sympathetic to the concerns and needs of residents and to deal with them in a caring and supportive manner. However, some staff we encountered seemed cynical or disengaged from their work and lacked sensitivity or empathy in their dealings with residents.

16.6 Incidents of inappropriate and abusive behaviours and treatment of residents by staff have been well publicised. However, we do not believe there is a hidden or significant problem of serious misconduct or inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour by staff, nor that such behaviours are endemic at Yarl's Wood. We found that staff had a good understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and treatment of residents.

16.7 The challenges managers and staff face have increased in recent months as a result of the rise in numbers of TSFNOs and detainees with pre-existing mental health problems.

16.8 In November 2014 Serco was re-awarded the contract to operate Yarl's Wood for a further eight years. The bid for that contract envisaged residents of Yarl's Wood having greater independence and freedom to manage their own affairs. It led to Serco managers instigating a redundancy programme that significantly reduced the number of DCOs employed at Yarl's Wood and removed a tier of middle management and a deputy director post.

16.9 Notwithstanding the introduction of technological and other innovations aimed at relieving staff from some duties, we found that the staffing levels provided for in the new contract put staff under great pressure, and that the care of residents has to some extent been undermined and compromised. Above all, we were concerned to find that low staffing levels meant staff did not have enough time to engage with residents. We were also concerned that activities were being curtailed, residents were under-occupied and did not have adequate opportunities for meaningful activity.

16.10 The loss of management capacity under the new contract meant that certain functions, including strategic planning and staff appraisal, were neglected. This poses a risk to the good management and governance within the centre and to the care and wellbeing of residents.

16.11 Two separate incidents of serious and unusual disturbance took place at Yarl's Wood while we were conducting our investigations. Both incidents involved TSFNOs and one resulted in serious injury to a DCM. We believe these incidents highlight the increasing risks and pressures involved in running the centre and that the present reduction in staff has increased them.

16.12 We identified a number of further specific shortcomings that had an impact on the wellbeing of residents. They include the food offered to residents, residents' access to open space, the safeguarding arrangements and staff training.

16.13 The matters of concern we identify in this report and the risks they pose for the wellbeing of residents should be tackled urgently. Managers must devise a comprehensive

plan of action. That delivery of that plan will require some investment by Serco and determined and visible leadership.

Team biographies

Kate Lampard CBE

Kate Lampard spent 13 years in practice as a barrister before moving into the public sector where she held a number of non-executive appointments. She now undertakes investigation and consultancy work related to management and service arrangements and their effectiveness. Kate worked on a lessons learnt report for the Secretary of State for Health arising from the publication of the Jimmy Savile investigations.

Kate has previously been the chair of the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority, vice chair of the South of England Strategic Health Authority and a non-executive director and vice chair of the Financial Ombudsman Service Limited. She is a trustee of the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

Ed Marsden

Ed has a clinical background in general and psychiatric nursing and NHS management. He has worked for the National Audit Office, the Department of Health and the West Kent Health Authority where he was director of performance management. He combines his responsibilities as Verita's managing partner with an active role in leading complex consultancy. He worked with Kate Lampard on a lessons learnt report for the Secretary of State for Health arising from the publication of the Jimmy Savile investigations. He has recently advised the Jersey government about the inquiry into historical child abuse. Ed is an associate of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit where he has carried out three assignments on immigration.

Investigation terms of reference

Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

Serco plc (Serco) which holds the contract to run Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre (Yarl's Wood) has commissioned an independent investigation into the culture and other issues relating to the treatment of residents at Yarl's Wood.

The investigation is asked to:

1. Review the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre specifically as they relate to the welfare and wellbeing of residents. Such review to include all levels of staff within the contract (front line, management and contract leadership), and Serco staff outside the contract to any extent that they may be relevant.
2. Such review to include:
 - a) the adequacy of operational safeguarding policies, management and practice including in relation to self-harm and the physical environment
 - b) the appropriateness of policies and practice affecting the privacy and dignity of residents.
 - c) the management of disabled residents, pregnant residents and residents with mental or other health issues and whether policies in this respect are appropriately and effectively applied
 - d) whether policies for preventing sexual misconduct or abuse between staff and residents are appropriate, understood, and effectively applied
 - e) the appropriateness of the staffing arrangements and in particular the gender balance among staff.
 - f) allegations and issues raised in complaints by residents and in media reports about the treatment of residents and the handling of such complaints.
 - g) whether comments and allegations made in media reports about the treatment of residents and inappropriate and disrespectful behaviours and attitudes on the part of staff are isolated or reflective of a wider inappropriate culture.

