

LAY OBSERVERS

National Cleaning Audit Court Custody Suite 2015

The Lay Observers, who monitor the treatment of prisoners during transit and in court custody, conducted their National Audit of the Standards of Cleanliness in 193 Crown and Magistrates Court Custody Suites during May and June 2015. We have found it difficult to determine the specifications and standards of cleanliness required of the Court Custody Suite by the Prisoner and Escort Services Contract, therefore the rating is against what most lay people would regard as acceptable by modern standards. The standards of cleanliness of toilets, kitchens and cells were ranked on a scale of 1–10 where 10 is fully satisfactory and below 5 is unacceptable. A survey was also conducted to assess the number of Courts, where toilet requisites are only provided on request by the prisoner (which we regard as an unacceptable practice).

Lay Observers have been regularly monitoring and reporting on standards of cleanliness in all Courts during 2014/15 and whilst noting some improvements have regularly noted to PECS and through them to HMCTS many instances of poor standards. Overall the 2014 evaluation “There remains a wide variance in the delivery and effectiveness of both regular daily cleaning” is still the case and requires greater focus by PECS and HMCTS. It seems that the specifications for the standards of Custody Suite cleanliness and the responsibility /accountability for delivery should be clearly established and uniformly applied across the HMCTS estate

Key findings :-

- Overall the percentage of Courts rated 10 has risen from 8% in 2014 to 13 % in 2015 but still below the 18% recorded in 2013.
- A total of 7 Courts have an overall rating of less than 5; 5 in Region 2 and 2 in Region 1. Although still unacceptable this number represents an improvement on 2014.

- However the cells in 15 Courts were below 5 and the toilets in 12 Courts and the kitchens in 8 Courts were also below 5 again mainly in Regions 2 and 1 . There are 20 Courts where a deep clean is imminently required .
- There remain a number of Courts where toilet requisites are on demand (8 for toilet paper, 7 for hand soap and 17 for hand drying).

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Chair
National Council Lay Observers
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