

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

### CLUSTER: Avon Somerset and Gloucestershire

TIMETABLE	DATE
Date of inspection	2-11 March 2020
Report published	1 July 2020
Action plan submitted	

Rec. no	Recommendation	Accepted / Rejected	Response / action taken or planned	Action owner	Target date	Update
5.1	<b>Main recommendations</b> Detainees in court custody should have their cases prioritised according to their needs and these should be heard promptly. The reasons for delays should be understood and addressed. (1.27)	Accepted	<p>The listing of cases is a judicial function, however HMCTS &amp; GEOAmey work with the judiciary in order to prioritise hearings involving detainees where possible.</p> <p>HMCTS will continue to liaise with GEOAmey, with regular stakeholder engagement events to review sitting schedules. HMCTS are currently working with CPS and Avon, Somerset and Gloucestershire Constabularies to resolve issues with Papers that cause delays and prevent defence advocates taking instructions.</p> <p>GEOAmey will ensure they highlight the requirement for detainee priority listings in order to reduce, where possible the time detainees spend in custody and managers will confirm the process for raising issues at the Team Information Board (TIB) or other relevant joint HMCTS meeting, providing evidence that cases are being prioritised.</p> <p>Daily cross agency dialogue will take place to discuss the order of the list, with a view to giving priority to youths, female &amp; adult detainees.</p>	HMCTS Ops /PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

			<p>When a delay occurs, the GEOAmeY Court Custody Manager will raise this as an issue at the following day's team information meeting as well as escalating through the GEOAmeY management chain to ensure any significant concerns are highlighted to HMCTS and PECS, particularly relating to children and vulnerable detainees.</p> <p>HMCTS will continue this work with Serco as court custody provider, following implementation of the PECS Generation 4 contract on 29 Aug 2020.</p>			
5.2	<p><b>Main recommendations</b> Handcuffs should only be used on detainees if this is proportionate and justified by an assessment of the risk. (1.28)</p>	Accepted	<p>Under the existing contract, GEOAmeY manage the use of restraints as a standard approach set out in standard operating procedure (SOP) 059. The SOP dictates the level of handcuffing required by areas and was introduced to reduce the risk of escapes.</p> <p>GEOAmeY have recently introduced an individual risk-based approach to handcuffing to support social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in line with the changes that will be introduced under the Generation 4 contract which is due to commence at the end of August 2020, whereby the use of restraints will be based on individual risk assessments. This will ensure that restraints are only applied when necessary whilst safety and security is maintained.</p> <p>GEOAmeY managers and PECS Contract Delivery Managers (CDMs) will carry out dip tests during court visits,</p>	PECS suppliers	30 Sept 2020	

			<p>providing advice and feedback to staff whilst the transition is embedded.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract and will operate an individual risk based approach to cuffing. PECS will continue to monitor the use of handcuffing procedures to ensure it remains compliant with the Generation 4 Contract and wider HMPPS security policies.</p>			
5.3	<p><b>Main recommendations</b></p> <p>Conditions across custody facilities should be improved. In particular, court custody cells should be of an adequate size and properly cleaned. The temperature in cells should be appropriate, they should be free of damp and have access to natural light. (1.29)</p>	Partially accepted	<p>Our buildings vary in age and size. Where we have been able to, we have increased and improved custody facilities but these opportunities are limited due to listed status and the building footprint.</p> <p>Cleaning is a standard agenda item on the weekly Check and Test audit conducted by GEOAmev and HMCTS staff. Regular and detailed Facilities Management audits take place and any issues escalated from the weekly check and test are focused on at the FM Audits and they are conducted more often until the issue is resolved</p> <p>The HMCTS/PECS temperature protocol is followed at all sites to identify, monitor and actions issues arising.</p> <p>Issues with damp in Taunton Crown Court cells are being addressed as part of a wider project.</p> <p>In response to HMIP physical facilities feedback, an action plan has been created to ensure corrective action.</p>	HMCTS (Property)		