3. To consider whether the terms of the new contract recently awarded to Serco to manage Yarl's Wood are likely to have a bearing on the matters under investigation.
4. To make recommendations based on the findings of the investigation and in particular recommendations for actions that Serco should take to address any material weaknesses or issues identified.

The investigation **will not** include matters of detention and Home Office policy or mandated procedure, save only as to assess the manner of their application in practice where this has a material bearing on the culture of the institution.

The investigation is not to include transport and healthcare services and/or matters or other services where they are not provided by Serco staff and/or where Serco is not responsible for their provision but will look at the extent to which such services impact Serco's ability to deliver their services and how they work in practice.

Methodology

Kate Lampard and Ed Marsden will carry out the investigation supported by Chloe Taylor and, as necessary, a consultant from Verita. Transcribing of interviews will be carried out by Fiona Shipley Transcription Limited.

Wherever possible in the conduct of the investigation, interviews with staff shall reflect the principles contained in the current Serco divisional standard operating procedure (DSOP) providing employees with notice of any interview and the facility to be accompanied by a trade union representative or relevant work colleague.

Serco management will make themselves available for interview and will facilitate interviews with relevant Serco staff.

The investigation team will be able to draw on expert advice as necessary.

The investigation team will produce and agree a guide for interviewees taking account of the scope of the investigation.

Serco will publish these terms of reference and the main findings of the resulting report.

The investigation is not a disciplinary investigation nor an investigation into contract compliance, or civil or criminal liability. The investigation team will not share transcripts or other evidence with Serco, other than what it sets out in its written report. The report may raise matters that Serco would wish to investigate that could lead to disciplinary action.

The investigation team undertakes to inform Serco of any matters which come to its notice during the course of the investigation which it believes or knows to present a current and real risk of illegal activity or of harm to residents or staff at Yarl's Wood. But it is not the responsibility of the investigation team to identify and determine whether matters which come to their notice do or do not amount to illegal activity or present a risk of harm to others.

Support

The investigation team will be supported on a day to day basis throughout by James Wilkinson and the onsite contract director Norman Abusin and in regard to areas of concern beyond the scope of the investigation by the group general counsel.

Authority

The investigation team will have the authority of the Serco group general counsel to access areas of the contract site, subject to Home Office approval and the investigation team members and support staff (including relevant employees or contractors of Fiona Shipley Transcription Limited undertaking transcribing) having appropriate security clearances, interview any current employee or contractor and obtain original and copy documentation as is necessary to progress the investigation and to ensure it has integrity and sufficient probity and rigour.

Reporting

The investigation team will report into Rachel Lomax one of Serco's non-executive directors who chairs Serco's corporate responsibility and risk committee.

The team will offer regular updates on progress, including any key areas of concern.

The team will work as quickly as possible but its primary concern will be to undertake a thorough and rigorous investigation and to produce a reliable report.

David Eveleigh

Serco - Group General Counsel

April 2015

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HM Inspectorate of Prisons and the Independent Inspector of Borders and Immigration (December 2012) *The effectiveness and impact of immigration detention casework: A joint thematic review*.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2013) *Report on an unannounced inspection of Yarl's Wood IRC. 17-28 June 2013 30 September-1 October 2013*. HM Inspectorate of Prisons, London

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Home Office UK Border Agency and Department of Health (November 2009) *Every Child Matters, Change for Children, Statutory Guidance to the UK Border Agency on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.*

The All Party Group on Refugees and the All Party Group on Migration (2015) *Report of the Inquiry into the Use of Detention in the United Kingdom*

Tsangarides.N, (2012) *The Second Torture: The immigration detention of torture survivors.* Medical Justice, London.

