

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – HMIP REPORT 2025- COLNBROOK IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE

Concern Number	HMIP Concerns	Home Office Response to HMIP Concerns Including Action Already Taken / Proposed to Address Concerns	Expected Completion Date
1	<p>Priority concern</p> <p>The entry of illicit drugs had not yet been effectively addressed. The level of staff searching, and the introduction of new detection technologies had not kept pace with the manifest need.</p>	<p>Since concerns related to the ingress of illicit drugs were identified during a HMIP inspection of Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) in 2024, significant work has been undertaken across Heathrow IRCs to combat the issue. This resulted in an increase in the number of staff, resident, area, and visitor searches. This approach has been supported by the reintroduction of staff drug testing on both a random and intelligence led basis.</p> <p>As part of the response to the Harmondsworth report and in advance of this inspection, Mitie Care & Custody (Mitie C&C) have developed excellent working relationships and a collaborative approach with the Metropolitan Police Service. This means that Mitie C&C can respond to intelligence in a more joined up fashion.</p> <p>In addition, two mobile phone detector devices have been funded by the Home Office and were put into operation at the end of February 2025.</p> <p>To ensure that there is an ongoing focus on the issue, monthly Security Meetings have been adapted to include a summary of intelligence and discussions around the overall improvement of tasking and targeting.</p> <p>As part of the Centre’s overall approach to improving safety as a general principle for residents, staff, and stakeholders, the Head of Safer Communities and Violence Reduction is responsible for oversight of the Drug Prevention Strategy with support from the Safer Communities Manager, wider Senior Management Team (SMT), Security Team, Practice Plus Group (PPG) Healthcare Provider and a Home Office Specialist Security Team.</p>	31/10/2025
2	<p>Priority concern</p> <p>Policies and procedures to minimise the length of detention were not effective enough and</p>	<p>The Home Office is clear that decisions to detain, and subsequent decisions to maintain detention or release must be well-made, with systematic safeguards and support for the vulnerable. However, there will always be a balance to strike between issues of vulnerability and public protection considerations.</p>	31/12/2025

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	<p>too many people had been detained despite being vulnerable. The Rule 35 process was still not used when needed, including for those at risk of serious self-harm. Many people remained in detention solely because of a lack of bail accommodation.</p>	<p>The Detention Gatekeeper (DGK) consistently apply the Detention – General Instructions and Adults at Risk in immigration detention policy so that detention only takes place where there is a realistic prospect of return within a reasonable timescale.</p> <p>Where vulnerabilities are identified, the appropriateness of detention is balanced against any immigration control considerations on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>The Adults at Risk policy does not exempt vulnerable people from the possibility of detention, however vulnerable individuals will only be detained under immigration powers where those immigration control considerations or public-protection factors outweigh any risk factors in their case.</p> <p>Once a person is in detention, regular reviews are undertaken to ensure their detention remains lawful, appropriate and proportionate. Case Progression Panels continue to provide additional assurance and challenge on the progress of cases in detention, reinforcing the consideration of removability, vulnerability, and risk factors in decisions to maintain detention.</p> <p>Whilst panels are not a replacement for any part of the existing detention review process, they are vital in providing an internal independent check to it. With independent panel members now a permanent feature in panels, the panels aim is to review the appropriateness of continued detention for all cases that are detained under immigration provisions at 3-month intervals (or when additional scrutiny is required).</p> <p>Additional GP clinics are in place to address Detention Centre (DC) Rule 35 requests, and all DC Rule 35 (2) are now being discussed as part of Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting.</p>	

