Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine

Operational procedures and equipment for clinical and forensic examination rooms in police stations

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There is a requirement for a fully fitted clinical room to assess and physically examine patients in police custody, police officers injured on duty and complainants.

When forensic samples are required there should be a separate clinical room (see below). If this is not available, the HCP should take all necessary precautions to reduce the risk of contamination and document the steps taken.

Custody forensic rooms are not currently required to comply with the Forensic Science Regulator (FSR) codes of practice[1,2], however, these codes should be used as a guide to good practice.

Clinical rooms

Suggested dimensions 5.5m x 3.6m

Operational procedures for clinical rooms

1. The room should be locked when not in use.
2. The room should only be used for clinical purposes.
3. The room should have all surfaces cleaned (including the floor) on a daily basis (unless there is a dedicated forensic examination room that is forensically cleaned between patients and sealed).
4. Any windows or other surfaces that could collect dust etc. should be cleaned at least once a week. A written record should be kept for audit purposes.
5. Details of suitable cleaning methods and materials, particularly to prevent DNA contamination are included in the Operational Guidelines for SARCs. A kit should also be available for immediate cleaning of small amounts of body fluids.
6. There should be a protocol for deep cleaning on a regular basis.
7. The room must have a lockable drug cupboard.
8. The room should not be used for the storage of other items that are not used in the examination and care of detainees.
9. A named person should have responsibility for checking and restocking the room on a regular basis (at least once a week). In their absence a problem should be reported to any Custody Officer or specially designated person.
10. The modular kits should be stored in appropriately labelled, enclosed cupboards/containers. Expiry dates should be checked regularly. All unused items from opened kits must be appropriately disposed of. Kits used for the retrieval of DNA must/should be specified as ‘forensic DNA grade’ (FDG).
11. There should be a wall mounted clinical waste bin with foot lever to open. This must be emptied at least once a week, regardless of how full it is and emptied after each forensic sampling case.
12. A pharmaceutical waste bin should be provided mounted and not free standing for the safe disposal of unused prescribed drugs; arrangements should be made for the providing company to collect and replace it on a regular basis.
13. Room thermometer to record ambient temperature for medicines stored at room temperature.

Equipment for clinical rooms

Equipment should be kept to a minimum to reduce the possibility of cross contamination.

In addition to the stock items each room should have:

- Desk with laminated non-porous surface
- 3 wipeable non-porous chairs. Detainee chair should be fixed to the floor
- Adjustable examination couch
- Lockable floor/wall units, labelled to identify what they contain
- Washbasin with elbow operated taps (preferably mixer). Plastic wipeable splash back area above wash basin
- Wall mounted examination light (appropriately placed for use with the couch)
- Wipeable clock
- Cleanable information displays
- Telephone
- Panic button(s). Accessible if sat or stood. Consider two levels of alarm (help required and urgent aid needed)
- Waste bin – wall mounted not free standing
- Clinical waste bin - wall mounted
- Good heating, lighting and ventilation
- Access to a small lockable fridge (not used for food purposes) for the storage of drugs
- Sharps disposal bin (secure and wall-mounted)
- Pharmaceutical waste bin (in locked cupboard). Consider location outside clinical room (suggest under video surveillance) so custody staff can dispose of medication without having to enter the room
- Paper towels and liquid soap dispenser
- Polished reflective mirror (not glass) so facial injuries can be seen by patient and confirmed

Guidance on fridge/freezer monitoring

Monitoring the temperature of the fridge and/or freezer with a daily check recorded is essential for a complete record of temperature at which the sample has been stored including any temperature deviations. The actual acceptable temperature range appears to be governed by what is specified by the equipment manufacturer e.g. fridges operate at 2° to 8° C and freezers operate at approximately -20°C (must be below -10°C to maintain freezing). Best practice is to check the freezer temperatures daily and record the reading.

Action is required if the temperature deviates up or down by 5°C, (see local standard operating procedures). Freezers should be alarmed and there should be a backup generator. It is good practice for the equipment used for the temperature monitoring to be calibrated and its accuracy known. It is possible where freezers have broken down or have been accidentally switched off for up to 48 hours that there may still be positive body fluid findings and DNA results. The storage of toxicology samples is non critical i.e. it just needs to be at 'refrigerated' or 'frozen' temperatures but does not need to be at a specific temperature (as it may need to be for certain diagnostic reagents, some medications, certain foods etc.)