UK Visas and Immigration (2014) Detention Service Orders

The Detention Centre Rules 2001. Statutory Instrument 2001 No 238 Immigration. HM Stationery Office. London

Serco and Yarl's Wood documents

Serco Group Standard Policies

Serco Code of Conduct

Serco Yarl's Wood bid executive summary

Serco Yarl's Wood contract extracts

Yarl's Wood IRC Centre Manager's Rules

Yarl's Wood IRC Post Orders

Yarl's Wood IRC training materials

Staff interview letter and guide for interviewees

Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

[Name]
[Address]
[Postcode]

[Date]

Dear [name]

Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

I have been appointed by the board of Serco plc (Serco) to conduct an independent investigation into the concerns raised in the media about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre. My co-investigator is Ed Marsden, the managing partner of Verita, a firm experienced in undertaking complex investigations. I have enclosed some information about us and the type of work we do.

Our terms of reference are attached to this letter. You will see that Serco is particularly interested in how the culture and practices at Yarl's Wood relate to the welfare and wellbeing of residents. In order to fulfil the terms of reference, Ed and I are conducting a range of interviews with residents, staff, experts, policy leads, practitioners and managers.

We would like to interview you and this has been arranged for [date] at [time]. The interview will be held at [location] in [room]. If this time is no longer convenient please call Chloe Taylor at the Verita office on 0207 494 5670.

The interview will be held in private and, subject to your agreement, will be recorded and transcribed to make sure nothing you say is lost. We will send you a copy of the transcript so that you can check that it is accurate. You are welcome to have a friend, colleague or union representative come with you to the interview. We would prefer it if you did not bring another interviewee to accompany you. A guidance note for interviewees is enclosed. Please do look through it.

We will not be sharing our interview transcripts with Serco but we may quote from your evidence in our written report. Our intention is to include names of people in our report where we think this is appropriate. Please let us know any reason why you believe your name should not be included in the report.

We will report our findings and any recommendations for improvement to the Serco board. It is for the board to decide what it will publish once it has received our report. We think you should work on the assumption that Serco will make the findings and outcome of our investigation public.

If you would like any further information about our work or the interview please call Ed Marsden or me on the same office number.

We look forward to meeting you shortly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Lampard".

Kate Lampard

Enclosures: Team biographies
Terms of reference
Guide for interviewees

Guide for interviewees

The purpose of the independent investigation is to investigate concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre.

1. The investigation team comprises Kate Lampard and Ed Marsden. All questions about the investigation and any communication to the investigation team should in the first instance be addressed to Chloe Taylor at the address and contact numbers at the bottom of this letter.
2. The investigation will be held in private. The record of interview proceedings will be strictly confidential except to the extent that extracts may be included in the report(s) submitted to and published by the commissioning body, that is, Serco plc.
3. The investigation team will invite interviewees to give evidence on a voluntary basis. Some interviewees may wish to give evidence in person, other individuals may wish to submit a written statement of evidence or to rely upon evidence previously given, but this is at their discretion.
4. The proceedings will be informal and interviewees may bring with them a friend or relative, a member of a trade union, lawyer (although this would not be in a legal capacity) or any other person they wish to accompany them. They may not attend with a fellow interviewee unless agreed with the investigation team in advance.
5. All interviewees and persons accompanying them will be expected to keep confidential all information disclosed to them. The investigation team may, at their discretion, exclude any person from any interview session should this appear to them to be desirable for the conduct of the investigation.
6. Interviewees may refer to records or other documentation should they think this necessary in order to answer questions. Interviewees may also provide to the team any relevant documents in their possession.
7. A transcript will be taken of the oral evidence given by each interviewee, with a copy being sent to the interviewee for confirmation or amendment if necessary. The transcript will be subject to the same undertaking of confidentiality referred to in paragraph 4 above.

8. Documentary material, and evidence (oral and/or written), submitted to the investigation will be kept confidential, except to the extent that it is disclosed in the report(s) or is used in the handling of the report's publication.

9. The investigation team will seek out documentary and other material that it considers will assist in fulfilling the terms of reference. This may include the collection and analysis of contemporaneous records and reports and assistance from experts or professional advisors.