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		<p>A training package was developed by the Home Office Rule 35 Team to improve the standard of Rule 35 reports and is regularly being delivered to medical practitioners and other relevant healthcare staff.</p> <p>The package focuses on the process for preparing and considering reports, outlining expected standards and the key information required. The training addresses the requirement to complete a separate report for every concern identified under Rule 35 including where a person's health is likely to be injuriously affected by continued detention or where there is a suspicion of suicidal ideation.</p> <p>In addition, in March 2024 NHS England developed and circulated additional clinical guidance to improve the standard of Rule 35 reports.</p> <p>It is not the Home Office's responsibility to source a bail address for all residents. Releasing an individual to no fixed abode is a last resort once all available options have been explored and exhausted.</p>	
3	<p>Priority concern</p> <p>The prison-like design, poor ventilation, lack of opening windows and limited green space affected detainees' well-being. These issues were compounded by the fact that much of the physical environment was in need of repair, especially showers, toilets and sinks.</p> <p>(repeated concern)</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that the ventilation and Building Management Systems are an ongoing concern at both sites. This is currently part of a larger project of improvements managed by the Home Office and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Estates.</p> <p>The Home Office have commissioned facilities consultants who have visited the site to identify concerns. This analysis work is ongoing and estimated to be complete by June 2025 with an expectation that physical remedial works will commence later in 2025.</p> <p>A programme of works has been developed and agreed with the Home Office for the whole of Heathrow IRCs. The initial focus was on Harmondsworth IRC and as it nears its conclusion, the focus will be on addressing the issues identified at Colnbrook.</p>	31/03/2026

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		<p>A new social values lead has since taken up post and part of their focus will be on sustainability, green issues and softening the conditions across Heathrow IRC, where the physical design allows.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in the size of the onsite Facilities Management team as well as the introduction in April 2025 of a new Facilities Management system.</p> <p>These changes will ensure that repairs and general maintenance are tracked more closely, and issues responded to in a timelier fashion.</p>	
4	<p>Priority concern</p> <p>There was inconsistent management of residential units. Staff did not always have the confidence, capability or frontline management support to respond effectively to low-level poor behaviour by detainees.</p>	<p>Mitie C&C are committed to delivering increased staffing numbers across Heathrow IRCs as agreed with the Home Office, ensuring the best outcomes for residents.</p> <p>In recent months there has been a significant increase in frontline staffing numbers at both the Detainee Custody Officer (DCO) and DCO Manager (M) grades. This increase has meant the rapid recruitment, training and deploying of new officers.</p> <p>A revised initial training package as well as a week-long operational readiness course, which seeks to put the theory into practice in a controlled way, thus increasing confidence amongst inexperienced staff and capability, is now in place.</p> <p>Mitie C&C have also recruited a Manager for Operational Readiness who will focus on this area.</p>	31/10/2025
5	<p>Priority concern</p> <p>A shortage of staff meant that detainees waited too long for mental health support, including assessments and psychological interventions.</p>	<p>Additional Mental Health nurses are now in place with further additional nurses going through Security Clearance at present.</p> <p>Weekend working for Mental Health nurses has started to be rolled out in April 2025, this will help manage urgent referrals at the weekend.</p> <p>Mental Health Multi-disciplinary meetings are still taking place weekly with minutes.</p>	31/10/2025

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		Resident workshops delivered by the psychology team have been introduced and are now taking place - <i>Hearing Voices</i> and <i>Managing strong and overwhelming emotions in detention</i> .	
6	Key concern Reception interviews were brief and not undertaken in private, which hindered disclosure of concerns and assessment of risk.	At the time of the inspection Colnbrook was receiving all arrivals for both Harmondsworth and Colnbrook due to building works at Harmondsworth. This may have caused reception processes to appear less comprehensive as normal. All arriving residents are given the option for a private reception interview which would allow them the opportunity to disclose key information related to risk. The current layout of the reception means the routine is not suited to completion of every interview in private, however following the recent completion of the refurbishment works in the reception area at Harmondsworth, similar plans exist for the Colnbrook site and will be completed later in 2025. This model will ensure that all interviews are completed in private by default, through reconfiguration of the current reception space to create several private interview rooms.	31/10/2025
7	Key concern Too many staff were reluctant to report safeguarding concerns. In our staff survey, a fifth of frontline operational staff said they did not know how to raise concerns, and a quarter said they would not raise any if they had them.	Mitie C&C are already undertaking work to properly understand the issue, including its scale, and find ways to address the concerns raised in this area. Staff surveys will be conducted by the end of May 2025, with a bespoke focus on this key concern. The findings from the local survey will be used alongside the findings of the report to help structure meaningful next steps. Additionally, the content of the Initial Training Course is scheduled for renewal and this area will be focussed on as part of that.	31/10/2025