			<p>Progress will be reviewed in all checkpoint meetings</p> <p>HMCTS will continue to work with Serco as court custody provider, following implementation of the PECS Generation 4 contract on 29 Aug 2020.</p>			
5.4	<p><b>Leadership, strategy and planning</b></p> <p>The relationships and communication between operational HMCTS and GEOAmeY staff should be improved to ensure a consistent focus on delivering good outcomes for detainees. (2.13)</p>	Accepted	<p>Daily Team Information Meetings take place between GEOAmeY and HMCTS staff. The purpose of this meeting is to identify any potential issues arising and to set up an effective communication channel for the day. Further instructions have been shared across HMCTS staff to ensure they take the lead in ensuring the required weekly test &amp; check audits take place.</p> <p>A reminder has been issued to ensure the access log is always completed when HMCTS managers attend the cell complex and that they do so on a regular basis</p> <p>HMCTS leaders work collaboratively with GEOAmeY and all agencies who have involvement with detainees via the Avon, Somerset, Gloucestershire and North Wiltshire PECS Stakeholder Group. They meet quarterly to share information and improve the service for persons in custody. The meeting has a Crown Court Judge as judicial liaison which has improved the communication and input from the judiciary.</p> <p>HMCTS will continue to work with Serco as court custody provider, following implementation of the PECS Generation 4 contract on 29 Aug 2020.</p>	HMCTS / PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

<b>5.5</b>	<b>Leadership, strategy and planning</b> The approach to delivering continuing training and development activity to custody staff should be improved to ensure they understand what is required of them and can implement their learning where necessary, notably in safeguarding and mental health awareness. (2.14)	Accepted	<p>All new GEOAmeY officers attend a 28-day comprehensive initial training course (ITC) which includes mental health and safeguarding awareness followed by a minimum of 1-week shadowing with a nominated coach/mentor. Officers also receive refresher training for first aid, control and restraint, MMPR &amp; mental health awareness.</p> <p>In order to enhance staff's knowledge and understanding of mental health, GEOAmeY are working closely with the Charity MIND. In July 2020 GEOAmeY launched a new initiative that will put in place local 'champions' who will be the subject matter experts having received enhanced mental health training. These champions will be based within court clusters and will be available to offer support &amp; guidance as a contact point for Officers.</p> <p>Champions will be able to liaise with MIND if they have any questions they feel unable to answer and will receive annual refresher training to ensure their knowledge remains current.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract. All new Serco officers attend an Initial Training Course (ITC) which includes mental health awareness and Safeguarding Level 2 covering both adults and children. Level 3 must be completed by all managers in courts and vehicle bases. In addition, Serco offer online courses to all new PCOs in child and sexual exploitation and suicide and self-harm.</p>	PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

			<p>To supplement classroom based learning, Serco use a Virtual Reality (VR) solution within their ITCs. VR enables the new employee to have sight of and experience first-hand what working in the PECS environment looks and feels like whilst in a training environment.</p> <p>Aside from exposing new employees to the environment, including exploring their senses with sounds etc Serco also focus very much on empathy, of which training is delivered in two parts.</p> <p>One element is around the behaviours expected from new officers whereby reactions can be tested using scenarios such as de-escalation, managing self-harm and mental health as examples.</p> <p>The second element is experiencing the journey of a custody from remand in court to arriving at prison and how they may be thinking and feeling, promoting empathy. It is a very effective way to promote positive behaviours in officers to provide the very best care to all custodies during their stay.</p>			
5.6	<b>Leadership, strategy and planning</b> HMCTS should develop a safeguarding policy, and all staff should be made aware of safeguarding procedures and referral mechanisms for	Accepted	HMCTS is conducting a formal review of all of its processes and responsibilities that relate to safeguarding. The review will recommend how we might best meet the needs of our users and support the development of an HMCTS safeguarding policy.	HMCTS HQ		

