

ACTION PLAN – HMIP REPORT 2025- DERWENTSIDE IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE

No	HMIP Concerns	Home Office Response to HMIP Concerns Including Action Already Taken / Proposed to Address Concerns	Expected Completion Date
1	There were not enough female detention staff to cover duties where detainees needed supervision and support from a woman. Such duties included overnight first night in custody checks on sleeping women, and support for women at risk of self-harm who had previously experienced male violence.	<p>Currently, 52% of Serco's operational Detainee Custody Officers (DCOs) at Derwentside are women. Serco will be increasing their recruitment of female staff through their recruitment pipeline in 2026 and will implement dynamic rostering to ensure appropriate deployment of female staff.</p> <p>Of all staff employed at Derwentside by Serco, 62% are women. Female to male staffing ratios and rostering arrangements are monitored by the on-site Detention Services Compliance team. Staffing reports are sent on a weekly basis to the compliance team, and staffing is discussed in all weekly and monthly performance meetings.</p>	31 Dec 26
2	Many detainees were still being transported overnight and had long journeys to the centre. This had included pregnant women and those at risk of self-harm.	<p>The Home Office and Escorting services provider seek to avoid routine night-time transfers where possible.</p> <p>The escorting service operates 24/7 and covers a wide range of activity, including moves between centres (RSTHFs/IRCs). All proposed moves consider the impact on the care and welfare of the detained individual, which includes the time and length of the journey.</p> <p>Although night moves are to be avoided where possible, moves between centres sometimes must be conducted during the night, depending on other priorities or if they are time-specific priority moves e.g. transferring detained individuals to a flight.</p> <p>All proposed moves consider the impact on the care and welfare of individual residents, including the time and length of the move. Given Derwentside's geographic location to other IRCs, the Home Office prioritises placing residents in a manner that is logistically appropriate, with factors taken into consideration including travel time, risk factors, and/or health conditions</p>	31 July 26
3	In a number of cases, the Home Office had not identified, explored, or taken sufficient account of vulnerability in making its initial decision to detain. These cases included women with serious mental illness, those who had experienced gender-related violence and some who had informed officials that they were pregnant. The quality of Rule 35 reports, which	<p>Improvements to certain mechanisms regarding safeguarding of those with vulnerabilities will be considered. The current review into changes to both Detention Centre Rule 34 and 35, and the Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention policy has now been completed and the outcomes of the review are currently under consideration.</p> <p>Any approved reforms are expected to take between 6-9 months to implement. Progress on the training and quality of decision making is already underway.</p>	30 Sep 26

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	provided a safeguard once women were detained, was also worse than we usually see.	<p>The role of the Detention Gatekeeper (DGK) is to consistently apply the Detention: General Instructions, and Adults at Risk (AaR) in immigration detention policy (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adults-at-risk-in-immigration-detention) so that detention only takes place where there is a realistic prospect of return within a reasonable timescale. Where vulnerabilities are identified, the presumption of liberty is strengthened for that individual, and the appropriateness of detention is balanced against any immigration control and public-protection 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>PPG (the healthcare provider) has acknowledged concerns about the quality of Rule 35 reports. PPG reports are independently audited and no negative feedback has been received from Home Office case working teams. PPG do, however, recognise the need for ongoing improvement.</p> <p>PPG will reiterate to their GPs the importance of providing high-quality, detailed information in Rule 35 reports. PPG is committed to raising standards by reminding GPs of best practice and the significance of accurate, comprehensive documentation to better identify and support vulnerable individuals in detention.</p>	
4	Too much of the food on offer was bland and unappetising, and portion sizes varied significantly	<p>Menus are reviewed by the Detention Services Compliance team prior to being implemented to ensure they meet the contractual requirements and complete a random monthly compliance check of mealtimes including reviewing portion sizes and quality of food prepared.</p> <p>Serco will review their menus in consultation with residents and in line with contractual requirements as set by the Home Office.</p>	31 March 26