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		Mitie C&C are committed to ensuring that a clear process exists for staff to refer safeguarding concerns and that all stakeholders are aware of how to complete such referrals as well as having confidence in the process.	
8	<p>Key concern</p> <p>Some detainees were held for too long in the care and separation unit and some were removed from association without the necessary authorisation.</p>	<p>Residents who are placed in the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) are subject to the requirements of Detention Centre Rule 40 and 42 which includes a daily review.</p> <p>DSO 01/2022 Assessment care in detention and teamwork</p> <p>In a small number of cases the Care and Separation Unit (CSU) was used to temporarily accommodate individuals who were recognised as having concerns whilst living on the main accommodation units. These individuals had access to amenities and regimes whilst in the CSU and were not held under Detention Centre Rule 40 or Rule 42.</p> <p>The full utilisation of the Care Suite has meant that more appropriate accommodation can now be offered, and this practice has now ceased.</p>	31/05/2025
9	<p>Key concern</p> <p>The vast majority of those taken to hospital were handcuffed, often without clear justification on the basis of risk.</p>	<p>An individual risk assessment is conducted for each resident, with the authority to use restraints in line with the Detention Services Order (DSO) 07/2016 Use of Restraint(s) for Escorted Moves.</p> <p>DSO 07/2016 Use of Restraint(s) for Escorted Moves</p> <p>The process is subject to scrutiny by the Home Office who undertake regular reviews of the process and will raise any concerns to Senior Managers.</p>	31/10/2025

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10	<p>Key concern</p> <p>Leaders did not ensure adequate collection, analysis and use of data to drive improvements in various areas including security, personal safety, safeguarding and fair treatment</p>	<p>While the collation, management, and analysis of data across the Heathrow IRCs has improved in recent months, partially in response to the 2024 inspection of Harmondsworth, it is accepted that there is further work to do.</p> <p>The performance and compliance team has more than doubled in size and is supported by two new Detention Custody Manager (DCM) grade managers. The focus of this team will be to use data to work more analytically enabling proactive improvements to be undertaken.</p> <p>The team will be fully staffed by 31 August 2025, which will allow for a greater focus and more proactive use of data across the centre.</p> <p>Over the next month, amnesty bins will be installed across the site, allowing residents to anonymously dispose of any illicit items. These bins will help identify potential hotspots.</p> <p>A newly implemented violence tracker was rolled out in late April 2025, enabling active monitoring of personal safety and safeguarding.</p>	31/10/2025
11	<p>Key concern</p> <p>Complaint responses were poor, often late and not translated when needed.</p>	<p>Complaints are processed in accordance with the recently updated DSO on Handling Complaints:</p> <p>DSO 03/2015 Handling of Complaints</p> <p>Mitie C&C accept that at the time of the inspection there had been issues with the complaints process across Heathrow IRCs. This caused some delays in a number of responses being completed and submitted to residents.</p> <p>A dedicated team of complaints investigators is now in place to investigate and respond to ensure consistency in terms of quality and timeliness of response.</p>	31/08/2025