	children and vulnerable adults at risk. (2.15)		The PECS providers have local Standard Operating Procedures in place to support safeguarding for custodies.			
<b>5.7</b>	<b>Individual rights</b> All detainees in court custody should be informed of their rights in an appropriate language and format that they understand. (3.17)	Accepted	<p>All detainees coming into GEOAmey care are advised and given a copy of their rights, English versions placed in every cell prior to arrival.</p> <p>Other languages are also available and will be printed off as required. GEOAmey have a copy of the world flags poster to assist in identifying their language</p> <p>Staff will be reminded to ensure that all detainees are asked if they need any assistance to read and/or understand their rights. If needs are identified, the custody staff will meet these needs.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract on 18 August.</p> <p>All detainees who come into the care of Serco will be advised of their status and rights and a copy of "Do You Know Your Rights?" leaflet placed in every cell.</p> <p>Where a custody is unable to understand English they will be directed to the Flags of the World poster to identify their preferred language. The Court Custody Manager (CCM) will print off the relevant Detainee Rights and Complaints Form from the directory in the SQMS and hand this to the detainee.</p>	PECS suppliers	30 Sept 2020	

			<p>In the event that a non-English speaking custody is unable to read, or has other queries, the CCM will use the telephone translation service and conduct an interview in accordance with the instructions specified in SOP 058 Detainee Welfare Interpretation Service.</p> <p>If an English speaking custody is unable to read, the contents of the form will be read and explained to them.</p> <p>The act of informing custodies of their rights and their response to it, will be recorded as part of the Reception process. Where a translator is required, this will be recorded in the PMP.</p> <p>Serco escort officers will also phone ahead to the receiving Court to advise where there is a need for a translated version of the "Detainee, Child or Young Persons Rights" Leaflets to ensure that it is printed ahead of the custody arriving at court, or whether translation services may be required.</p>			
<b>5.8</b>	<b>Individual rights</b> HMCTS should ensure that there are sufficient interview rooms at each court and that they are soundproofed to ensure confidentiality. (3.18)	Partially accepted	<p>All rooms are sufficiently soundproofed and used to maximum capacity.</p> <p>Our buildings vary in age and size. Where we have been able to, we have increased and improved custody facilities but these opportunities are limited due to listed status and the building footprint.</p>	HMCTS (Property)		
<b>5.9</b>	<b>Treatment and conditions</b> Women and children should be transported	Accepted	Where reasonably and practical, GEOAmey make best endeavours to transport women and children separately from adult men. However, the current	PECS suppliers	31 Oct 2020	



	separately from adult men. (4.20)		<p>contract does permit the use of escort vehicles with a separation capability, which allows different types of detainees (male/female, adult/young people) to be carried on the same vehicle. The separation screen ensures these groups do not come into contact during the journey and additionally provides sound attenuation.</p> <p>The Generation 4 contract is designed to reduce the occasions when women and children will be required to be transported with adult men.</p> <p>A custody officer is always present in the cell area of the vehicle to ensure support and supervision.</p>			
5.10	<p><b>Treatment and conditions</b></p> <p>Personal information about detainees, including names, should not be clearly visible in or from areas to which detainees and non-staff visitors have access. (4.21)</p>	Accept	<p>Whiteboards should not contain any personal information. Confidential information must be controlled in a secure environment that cannot be accessed or viewed by custodies. SOP 108 relates to the use of wipe boards within the court custody setting and sets out the requirements of the court custody staff when completing the board.</p> <p>CCMs and PECS CDMs will monitor the adherence to this SOP.</p> <p>Serco: All personal data is securely stored on the SER's 4 / CORA systems, this is protected by individual log in details.</p> <p>The Information on the boards in the custody areas, indicates surname only. Under the definitions set by the Information Commissioners Office, i.e.</p>	PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