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5	Complaint responses took too long and were not translated. This meant that too many detainees either did not receive or understand the complaint response.	<p>In accordance with the published Detention Services Order 03/2015 Handling complaints responses to complaints must be issued within 20 working days for service-related matters and minor misconduct.</p> <p>Complaints involving serious misconduct are investigated by the Professional Standards Unit (PSU), with a response deadline of within 12 weeks.</p> <p>All complaint responses are provided in English although a request can be made for the response, or any related communications, to be translated into another language.</p> <p>Delays in complaint responses at Derwentside occurred primarily because key staff required for investigations were unavailable at critical times. This led to three out of thirty-three complaints in the last quarter not being resolved within the required timeframe. The majority (91%) were addressed on time.</p> <p>To prevent such delays in the future, Serco will review and strengthen their internal processes to ensure that sufficient staff are always available to handle complaint investigations promptly. This includes improved planning for staff availability, cross-training team members to cover key roles during absences, and regular monitoring of complaint handling timelines.</p>	31 July 26
6	There was a lack of systematic identification and support for women with disabilities or neurodivergent conditions, and for younger and older women.	<p>Serco will work with the Home Office and the healthcare provider to improve identification and available support mechanisms for vulnerable women in the centre.</p> <p>This will look at the various conversation points (Reception, Healthcare, First Night, Residential, Welfare) where those who are disabled or neurodivergent can have additional support provided to them. This will also focus on the differences supporting younger and older women.</p>	31 July 26

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7	There was not enough focus on the importance of family contact for detainees. Women's ability to contact their children and other members of their family was hindered by poor phone signal and delays in access to social video calls.	<p>Serco are working with the Home Office to introduce a Wi-Fi phone solution in early 2026 which will help alleviate any mobile phone signal concerns.</p> <p>Work to ensure sufficient infrastructure for the project commenced in November 2025.</p> <p>Social video calls are available on all residential units and in visits. Serco will continue to promote the availability of this facility through 2026.</p>	30 Sep 26
8	Release planning for some vulnerable individuals did not sufficiently address specific risks and vulnerabilities alongside practical concerns.	<p>Detention Services Order 1/2018 Release of Detainees states 'In accordance with DSO 08/2016 Management of adults at risk in immigration detention when IRC or healthcare staff have significant concerns about the arrangements for releasing an individual considered to be at risk, a multi-disciplinary meeting (or teleconference if a physical meeting is not possible due to time constraints), should be held to agree a plan to safely release them'.</p> <p>A Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting is undertaken in all cases when it is known someone with identified vulnerabilities is being released to no fixed address. The on-site Home Office teams will regularly monitor compliance in this area and attend meetings as appropriate.</p> <p>The National Returns Progression Command (NRPC) Detained Hub colleagues will participate in these meetings when they relate to individuals in their casework area. An MDT will be requested if, on receipt from the Detention Gatekeeper, vulnerabilities that require an MDT approach are clearly evident.</p> <p>Prior to any release to no fixed address (NFA), NRPC Detained Hub will refer to the IE Safety Valve Mechanism to explore whether there are any other possible alternatives. Release to NFA is an absolute last resort and individuals are signposted to local homeless support and the Voluntary Returns Service (VRS).</p> <p>Foreign National Offender Removals Command (FNORC) have a responsibility to work with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to ensure a safe release into the community for FNO's where bail has been agreed. Proposed release addresses must be approved by HMPPS and the relevant Police force.</p>	31 Dec 26

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		<p>Unfortunately, many addresses are rejected by HMPs having been identified as unsuitable.</p> <p>To mitigate the risk of unlawful detention and given the need to adhere to the Hardial Singh principles, on occasion individuals must be released to NFA where no suitable address has been identified. Where this happens, careful consideration is given to release, with tagging and reporting restrictions put in place and all appropriate agencies are informed ahead of release, to help to mitigate risk.</p> <p>The Detention Oversight Team in FNORC are currently conducting an accommodation pilot. The intention is to source accommodation solutions further upstream for cases who do not meet the threshold for detention. One of the pilot's aims is to reduce the number of cases released to NFA. FNORC strive to hold Multidisciplinary meetings for all cases where vulnerabilities have been identified and where a concrete support plan is required to enable a safe release into the community.</p> <p>The Detention Oversight Team also monitor critical cases of concern in the detained estate to ensure adherence to this policy.</p>	