CLINICAL ROOM SUPPLIES LIST

Custody staff and HCPs should ensure that they are familiar with any equipment that is available and fully trained to use such equipment.

- Bag-valve-mask with various size facemasks
- Oropharyngeal airways (range of sizes)
- Nasopharyngeal air ways size 6/7
- I gel size 3/4/5
- Magill Forceps
- Electrical suction equipment
- Automated External Defibrillator (AED)
- Oxygen cylinder with delivery head, tubing and masks
- Oximeter
- Sphygmomanometer
- Stethoscope
- Auroscope (with disposable covers)
- Ophthalmoscope/pen torch
- Thermometer (with covers if required)
- Glucometer with test strips (and control solution for calibration)
- Ketone testing equipment

Dressing bandages & plasters

- Steristrip closures 3mm/6mm Pack 36
- Assorted fabric dressing strips
- Non-adherent dressings 9.5cm
- Microporous tape 2.5cm x 5m
- Elastic adhesive strapping 2.5cm
- Gauze square various sizes
- Assorted adhesive dressings
- Dressing packs
- Protective items
- 2 sharps disposals bin 7L (one in use)
- Clinical waste bags as appropriate to fit clinical waste bin
- Non-sterile powder free vinyl gloves – various sizes
- Facemasks
- Personal protective equipment (sleeved aprons/CSI suits) as required

Miscellaneous

- Pill pots
- 2 paper towel rolls 250mm (one in use)
- 2 paper towel roll 500mm (one in use)
- Cardboard bowls
- Paper cups
- Single use lancets
- Disposable preparation razor
- Heavy duty scissors
- Single use lubricating jelly
- Tissues
- Various size syringes/needles/butterflies
- Sanitary products
- Finger dressing applicator (for tubular gauze)
- Low adhesive tape
- Test strips for urinalysis for blood, protein and glucose
- Test strips for blood ketone testing
- Pregnancy test (minimum 2)
- Disposable vaginal speculum (medium and small 2 of each)
- Disposable proctoscopes (medium and small 2 of each)
- Containers and solution for the storage of contact lenses
- Electric fan x 1 cleanable
- Saline eye wash x 3
- Examinee Gown (FDG)
- Modesty blanket (FDG)

Disinfectant & antiseptics

Any skin wipes should be alcohol free.

- 30 sterile alcohol-free wipes
- 30 Normasol sachets 25ml
- 2 liquid soap
- Hand sanitiser

Forensic Kits *(National Kit list on FFLM website)*

For more information see *Recommended equipment for obtaining forensic samples from complainants and suspects*

- Modular intimate swab collections kits
- Standard swab collection kit
- Blood toxicology kit
- Urine toxicology kit
- Mouth collection kit
- Hair collection kit
- Condom collection kit
- Fingernail swab kit
- Sanitary wear collection kit
- Hepatitis testing kits. *See: Recommendations – Managing blood-borne virus exposures in custody*
- RTA blood kits
- RTA urine kits

Access to computerised documents

- Letterhead
- Body diagrams
- Clinical Questionnaires, e.g. CIWA/COWS/SADQ/MMSE/DASH/CSE
- Forensic sampling forms for laboratory e.g. FFLM FME form or equivalent
- Hospital referral forms
- Patient advice sheets: Post CEW; Post Irritant sprays; Head injury advice etc
- Prescription proforma
- Letter to collect CD drugs e.g. methadone/buprenorphine
- Proformas as required e.g. FFLM Assessment (alcohol & drugs) under the RTA, Fitness to Detain and Interview. Mental Health Act Assessment, Sudden Death Forensic Notes
- HO/RT5 form

Medication at the police station

There should be an agreed local formulary in a suitable locked medicine cabinet in the clinical room. The management of the stock should be agreed locally by the HCPs involved and checked regularly with respect to ordering & expiry date of contents. The drugs covered by PGD should be included. It is suggested the formulary *may* include:

1. Analgesics

- Paracetamol 500mg
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory e.g. ibuprofen 200mg
- Co-codamol 30mg/500mg
- Dihydrocodeine 30mg

2. Anxiolytics

- Diazepam 5mg

3. Alcohol Withdrawal treatment

- Diazepam 10mg
- Chlordiazepoxide 10mg

4. Acute behavioural disturbance

- Lorazepam 1mg

5. Antibiotics

- Co-Amoxiclav 625mg
- Erythromycin 250mg
- Flucloxacillin 250mg
- Metronidazole 400mg
- Doxycycline 100mg

6. Gastrointestinal system

- Antiemetics
- Loperamide
- Buscopan

7. Cardiovascular system

- Glyceryl trinitrate spray (which delivers 400 micrograms/ metered dose)
- Aspirin 300mg

8. Respiratory system

- Salbutamol inhaler
- Nebulisers

9. Seizures

- Diazepam rectal solution
- Buccal midazolam

10. Injectables

- Naloxone 400micrograms/ml
- Adrenaline 1mg/1ml pre-filled syringes e.g. EpiPen®
- Glucagon for injection (1mg)

11. Miscellaneous

- Antihistamine e.g. cetirizine 10mg
- Tissue adhesive
- Glucose Gel
- Naloxone nasal spray

All prescriptions issued for detainees (unless they are the doctor's own NHS patients) must be on a PRIVATE PRESCRIPTION at police expense, unless the overall service is provided by the NHS or other provider. Prescribers should also have access to FP10CD or equivalent. All HCPs should be familiar with the FFLM Guidance: *Safe and Secure Administration of Medication in Police Custody*.

Forensic Clinical Rooms

- This room is to be used solely for the obtaining and recording of forensic samples from the detainee and should be separate from the general clinical room. ***It is recommended that any new police custody build, develop their requirements as detailed in the Design Guide for the Police Custody Suites.***
- This room has been designed with an integral bathroom facility and gowning area for HCP.
- This room will be locked when not in use.
- A named person should have responsibility for checking stock and expiry dates on a regular basis (at least once a week). In their absence a problem should be reported to any Custody Officer or specially designated person.
- This room will have separate cleaning equipment for sole use within this environment only.
- This room will have a robust cleaning regime in place between each examination to minimise DNA contamination.
- This room will have a deep cleaning protocol in place to minimise DNA contamination.
- Details of suitable cleaning methods and materials, particularly to prevent DNA contamination are included in the Operational Guidelines for SARCs. A kit should also be available for immediate cleaning of small amounts of body fluids. For more information see *Recommended equipment for obtaining forensic samples from complainants and suspects*.
- The gowning area will be a suitable size for the management and secure storage of modular kits/ consumables which will be labelled and secured with
- cupboards.
- The room needs to ensure it can accommodate accessibility requirements for all disabilities.
- The room will have a 1 metre clear space on all four sides.
- All fixtures and fittings within the room shall allow for effective repeat cleaning without degradation.
- Requires 10 air changes per hour, with no strong air currents within the room. High efficiency filtration to avoid cross contamination of evidence.

Equipment for Clinical Room

- Lockable storage within the gowning room for bespoke cleaning equipment and materials.
- Further storage for personal protective equipment for HCP.
- Adjustable examination couch.
- Patient privacy needs to be considered.
- Detainee chair needs to be fixed to the floor.
- Glove & hand gel dispensers at entrances of forensic examination area.
- Clinical waste bins in the forensic examination room and gowning room.
- Smoke detection, visual alarm system and alarm strip plus push button call button.
- Entry log via the forensic room entrance.
- Room in use signage/illuminated outside location.
- The sharps disposal bin should be mounted and not free standing and replaced when three quarters full.
- Washbasin with elbow operated taps (preferably mixer). Plastic wipeable splash back area above wash basin.
- Cleaner sink within gowning room.
- Wall mounted examination light (appropriately placed for use with the couch).
- Polished reflective mirror (not glass) so facial injuries can be seen by patient and confirmed.

References

1. Forensic Science Regulator
Forensic science activities: statutory code of practice - version 2
June 2025

2. Forensic Science Regulator
DNA contamination controls: forensic medical examinations (FSR-GUI-0017)
September 2025

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