			that the individual must be identified or identifiable either directly or indirectly from one or more identifiers or from factors specific to the individual, the surname alone would not be an identifier. The information on the boards does not form part of our automated data storage, nor part of a manual filing system, it is wiped at the end of the day. Serco is happy to review this practice following a view from HMIP on whether they will accept continuing to use surname, or move to initials, which would remove the 'identifiable' even further.			
5.11	<b>Treatment and conditions</b> Staff should use telephone interpreting services whenever necessary to check on the welfare, risk management and understanding of non-English speaking detainees. (4.22)	Accepted	<p>All GEOAmeY officers have the ability to access interpreting services for detainees and instructions for use are set out in the standard operating procedures.</p> <p>GEOAmeY recognise that this service is often underutilised and are taking steps to encourage staff to make more effective use of the service. The service has recently featured in the 'WOU', a weekly notice informing all staff of the importance and value of this service including a guide of when and how to use the service.</p> <p>Cordless telephones have been purchased to make the service more accessible and a monthly report on each courts use is provided to the GEOAmeY Managers so as they can monitor uptake.</p> <p>GEOAmeY Managers and CDMs will continue to promote the service and to challenge staff where it is noted that the service is not being effectively utilised.</p>	PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

			<p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract. All Serco officers have the ability to access interpreting services for detainees and instructions for use are set out in the standard operating procedures. In the event that the detainee is unable to read, or has other queries, then the Court Custody Manager will contact the telephone translation service and conduct an interview in accordance with the instructions in SOP 058 Detainee Welfare Interpretation Service. Where circumstances dictate, such as welfare checks and medical consultations or emergencies for example officers can use the telephone service in the detainee's cell.</p> <p>PECS CDMs will also review the uptake.</p>			
5.12	<p><b>Treatment and conditions</b></p> <p>The individual needs of children transported to, and held in, court custody should be understood and consistently met. Custody staff who work with children should receive specific training, including in the use of MMPR techniques. (4.23)</p>	Accepted	<p>An enhanced level of care to all CYPs whilst in the care of GEOAme is being introduced in the Generation 4 contract. Officers will be trained to specifically care for CYPs and to recognise their additional emotional and physical needs.</p> <p>GEOAme have invested in a strategic partnership with the children's charity Barnardo's to help design and deliver bespoke training for all officers who work with children around building positive relationships and how the impact of trauma can affect the behaviour of CYPs, this will be in addition to safeguarding and child protection training.</p> <p>All CYPs will receive an enhanced care provision where officers will remain with them whilst at court engaging and</p>	PECS suppliers	28 February 2021	

			<p>interacting with them throughout their time at court. They will accompany them in the courtroom and ensure that they understand what is happening throughout the day.</p> <p>There will be boredom alleviation packs available at all courts, which will include age appropriate reading material, colouring materials, quiz's and board games.</p> <p>CYPs will not be routinely hand cuffed but rather hand cuffed upon a risk based approach. All officers will receive safeguarding training.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that COVID 19 is affecting the rollout of training which cannot be delivered at the planned rate because of the need for social distancing.</p> <p>Children will also not be searched unless there is a reason to suspect they may have something concealed, this would have to be approved by a court custody manager or officer in charge.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract. Serco have a specific recruitment and training process for staff who work with children and young people (C&amp;YP) made up of ECO's dedicated to C&amp;YP as well as Dual Badged staff who can work with both adults and children.</p> <p>These staff will be trained in MMPR techniques. Instructions and information for C&amp;YP have been made clearer and easier to understand. This includes an</p>			
--	--	--	---	--	--	--