10. The investigation team has formed no view, provisional or otherwise, as to whether it is necessary to make any criticism of any individual or organisation. Should any points of potential criticism arise, the person or organisation concerned will be informed of them, either orally, when they give evidence, or in writing. They will also be given an opportunity to comment on the potential criticism before the investigators reach a conclusion on it. Before receiving written notice of the detail of any potential criticism, the recipient may be required to give an undertaking to keep the written notice and the information contained in it confidential, except for the purpose of taking advice or preparing a response.

11. Representations on various aspects of the investigation, including on any draft recommendations, may be invited from or made by relevant statutory and voluntary organisations, professionals and other interested parties.

12. Any other person who feels they may have something useful to contribute to the investigation may provide a written submission or ask to meet with the investigation team.

13. The investigation team may make such amendments to this procedure as appear to be necessary. Should any such amendment be made, the investigators will endeavour to notify those affected as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Verita
53 Frith Street
London, W1D 4SN

Office: 020 7494 5670
Fax: 020 7734 9325
Email: chloetaylor@verita.net

Resident interview letter

**Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood
immigration removal centre**

[Name]
Yarl's Wood IRC
Twinwoods Business Park
Thurleigh Road
Milton Ernest
Bedford
MK44 1FD

11 June 2015

Dear [Name]

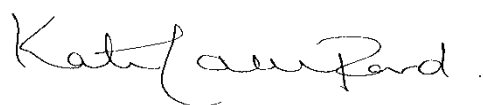
**Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal
centre**

I am doing a piece of work for Serco about residents' experiences of Yarl's Wood. I would like to invite you to come to a meeting with me and my colleagues Ed Marsden and Chloe Taylor on **Wednesday 17 June** at [time], to tell us more about how you have been looked after in the centre.

We will take a note of what we learn from the group and Serco staff will not be present at the meeting. Tea and coffee will be available.

We hope you will be able to join us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Lampard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'K' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kate Lampard

Interview list

Kiki Roberts, Rt Hon Keith Vaz's office
 Hindpal Singh Bhui, inspection team leader, HM Inspectorate of Prisons
 Natasha Walter, Women for Refugee Women
 Gemma Lousley, Women for Refugee Women
 Marchu Girma, Women for Refugee Women
 Sophie Radice, Women for Refugee Women
 Emma Mlotshwa, co-ordinator, Medical Justice
 Theresa Schleicher, casework manager, Medical Justice
 Kris Harris, policy and research, Medical Justice
 Mark Townsend, home affairs editor, The Observer
 Mary Bosworth, professor of criminology, University of Oxford
 Alice Gerlach, University of Oxford
 Alan Costello, regional officer, GMB
 Mary Coussey, chair, Yarl's Wood independent monitoring board
 Clare Checksfield, director, returns, Home Office
 Karen Abdel-Hady, head of detention operations, Home Office
 Alan Gibson, head of detention operations, Home Office
 Jenny Myers, independent chair, Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children's Board
 Councillor Louise King, Bedford Borough Council
 Jeanette Hall, HM Inspectorate of Prisons
 Colin Carroll, HM Inspectorate of Prisons
 Harriet Wistrich, solicitor, Birnberg Peirce
 Sarah Cox, editor, Bedfordshire on Sunday
 Ali McGinley, Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees
 Jane Leech, former chair, Yarl's Wood IMB
 Richard Fuller MP, Bedford and Kempston Constituency
 Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP, North East Bedfordshire Constituency
 Kevin Crompton, director of child and adult services, Bedford Borough Council
 Jacqueline Gray, service manager, scrutiny and member support, Bedford Borough Council
 Kate Walker, assistant director of child and adult services, Bedford Borough Council
 Jan Fooks-Bale, inspector, CQC
 Alan Stannard, account director, Home Office
 Professor Cornelius Katona, medical director, Helen Bamber Foundation

Yarl's Wood Befrienders

Heather Jones, former chair coordinator, Yarl's Wood Befrienders

Fiona Quaynor, immigration manager

Gillian Kelly, consultant nurse within women's secure services, West London Mental Health NHS Trust

Noel Finn, former mental health nurse at Yarl's Wood

Christine Wyld, Hirschurch

Donna John, project manager for the international resettlement team, Hibiscus

Adrienne Darragh, director, Hibiscus

Stephen Shaw, lead, *Review into the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons*