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		<p>The local Home Office compliance team undertake regular Assurance checks of Complaints with the Detention Services Complaints team conducting 100% quality Assurance of final responses to formally lodged complaints, these include service and minor misconduct cases.</p> <p>With regards to service and minor misconduct complaint responses being late, Detention Services Complaints Team have introduced a weekly reporting mechanism, highlighting which complaints are currently live (and days to the deadline) and which have gone beyond the 20-working day SLA, as specified in the DSO. These reports are shared with Contracted Service Providers (CSPs), and Home Office Compliance Team.</p> <p>Detention Service Complaints Team secure translations on behalf of the IRCs, based upon complaints submitted by Compliance teams. Detention Services Complaints team have also implemented a translation tracking system, which ensures oversight/record keeping. The new process had reduced the average handling time for all translations from 7 to 3 working days.</p>	
12	<p>Key concern</p> <p>There were too few opportunities for detainees to cook their own food and the cultural kitchen had been closed for several weeks.</p>	<p>A greater staffing provision in this important area has been agreed within the new staffing profiles and it is hoped that all roles will be filled in Q2 of 2025, ensuring greater access for residents.</p> <p>The feedback from residents who have used the cultural kitchen both before and since the inspection has been excellent and we will continue to ensure delivery of a great service for residents going forward.</p> <p>The Home Office Compliance Team will ensure that Mitie C&C are providing this provision in line with their contractual obligations.</p>	31/08/2025

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13	<p>Key concern</p> <p>Some aspects of medicine management were poor: supervision of the medicine queues was inadequate; administration sessions were excessively long and too few detainees had their medications in possession.</p>	<p>The Healthcare Provider have reviewed the medication time to shorten the length of time it takes to administer medication and have also introduced a medication tracker. This will allow residents to access their medication in possession.</p> <p>Staffing in this area is currently under review to ensure that an appropriate level of observation is maintained during the dispensing of medications by DCOs. The review is expected to be completed by the end of May 2025.</p>	31/10/2025
14	<p>Key concern</p> <p>Attendance at activities in the evening session had reduced because detainees could no longer move freely between their wings and activity rooms.</p>	<p>As part of increased Security measures there has been a change to the way in which residents moved within the centre which prevented access to other residential units, but still enabled access to activities.</p> <p>Mitie C&C will continue to monitor the impact that any restrictions on movement may have on access to regimes in the future and remain committed to allowing residents as much free movement as possible while continuing to ensure the safety and security of all who live and work at Colnbrook IRC.</p>	31/08/2025
15	<p>Key concern</p> <p>There was limited support for those leaving the centre, especially those being released, and in the previous year 24 detainees had been released homeless.</p>	<p>It is accepted that a very small number of residents who left the centre had no fixed abode.</p> <p>Mitie C&C will work collaboratively with the Home Office to ensure that any vulnerable residents being released are treated in line with the guidance published.</p> <p>Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings for such cases are now arranged at the earliest possible opportunity to provide support.</p> <p>If a resident is destitute, they can apply for Home Office (HO) accommodation however there is strict criteria which must be met depending on whether an application is made under Section 95, Section 4 or Schedule 10 of the 1999</p>	31/10/2025

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		<p>Immigration and Asylum Act, e.g. no recourse to public funds, be destitute, and have an outstanding or failed asylum application (not exhaustive criteria).</p> <p>It is not the Home Office's responsibility to source a bail address for all residents. Releasing an individual to no fixed abode is a last resort once all available options have been explored and exhausted.</p> <p>Where a Foreign National Offender (FNO) is subject to Probation Licence conditions the Home Office will work closely with His Majesty's Probation Service to approve suitability of either a private or Home Office address and where Probation have failed to approve the addresses, if detention becomes unlawful (i.e. if bail has been approved, or if there has been a change of circumstances and detention is no longer appropriate).</p> <p>Work is underway to address some of the challenges in obtaining address suitability checks, including an accommodation pilot which was rolled out from April 1st 2025 in 5 prisons.</p> <p>The intention is to support timely release of FNOs after a grant of bail and to ensure only those with a realistic chance of removal enter the detained estate. This will be achieved through the early gathering of information on proposed release arrangements 3 months prior to an FNO's Conditional Release Date and seeking earlier resolution of accommodation blockers through collaborative working with HMPPS.</p>	