			<p>Infotainment system for vehicles about what to expect next.</p> <p>Serco has worked closely with Cookham Wood, Feltham, Vinney Green and Oakhill to make sure information presented to C&amp;YP is accurate and easily understood.</p> <p>Serco are also working with Stem4 – a charity that helps C&amp;YP deal with anxiety, they are providing a bespoke version of the Clear Fear App which will be available to C&amp;YPs on a tablet and in card form.</p>			
5.13	<p><b>Safety</b></p> <p>The assessment of each detainee's risks and needs on arrival in custody should be carried out consistently. Cell checks should be carried out on time, should normally include interaction with the detainee and should be recorded accurately. (4.38)</p>	Accepted	<p>GEOAmey are responsible for the continuing care and safety of all detainees whilst in court custody. The Court Custody Manager or Officer in Charge must ensure that checks of all detainees in their custody are carried out to the standard required in the standard operating procedures and that all checks and interactions are recorded onto the EPER.</p> <p>GEOAmey Managers will brief and deliver training to staff in order to improve the quality of interaction with custodies and will conduct dip tests to quality assure the improvement.</p> <p>PECS CDMs will also carry out checks during their visits.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract.</p> <p>Designated officers are responsible for managing detainees held in cells,</p>	PECS suppliers	31 Dec 2020	

			<p>completing and recording observation checks whilst patrolling the area and answering cell call bells.</p> <p>A recorded check will be completed within every period of 30 minutes. Where a detainee is considered to be at risk of self-harm/suicide the frequency of checks will be increased.</p> <p>If considered suitable and after completion of a Cell Sharing Risk Assessment (CSRA) for both detainees that endorses the cell sharing, a detainee may be placed in a cell with another detainee of the same gender and age status.</p> <p>A record of all observation checks will be made on Serco's PMP system using the Court Operations Reporting Application (CORA) tablet. Each check will involve talking to the detainee/s to establish how they are as well as recording which of the activity codes in CORA is applicable.</p>			
5.14	<p><b>Safety</b></p> <p>Searching of detainees should be carried out effectively and consistently across all suites, in accordance with a policy which restricts searching to situations where it is clearly necessary. (4.39)</p>	Accepted	<p>The current GEOAmeY searching strategy included in SOP 061 was updated in 2015 in line with HMIP recommendations, however as a result of COVID, searching has currently moved to an individual risk based approach to support the government guidelines on social distancing and where necessary, PPE is used.</p> <p>For Generation 4, the searching strategy is currently under review. This review will include consideration of risk and frequency to ensure that searching is only carried out where necessary.</p>	PECS suppliers	30 Sept 2020	

			<p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract.</p> <p>All searching is based on risk and frequency to ensure that it is only carried out where necessary.</p> <p>On arrival into Serco's custody, detainees may be subject to a search based on an individual risk assessment.</p> <p>The assessment process is dynamic and based on information obtained from the PECS Move Platform, escort staff as well as any additional intelligence received about an individual.</p> <p>All off-bail detainees will be searched whereas those arriving from police stations or brought to court by another contractor will only be searched where an individual risk assessment deems this necessary.</p> <p>Children and Young People will not normally be searched unless risk information suggests otherwise.</p>			
5.15	<p><b>Use of Force</b></p> <p>The quality of individual statements accounting for the use of force against detainees and the quality assurance of use of force should be improved. Only approved use of force techniques should be used. (4.43)</p>	Accepted	<p>Following every incident of use of force every member of staff involved is required to complete a use of force report. Use of force reports are Quality Assured by an Area Business Manager. GEOAmev, as part of their assurance processes also review assurance checks on use of force paperwork as part of their base audit schedule.</p> <p>The PECS CDM will support the assurance process and will dip test a quantity of use of force paperwork during</p>	PECS/PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

