

Case Study: Sussex Police



Sussex Police's custody service has been recognised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) as a strength of the force, with its facilities and methods widely regarded among UK police authorities as a landmark model of good practice.*

But it was a very different situation in the late 1990s. To bring about the dramatic improvements in custody provision seen by Sussex Police since 2002, Reliance designed, delivered and now manages a multidisciplinary solution combining innovative security technologies with outsourced custodial services. Consequently, the force has been able to strengthen local policing, free up frontline resources and provide better value to the public.

Security challenge

In the late 1990s, custody services in Sussex were managed across 24 locally run, ageing police station facilities that offered a varied standard of detainee care and security. Renewal of the estate was an opportunity to radically rethink custody provision. To do this, Sussex Police wanted to make best use of electronic security technologies to improve the practical care and administration of detainees, while creating a more effective and efficient service.

Reliance and its consortium partners were tasked with designing, building and running new Investigation and Detention Handling Centres (IDHCs) across Sussex as part of a 30-year contract. As a Home Office Pathfinder project developed under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI), it became the first project of its kind to be outsourced to private contractors.

To ensure the new IDHC custody centres would operate as planned, electronic security solutions specialists Reliance High-Tech, had to deliver a technical blueprint to meet the following requirements:

- Compliance with the highest security industry and Home Office standards
- Maximise the welfare and safety of detainees at all times
- Enable the smooth day-to-day operation of all detention and investigation services
- Support the one-stop shop provision of core custody services on site
- A solution that could be replicated across the Sussex Police estate
- A future-proof solution to support the 30-year lifespan of each IDHC.

As a result of our partnership with Reliance, Sussex Police is benefiting from a leading-edge professional custody service that has become a beacon of excellence for the other 42 Police Authorities across the UK. By expertly combining the right security technologies with the right mix of custody services, Reliance is helping us to deliver a first-class custody service that we can be justifiably proud of.

**Chief Inspector, Paul Smith,
Sussex Police**

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Our solution

As with all major projects the key to the successful solution was in meticulous planning and professional project management. An in-depth risk assessment enabled Reliance High-Tech to develop a clear technical specification that would wholly equip each new custody centre for 21st century detention and investigation.

To bring the vision to life, a technical solution was created for each custody centre with 24/7 centralised touchscreen control of all security systems including CCTV, access control, affray alarms and two-way intercom capabilities.

Since 2002 three purpose-built custody centres at Chichester, Worthing and Eastbourne have opened plus a major refurbishment at Brighton. Each centre is staffed and managed by Reliance Secure Task Management custody assistants, so minimising the number of warranted police officers needed on site.

Throughout the design and implementation, Reliance High-Tech worked closely with consortium partners, the construction team and Sussex Police to meet everyone's requirements.

Custody control systems

Security at each centre is managed locally from a hub of PC-based control positions on 'the Bridge' – the central atrium area of each building where custody assistants and police sergeants are typically based. From here the core security functions for the whole site can be managed via simple touchscreen controls.

The easy-to-use touchscreen system is highly intuitive, requires minimal training and gives the operators continuous control over all electronic security, enabling:

- 24/7 monitoring of live incidents and movements anywhere on site
- Close monitoring on the wellbeing of detainees at any time
- Remote management of access and opening of doors across the site
- Immediate validation and response to affray alarms and alerts
- Environmental control of cell temperatures and lighting levels.

By complementing personal checks on the wellbeing of detainees, the control systems improve levels of monitoring and quality of care. The system also gives the operators

maximum flexibility to maintain the highest levels of security at all times, allowing the team to cope with peaks of demand, manage levels of access and respond swiftly to emergencies.

CCTV

CCTV cameras are situated in key positions throughout the centre. There is a CCTV camera in each cell, plus cameras at all entry points, in vehicle docking bays, the decontamination suite, exercise yards and walkways.

The cameras are mounted and enclosed to guard against tampering and damage. CCTV images are held for up to 28 days to ensure that records can be retrieved and archived for future reference.

Dedicated CCTV review suites at each site enable authorised operators to review and archive incidents (to DVD/CD) by date and time across the site-wide digital recording platform. This ability to retrieve information by date and time has dramatically improved the time taken over previous VCR based systems.

Access control

All entry points into and within the custody centre – including doors to each cell – are controlled by PIN and prox access control software and card readers. As a fully featured door-entry security solution, the PIN and prox system guarantees the safe transit of



detainees around the building. It also creates a precise record of every movement around the site, providing a definitive audit trail of events should any incident require scrutiny.

Affray alarms

Affray alarms are easily accessible to staff in all the main walkways throughout the site. The alarms are positioned such that staff can raise the alarm whenever and wherever required. As soon as an alarm is activated CCTV cameras immediately focus on the area where the alarm has been sounded so that operators on the Bridge can assess the situation and act accordingly.

Intercom

Two-way intercom provides an audio link between the control position on the Bridge, each cell and key areas of the site. Intercom allows operators to assess requests from detainees in their cells without necessarily having to leave the Bridge. Another advantage is the ability to 'patch in' external telephone calls to a detainee without the need to bring them out of their cell, which heightens security and reduces disruption to operations.

A one-stop shop approach to custody

The four new Sussex custody centres operate as a one-stop shop, with secure facilities and staffing on site to manage the whole custodial process seamlessly, including:

- Search and monitoring of detainees
- Collection of Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) information via DNA testing, NAFIS fingerprint analysis, photograph ID, shoeprint records, etc
- A fully equipped PACE interview room
- Forensic medical examinations
- Management of ID parades
- Provision of meals and drinks.

With effective electronic security in place, all of these processes can be managed under one roof within a safe, controlled environment.

System maintenance

Reliance has an ongoing maintenance contract for the 30-year life of the facilities, working to rigorous service level agreements and in line with key performance indicators. Since implementation, the system has proven to be highly reliable. In the event of any damage to equipment or a fault, rapid response is provided via both telephone and call-out support.

Results and benefits

Supported with the right technology solution, Sussex Police has seen significant improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of its custody provision, ensuring that it can better manage its costs and improve the value of its services to the public.

Improved efficiency

The average time spent by arresting officers to book in detainees from arrival to authorisation of arrest has been cut from 30 to 9 minutes. With over 50,000 detentions each year, this leads to over 35,000 extra hours, equating to 20 extra officers on frontline police duties.

Improved economies

Despite an approximate 21% increase in the number of detentions since 2002, the additional volume has been absorbed without the need for additional operational warranted officers, so providing further value for money by avoiding additional recruitment and training costs.

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Improved effectiveness

The service has enabled Sussex Police to exceed its targets for Offences Brought to Justice in the three years to April 2007, such that custody services are no longer seen as a bottleneck in the criminal justice system.

Additional benefits include:

- Reliable security safeguards the welfare and wellbeing of all detainees at all times
- Modern, fit-for-purpose custody centres create a safe and secure working environment that promotes good staff morale
- Security systems are flexible, user-friendly and require minimal staff training
- On-site security is robust, easy to manage and requires low maintenance
- Full accountability, recording and measurement of all on-site activity is assured.

About Reliance High-Tech

Reliance High-Tech applies advanced technologies to design and deliver fully integrated electronic security solutions. It is part of Reliance Security Group, an established market leader that employs in excess of 12,000 people nationwide in manned security, facilities management and outsourced services.

With a growing share of the electronic security solutions market, Reliance High-Tech delivers award-winning security solutions for leading UK organisations including the police, HM prisons, financial services, manufacturing and defence sectors.

*HMIC 2006 baseline assessment



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