to email, video calling or social networks to maintain contact with friends and family. Mobile phones were always confiscated at Tug Haven and detainees were rarely given the opportunity to call someone to advise them of their whereabouts. Detainees were often released on immigration bail without having had the conditions of their release fully explained through an interpreter.

Key concerns and recommendations

1.10 **Concern:** The reception facilities at Tug Haven were very poor and those at KIU were unsuitable for the large number of detainees who frequently had lengthy stays. There was no ready access to showers or lockable toilets with seats and lids. Many detainees at Tug Haven were not sufficiently protected from the cold, basic supplies including clothing were running out and detainees were often crowded into spaces where social distancing was not possible. Managers agreed that the environment was not acceptable but not enough progress had been made towards improving the situation, which was especially poor in view of the risks posed by COVID-19.

Recommendation: Effective and coordinated action by all agencies involved should ensure that there are safe, decent and hygienic reception conditions for arrivals at Tug Haven, KIU and Frontier House. In particular, contingency planning should ensure there is an effective response to fluctuating numbers and rapid mobilisation of resources whenever necessary.

1.11 **Concern:** Detainees arriving at Tug Haven routinely had their mobile phones removed from them, and they could not gain access to the contact details for family or friends that were stored on their phones.

Recommendation: Detainees arriving in the UK should be able to make initial contact with their family and friends by telephone free of charge.

1.12 **Concern:** Detainees' vulnerability was not always identified. Screening interviews were undertaken in the early hours of the morning, making it less likely that vulnerabilities would be identified. No vulnerable adult warning forms had been opened at Frontier House between June and August 2020. An elderly woman was held there for 40 hours. Mitie had not reported any modern slavery concerns and we did not receive information on how many UKVI referrals were made under the National Referral Mechanism.

Recommendation: The Home Office should promptly assess and meet the needs of vulnerable detainees. Care plans should be in place for all detainees at risk.

1.13 **Concern:** Unaccompanied children were often held overnight with adults and often for too long. Welfare interviews with unaccompanied children arriving in the daytime regularly took place in the early hours of the next morning, which undermined the purpose of the interviews. Some children had not been identified at Dover and were placed on a coach to adult detention facilities.

Recommendation: The Home Office should ensure that its practice at Dover complies with its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children arriving in the UK.

1.14 **Concern:** Detainees, including children, were held for far too long and often overnight in facilities with no access to the open air and little or no natural light. Detention reviews frequently did not take place.

appropriate. Mitie staff had not raised any modern slavery concerns with the Home Office in the three months to 31 August 2020 (see key concern and recommendation 1.12). Mitie staff we spoke with had received some awareness training on aspects of vulnerability and were aware of a variety of issues that could impact on the safety and well-being of detainees.

1.27 In the three months to the end of August 2020, there had been 142 incident reports completed at KIU and six at Frontier House. They mostly concerned medical issues but some related to mental health problems, pregnancy or, in a few cases, safeguarding concerns, such as sexual assault.

1.28 Self-harm was rare. Where risks were identified, staff would complete a suicide and self-harm or vulnerable adult/child warning form. This generally led to an increase in the level of observation that the person affected received. Mitie staff all carried personal anti-ligature knives.

1.29 Violence and antisocial behaviour were infrequent and detainees we spoke to at all facilities told us they felt safe. Limited space meant that men, women and children were frequently held together. Staff's supervision of the holding rooms was good and they were responsive to potential problems – for example, staff responded quickly to raised voices at the queue for the shower at KIU and de-escalated a potentially volatile situation well.

1.30 Force was rarely used and Home Office and contractor staff focused on de-escalation and communicating with detainees to avoid it. All Mitie detainee custody officers (DCOs) were trained in the Home Office Manual for escorting safely (a training package developed specifically to cover the restraint of non-compliant immigration detainees). DCOs applied handcuffs rarely and we did not see them used during our inspection. All DCOs we spoke to were aware of the need to complete individual use of force statements if they used force against detainees.

Safeguarding children

Expected outcomes:
The facility promotes the welfare of children and protects them from all kinds of harm and neglect.

1.31 The treatment of children was a matter of concern. Most children were held in KIU. According to holding room logs, in the three months to 31 August 2020, 73 unaccompanied and 250 accompanied children had been held there.

1.32 All unaccompanied children received a face-to-face Home Office welfare interview. However, if they arrived in the day time, they were regularly interviewed about their welfare in the early hours of the following morning, suggesting the Home Office might have lost sight of the purpose of the interviews. For example, a 15-year old boy had arrived in the UK at 4.10pm, but had a welfare interview at 4.55am the next morning. Interview records we looked at were perfunctory and demonstrated little meaningful exploration of the children's welfare. (See key concern and recommendation 1.13.)

1.33 Children were held for far too long and often overnight. This was partly because Kent County Council's social services department no longer had the capacity to care for unaccompanied minors, who therefore waited a long time for social workers to arrive from other counties. (See key concern and recommendation 1.13.)

1.34 According to holding room records, unaccompanied children were held at KIU for, on average, just over 17 hours, which was longer than the average for adults. Twenty-nine per

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