

ACTION PLAN – Report on an inspection visit to court custody facilities.**CLUSTER: Staffordshire and West Mercia**

TIMETABLE	DATE
Date of inspection	19 February – 2 March 2024
Report published	29 April 2024
Action plan submitted	22 July 2024

Rec. no	Concern	Accepted / Rejected	Response / action taken or planned	Action owner	Update / target date for completion
	Priority Concerns				
1	Release processes were inconsistent and too often failed to inquire properly about detainees' personal circumstances to identify and address issues such as homelessness.	Accept	<p>GeoAmey have collated contact details for several national assistance agencies to be published and handed out to those being released. This has been presented to the Standard Operating Procedures Committee for review to add the updated release checklist.</p> <p>The Release checklist was redesigned in April 2024 to ensure the next steps for defendants and all the necessary actions are taken at the point of release.</p> <p>GeoAmey shall locally identify the best practice in the court cluster surrounding the release process for individuals and provide individualised support for defendant welfare. GeoAmey Regional Manager will ensure that this process is embedded.</p>	GeoAmey	Oct 24

2	<p>Those being discharged from prison at court had long waits for release.</p> <p>(Important possessions such as phones, house keys and bank cards were routinely left at the prison).</p>	Accept	<p>GeoAmey monitor all release authority delays and collate monthly data to identify and share with HMPPS sites that are not releasing within the one-hour time frame. The data will also be taken to the operational meetings between HMPPS, PECS & GeoAmey to drive performance and influence change.</p> <p>PECS issued a notice regarding "Supporting the Release Process" (NTC 683 2024) which provides an escalation route for delayed releases.</p> <p>PECS escalate to Prison Group Directors Offices if establishments fail to authorise release within the specific timescale.</p> <p>Prisons discharging prisoners to aligned courts do not routinely send all property if the prisoner is due to return. Prisoners attending out of area court are discharged to court with all their property. If the prisoner is released from court GeoAmey shall provide a travel warrant for the prisoner to return to the prison to collect their necessary property (such as phones, house keys and bankcards), this will include an onward travel warrant to their home address.</p>	GeoAmey, PECS	Nov 24
	Key Concerns				
3	<p>Too little was being done to understand and address the factors</p>	Accept	<p>Legal Advisers and Court clerks working on digital platforms support each other to prioritise results in custody courts and will seek to</p>	HMCTS	Nov 24

	that led to some detainees being held in court custody for longer than needed.		<p>ensure results from the courtroom are completed as speedily as is possible so that any delays in releasing detainees are kept to a minimum.</p> <p>PECS are developing enhanced reporting relating to overall performance at court and will be delivered to HMCTS. This will include delays from arrival at court to 1st appearance in the dock and subsequently the final dock appearance to discharge from court. GeoAmey, PECS and HMCTS shall routinely review the data to identify areas of improvement.</p> <p>GeoAmey will continue to provide key delay data identifying arrivals and departures to/from court, release authority and placement orders. This data will be shared with key Stakeholders monthly.</p> <p>HMCTS and GeoAmey to ensure collaborative working and effective communication is in place to sufficiently focus on outcomes for detainees.</p>	<p>PECS</p> <p>GeoAmey</p>	
4	The reception process at North Staffordshire Justice Centre was slow and some detainees waited too long in vehicles before alighting.	Accept	<p>GeoAmey Senior Managers attend each court custody suite monthly and complete management checks/corrective actions. Procedures are further assured by the Internal Audit process, PECS, and Lay Observers.</p> <p>A review of the reception arrival procedure will be completed at each</p>	GeoAmey	Nov 24

			court facility to determine which elements of the procedure would benefit from being conducted at the reception arrival area or at the cell to improve efficient processing of prisoners from vehicle to reception.		
5	Excessive routine searching of detainees, without any individual risk assessment, was often disproportionate.	Accept	<p>GeoAmey have a specific Standard Operating Procedure relating to searching.</p> <p>This is now under review with the Compliance Team with the intention to ensure risk-based searching.</p> <p>PECS are working with GeoAmey to ensure that the operating instructions clearly identify the need for an individual risk-based approach to searching. PECS will ensure that the communication of the revised procedures is robust throughout the operation and will conduct assurance checks to ensure compliance.</p>	<p>GeoAmey</p> <p>PECS</p>	<p>Oct 24</p> <p>Oct 24</p>
6	Telephone interpretation was not always used when required and staff therefore lacked information about some detainees' needs and welfare.	Accept	<p>The business took a thorough approach towards the use of Language Line in March 2024 and looked to ensure that all courts had the working equipment. Its usage is a mandatory requirement for non-English speaking prisoners to ensure that prisoners receive the correct support / treatment.</p> <p>Management Information relating to telephone interpreter services is provided by the PECS performance team. This data is reviewed and monitored at contract management boards.</p>	GeoAmey	Oct 24

7	<p>Detainees with mobility impairments often experienced long journeys to court and the available adaptations did not meet all needs.</p>	Accept	<p>Where possible adaptations are made to our sites to meet as many needs as practicable. In some instances, this is not achievable due to the age or construction of our cell's areas.</p> <p>PECS work with HMCTS to provide the best outcome for the detainee. Whilst journeys are impacted by the distance from source location to a DDA compliant courts, PECS utilise the flexibility of the contract to offer an alternative approach/location where possible.</p>	<p>HMCTS FM</p> <p>PECS</p>	Aug 24
8	<p>Too many cells were not clean enough and poorly decorated. Toilets often lacked hygienic dispensers for soap, toilet paper and towels.</p>	Accept	<p>The custody facilities will be cleaned to the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS) standards and will be maintained by daily cell inspections and the use of the cleaning schedules.</p> <p>HMCTS will ensure the custody facilities are clean, safe, and always well maintained. All defects will be logged with EQUANS helpdesk by HMCTS staff and escalate if necessary before it becomes an issue.</p> <p>Requests for decorating or missing equipment's should be raised with the Building Champion, by GeoAmey. Building Champion to escalate to local FM, to be added to the pipeline for future works when funding is available.</p>	<p>HMCTS FM</p> <p>HMCTS Ops</p>	Oct 24

			<p>Opening & Closing checks are completed each day which should identify non-conformance. Hygiene standards and toiletry products will be highlighted on the daily checks.</p> <p>Senior Court Custody Manager to monitor and action the quality on court visits through sampling in the cluster.</p> <p>GeoAmey shall utilise the cleaning communication book to highlight areas of concern relating to cleaning. This shall further be communicated to HMCTS and a review when the joint agency meeting is completed monthly.</p> <p>GeoAmey will ensure all court custody managers are briefed to ensure the need for timely reporting of defects to ensure any faults/failures to the fabric of the custody suite are expedited and addressed.</p>	GeoAmey	
9	Staff training in resuscitation skills did not take place frequently enough.	Rejected	GeoAmey are delivering to their regulatory requirements, that is mandatory with the governing body. This consists of a 3-year training programme.	GeoAmey	N/A

Recommendations	
Accepted	8
Accepted Subject to Resources/Partially Accepted	0
Rejected	1
Total	9