			<p>the annual vehicle base audit and in turn will raise any assurance concerns with the appropriate business manager.</p> <p>A quarterly Use of Force Board Chaired by the Head of PECS, attended by senior representatives of GEOAmey will provide further assurance that use of force is effectively managed.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract.</p> <p>Following every incident of the use of force all members of staff involved will complete a Serco's Use of Force report.</p> <p>All statements completed by officers are quality checked by the court or vehicle depot manager before submission to the Operational Control Centre (OCC).</p> <p>All reports are then quality assured by a manager at the Incident Desk at the OCC and those which significantly fall below the expected standard are returned to local managers to be rewritten.</p> <p>A monthly review of all use of force incidents reported is conducted by Serco's Incident Manager and Health &amp; Safety Manager. Any concerns, learning points or best practice are feedback to the originating court or vehicle depot manager and member(s) of staff.</p> <p>Further assurance is provided through Serco's quarterly Use of Force review, conducted by a member of the Audit team who is also a C&amp;R instructor. A report is produced after every review with</p>			
--	--	--	---	--	--	--



			<p>actions assigned to owners where necessary and a RAG rating applied to recommendations.</p> <p>An annual audit schedule of vehicle bases also includes a review of Use of Force paperwork.</p> <p>All MMPR incidents involving the use of MMPR will be reviewed and investigated by Serco's MMPR Coordinator along with the C&amp;YP Operations and Safeguarding Manager.</p> <p>PECS CDMs provide assurance by dip testing a quantity of use of force paperwork during the Authority's annual vehicle base audit and in turn will raise any concerns with the appropriate Serco business manager.</p> <p>A quarterly Use of Force Board Chaired by the Head of PECS attended by senior representatives of Serco will provide further assurance.</p>			
<b>5.16</b>	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>All custody staff should receive annual first aid refreshers to maintain their skills. (4.57)</p>	Rejected	<p>GEOAmeY officers are trained in first aid at work and resuscitation and attend 2-day refresher training course every 3 years in line with current legislation; both GEOAmeY and PECS have internal processes in place to monitor this.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract.</p> <p>Serco officers are trained in first aid level 3 at work which is refreshed every 3 years in line with current legislation.</p>	PECS/PECS suppliers		
<b>5.17</b>	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>Person escort records should identify the</p>	Accepted	PECS and PECS contractors are working together to improve the quality of PERs.	PECS/PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

	detainees' health risks while maintaining confidentiality. (4.58)		<p>PECS issued a notice to contractors in April 2020, reinforcing the process that contractor staff should follow when they are found to have an incomplete PER. This includes checking the PER and highlighting missing mandatory fields to dispatching staff for correction at the point of handover as well as an escalation process should significant risks be missed.</p> <p>Contractors carry out a comprehensive PER review, producing a monthly consolidated report to highlight where PERs are not completed to the required standard. These failings are shared with the relevant prisons and the police in order to drive up the quality of information communicated.</p> <p>PER completion will be added as an agenda item to the regional PECS Stakeholder Meeting where poor completions will be discussed and challenged as necessary.</p>			
5.18	<p><b>Health</b></p> <p>Custody staff should have regular mental health and substance misuse awareness training. (4.59)</p>	Accepted	<p>Drugs and alcohol (including legal highs) and mental health awareness training is delivered to GEOAmeY officers as part of their initial training course. As well as this, staff are provided with refresher training every 3 years.</p> <p>In order to enhance staffs' knowledge and understanding of mental health, GEOAmeY are working closely with the Charity MIND. From July 2020 GEOAmeY are launching a new initiative that will put in place local 'champions' who will be the subject matter experts having received enhanced mental health</p>	PECS suppliers	31 Jan 2021	

			<p>training. These champions will be based within court clusters and will be available to offer support &amp; guidance as a contact point for Officers.</p> <p>Champions will be able to liaise with MIND if they have any questions they feel unable to answer. Champions will receive annual refresher training to ensure their knowledge remains current.</p> <p>Serco take over as the provider of custody services under the Generation 4 contract.</p> <p>Mental health training is provided on the ITC. In addition Serco have introduced Mental Health First Aid accredited by Mental Health England and aim to have 30% of the workforce fully qualified as champions to support staff and detainees to deal with mental health issues.</p>			
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Recommendations	
Accepted	
Accepted Subject to Resources/Partially Accepted	
Rejected	
<b>Total</b>	