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP, shadow home secretary

Dan Smith, head of detained asylum casework, Home Office

Matthew Brady, SEO team leader, Home Office

Lynsay Fisher, case worker, Home Office

James Beer, case worker, Home Office

Serco staff

Central office

Rupert Soames, chief executive

Charles Carr, communications manager

Ray Duckworth, transition director (two interviews)

Davie Tanner, bid director

James Thorburn, former managing director, home affairs

Wyn Jones, director of custodial operations

Carol Butler, corporate investigations manager

Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

Norman Abusin, centre manager (two interviews)

Stacey Keegan, AD operations (three interviews)

Lisa Hooper, AD governance (two interviews)

██████████, security analyst

██████████, welfare officer
██████████, contract administrator
██████████, catering manager
██████████, head of cleaning
██████████, acting training manager
██████████, religious affairs
██████████, DCM governance (two interviews)
██████████, DCM and disability liaison officer
██████████, DCM and pregnancy liaison officer
██████████, DCM
██████████, DCM
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Residents

Three focus groups (approximately 40 residents in total)
A further group of 12 residents who asked to speak with us

HMP Bronzefield

Charlotte Pattison-Rideout, director
Chris Purkess, deputy director
Wendy Bayley, head of reducing reoffending
Kemi Oyemade, head of healthcare
Tanvir Hynes, head of learning and skills

Nathan Sawford, community links manager

Dave Hookway, regimes manager

Sally King, performance manager

Vicky Robinson, head of security

Colnbrook immigration removal centre

Paul Morrison, centre manager

Aaron Woodward, head of residence

Sonia Sahni, immigration area manager

Stella Simpson, head of healthcare operations

Dungavel House immigration removal centre

John McClure, centre manager

Sarah Lynch, senior manager

Correspondence with Channel 4 news²⁵

Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

Job Rabkin
Commissioning Editor, Investigations
Channel 4 News
ITN
200 Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8XZ

17 March 2015

Dear Mr Rabkin

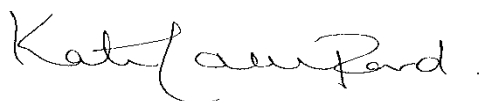
As you may know, I have been appointed by the board of Serco plc (Serco) to conduct an independent investigation into the concerns raised about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre in the Channel 4 news reports on 2 and 3 March 2015. Ed Marsden, managing partner of Verita, is my co-investigator.

I have suggested to Serco that before the terms of reference are finalised I wanted to consult a small number of people and organisations about the focus of my investigation. With this in mind, Ed and I would welcome the opportunity to talk to you.

If you would like to meet perhaps someone in your office could contact Chloe Taylor at Verita. Her contact details are at the bottom of this letter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Kate Lampard

²⁵ Channel 4 News gave permission for their letter to be published on 30 November 2015.

Private and confidential

Kate Lampard
c/o Verita
53 Frith Street
London W1D 4SN

Wednesday, March 25th

Dear Ms Lampard,

Thank you for your letter of the 17th of March requesting a meeting with ITN to discuss your investigation.

Serco, which has hired you to carry out this investigation, has already written to us, firstly through their solicitors Schillings and subsequently in a letter dated March 12th from Trevor Brading, the Head of Corporate Investigations.

On both occasions Serco has requested that ITN hand over all unedited footage. ITN has made it clear that you would need to seek a court production order before we would make any such footage available.

It is ITN's policy to require a court order for disclosure of unbroadcast material in order to protect our independence and neutrality.

This policy applies whoever is making the request, whether the police, defence lawyers or from an inquiry such as this.

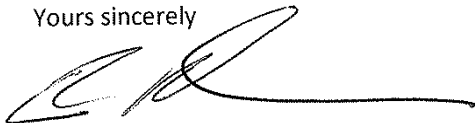
We also have a duty to protect our journalistic sources.

All the information we are able to disclose without a court order was contained in our two reports which you will be aware are already in the public domain and are available on the Channel 4 News website.

As ITN informed Schillings on the 28th of February, we are confident that our investigation was conducted in accordance with all Ofcom rules and regulations, Channel 4's guidelines and all aspects of law.

Thank you once again for contacting us and we wish you all the best with your inquiry in these important public interest matters.

Yours sincerely



Ed Fraser
Managing Editor
Channel 4 News

Independent investigation into concerns about Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre

Ed Fraser
Managing Editor
Channel 4 News
ITN
200 Gray's Inn Road
London
WC1X 8XZ

31 March 2015

Dear Mr Fraser

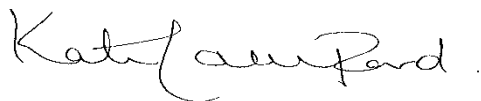
Thank you for your letter of 25 March 2015 responding to mine of 17 March 2015.

In your letter you explain that Serco and their lawyers have previously written to you to ask ITN to hand over unedited footage taken at Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre. You explain why ITN is not prepared to accede to that request without a court order.

I wish to clarify however that while my investigation into Yarl's Wood has been commissioned by Serco, it is an independent investigation, and Ed Marsden and I are determining and managing the investigation process entirely independently of Serco. It was on this basis that I wrote to you on 17 March. In that letter I asked simply for an opportunity to meet relevant members of the team that recently reported on Yarl's Wood. Such a meeting would be a useful way for me and Ed Marsden to understand more about the culture at Yarl's Wood and the events and allegations that have given cause for concern. I believe that it would assist us in getting to the bottom of matters and in coming to appropriate conclusions. I should therefore be most grateful if ITN would reconsider whether such a meeting could take place.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Lampard'.

Kate Lampard

Summary of issues, incidents, allegations and comment contained in Channel 4 film

Issues

1. Attitudes of staff

[nb. we have not been able to investigate and come to our own findings on these alleged comments and attitudes of staff]

“they’re all slashing their wrists apparently. Let then slash their wrists.” “Its attention seeking”

“You know what... They are all the fucking same. They’re all bastards.” (Footage repeated later - see below)

“They’re animals. They’re beasties. They’re all animals. They’re caged animals. Right? Take a stick in with you and beat them up.” (C4 say this was said by a member of the Serco management team)

“Should’ve fucking headbutted the bitch. Huh? Headbutt the bitch” (footage repeated later - see below)

“Some of those women in there are horrible. They are really, really horrible. They’re evil. Yeah? There’s a lot of them that are really nice but some of them, these black women, they’re fucking horrible mate.”

Female officer: “They’re all bastards. I don’t like any of them. This one jumped over the stairs” (About Esther)

“They take their clothes off, right? Not normally Jamaicans but it’s a very common thing with African ladies.” “They’re never slim and petite and pretty”

The film says some of the most aggressive language from staff is directed to those in Kingfisher segregation unit, after a resident attempted to assault a member of staff -

“What’s that bitch in there for? What is she in there for?” “Should’ve fucking headbutted the bitch. Headbutt the bitch, I’d beat her up.”

“I allegedly walked into somebody’s room without knocking. I had my disciplinary just now” “...So look out. How about I just like tits. Sorry. I’m addicted to the viewing of tits. No you won’t be, because some of the tits you see, you’ll never want to see them again. Shit bag. I never saw fuck all.”

The film refers to the fact that Yarl’s Wood houses both TSFNOs and asylum seekers but staff view all residents the same: *“Do you know what, they are all the fucking same. They’re all bastards. Like one bad apple affects all the others doesn’t it?”*

An officer guarding two women in segregation for drug taking says he asked them to write down the names of their mothers - *“When they were in Kingfisher, I was talking to them both and I gave them both a piece of paper... I said, write your mam’s name and address down... where you two fuckers are going, no doubt you’re going to kill yourself and I need to know your next of kin.”*

Ex-resident Esther Azigwe filmed saying that in Yarl’s Wood she felt like she was a caged animal. She complains that felt humiliated, she was counted every morning and felt like a prisoner. The commentary says that Esther was already struggling with depression when she entered Yarl’s Wood and she deteriorated badly while she was there.

2. Allegations of self-harm

A FOI request showed that in 2011 there was only 1 self-harm incident requiring medical treatment, in 2013 this had risen to 74 incidents.

Female - *“They are all slashing their wrists apparently. Let them slash their wrists.”*
“Why would anyone slash their wrists, I don’t understand” “It’s attention-seeking.”

3. Mental health while detained

Esther Azigwe left Yarl's Wood in January 2015. She is from Ghana and was a victim of sexual violence before fleeing to the UK. She felt like a prisoner at Yarl's Wood. Esther told the C4 film her mental health deteriorated while in Yarl's Wood.

C4 film presenter - *"humiliation is just one of abiding memories of Yarl's Wood for Esther Azigwe."*

Esther - *"In Yarl's Wood I did feel like I was an animal...I did feel also that I was a prisoner."*

4. Safety of residents

Serco have confirmed three incidents have taken place of residents jumping from the stairwell. They say thorough reviews took place to prevent those women further self-harming, but have decided nets or barriers would be ineffective in preventing further incidents. In the film the ex-resident Esther talks about the incident involving her when she jumped after officers came to try to remove her. The film also describes an incident in which a Chinese resident *"the longest serving detainee"* who had been there two years decided to jump into the stairwell. She ended up in hospital. She broke her back. She had to use a wheel chair and was released.

The film shows the stairwell where incidents are alleged to have taken place - it has a large red geometric patterned painting pinned to the wall above it.

5. Allegations of an ineffective healthcare system

The C4 film - *"Esther Azigwe told us medical staff routinely treat detainees with scepticism."* Esther says on film that staff accuse detainees of lying about their health because of their immigration status.

6. Detention of pregnant women

The film says the detention of pregnant women remains controversial. The film says *“there are strict protocols around dealing with pregnant women, and no evidence they have been broken here”*.

The film describes the difficulty of separating couples when the woman is pregnant as they cannot use any force on her. A male officer said *“And we couldn’t use force on her, so we couldn’t get him. Just didn’t want to move. They couldn’t bloody move him and they got him on the floor, and it was just awful.”*

The film says less than five per cent of pregnant women held at Yarl’s Wood go on to be deported.

7. Detention of elderly people

Detaining elderly people is meant to take place only in exceptional circumstances. There is comment about the detention of an 85 year old and staff express their shock and disquiet about this - *“I don’t get where immigration get off detaining people like that ... It’s sick”*

8. Allegations of sexual abuse

The film says there have been years of allegations of sexual abuse inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees. It reports that allegations of male members of staff walking into residents’ rooms unannounced surfaced at the beginning of the year.

9. Reduction in staff numbers.

The film comments on the fact that Home Office cost cutting means 68 staff posts have been scrapped. Staff are heard referring to the fact that this leaves them unable to fulfil their *“duty of care”*.

Incidents:

1. A pregnant woman [referred to as Anna] collapsed in the dining room. She was bleeding and taken to hospital. *"The technical thing is that no further concerns were raised"*. The next day she called the alarm in her room (Dove 96). Staff in the control room did not know if she was still pregnant. After she rang the bell she went to the healthcare suite at 8am. The film says *"Serco staff record that she was refusing to wait her turn and was spoken to for hitting the alarm button"*. G4S say she was offered an appointment at 10.30am but declined. Film says that it was not until three hours after first arriving at the healthcare suite that staff called an ambulance, the woman was taken to hospital where it was found she had lost the baby. G4S staff said the standard of clinical care she was given was excellent.
2. Esther Azigwe ran and jumped off the stairwell when they tried to move her from Yarl's Wood.

Female officer - *"I don't like any of them. This one jumped over the stairs. What's her name? Esther. Esther jumped? Why did she jump off the stairs? Because she didn't want to go on a charter flight."*

3. Another woman from China who was at Yarl's Wood for two years jumped from the stairwell. She ended up in hospital and broke her back.

Male - *"She had to be in a wheelchair, so they decided that she got released. You've got to be in quite a bad way to jump, haven't you?"*

4. Taking people to the Royal Courts of Justice in their underwear.

A member of staff says that taking their clothes off is common among the African population. *"They're never slim and petite and pretty."*

5. Use of illicit substances - two residents were smoking a legal high called Spice so two ambulances had to be called. The offenders also spent time in the Kingfisher segregation unit. The film says staff seem unsurprised by the breach in security. One is heard saying *"they get in easy don't they?"* "Yeah" The film reports that Serco say Class A drugs have only be found at Yarl's Wood once in the past 12 months.