



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
for  
**Brook House  
Immigration Removal Centre**

**1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012**

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## Introduction

This report is presented by the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for Brook House and covers the year ending 31 March 2012.

The IMB for Brook House acts as a 'watchdog' on behalf of the Home Secretary and the general public by providing independent oversight of the Immigration Removal Centre. All members are volunteers.

The Board monitors the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held in order to ensure that these men are treated with dignity and respect. It is also the duty of the IMB to ensure that the contractors, G4S, comply with the requirements of the Detention Centre Rules 2001.

The IMB works closely with the staff of Brook House whilst maintaining independence and impartiality. Members normally raise concerns with the Management before taking them further.

A detainee can make application to see a member of the IMB to discuss his problems relating to his stay in Brook House. Our remit does not include a detainee's immigration status.

Should they wish, staff are able to discuss their own problems with the IMB and they are assured of the utmost discretion.

The G4S management team is also responsible for the running of Tinsley House IRC which is situated about three quarters of a mile away. This establishment is served by a separate IMB.

All figures quoted in this report are based on the IMB's analysis of statistics supplied by the Contractor, G4S.

RTL Fairclough  
Chair  
Brook House Independent Monitoring Board

July 2012

## Statutory Role of the IMB

The Prison's Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every Prison and Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an Independent Monitoring Board averaging 8 -12 members. The Home Secretary appoints members from the community in which the Prison or IRC is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- 1) Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in IRCs.
- 2) Inform, promptly, the Secretary of State or any officials to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concerns it has.
- 3) Report annually to the Secretary of State on how far the IRC has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have had on the Centre.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have the right of access to every detainee and every part of the Centre at any time and also the Centre's records.

## IMB Diversity Statement

Brook House IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds including; race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability, age etc. We also recognise that this fully inclusive approach to diversity must respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as mental health, literacy and drug addiction.

The Board values this approach to diversity within its recruitment and Board development practices. All members of Brook House IMB endeavour to undertake their duties in a manner that is acceptable to everyone in the Centre regardless of their background or situation.

## Brook House Immigration Removal Centre

Brook House is a purpose built Immigration Removal Centre which was opened in 2009. It is built on a small site next to the main runway at Gatwick Airport and is designed to hold 426 detainees in conditions very similar to those in a Category B Prison. The main contractor, G4S, provides the service for UK Border Agency.

There are five Wings of double rooms each with a washbasin and screened-off lavatory. Each room has a wall-mounted television. The detainees do not have keys to their rooms but each man has a lockable cupboard for his personal possessions. There are table tennis and pool tables and some games consoles in the communal areas on each Wing and fixed tables and chairs where men may take their meals. One Wing is designated for detainees who have earned an enhanced status. On this Wing there is a large television, showing extra channels, and soft furnishings in the communal area.

The men are locked within their shared rooms from 21.00 until 08.00 hours.

A smaller Wing exists on the ground floor and is certified to hold up to eighteen men in single rooms. Men are held here under rules 40 (Removal from Association) and 42 (Temporary Confinement) or when they are about to be deported and are considered likely to cause a disruption if allowed to stay on normal location.

There is a small Healthcare Centre, run by Saxonbrook Medical, a local provider of NHS facilities. There is 24 hour healthcare cover available.

The contract to provide the catering and cleaning and a modest shop for detainees is held by Aramark. A cultural kitchen is provided for men to cook their own food. This is supervised by Aramark in conjunction with a custody officer from G4S.

The limited space allows for facilities which include a suite of computers with internet access and some fitness rooms. The library and education departments are provided and staffed within the G4S contract.

An officer is available to give welfare advice. Diversity and safer custody matters each have their own coordinator. These three areas give much needed support to detainees.

The Board considers that there is good religious provision with a Christian chapel, a Mosque and a multi-faith room.

One of the four small exercise yards has been converted into a garden.

Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group visits the Centre to give assistance in advice and personal effects to detainees and the Samaritans are gradually setting up support for detainees.

## Executive Summary

The Centre appears more settled and as a result, we believe, offers safer accommodation than in previous years.

The management commitment to providing a decent environment for detainees and staff continues and there are high expectations of staff. The limitations of space cannot be overcome but G4S have tried to utilise the buildings to the maximum to create opportunities for activities to occupy the detainees held within the Centre. Improvements continue to be made at the time of report writing.

Staff have confidence in managing detainees and, generally, there is a mutual respect between officers and detainees.

The HMIP unannounced inspection report reflects our views that, whilst the Centre has improved, it still has many physical limitations which prevent the detainees being treated as we might expect.

Issues requiring a response:

**Issue 1: Length of stay at Brook House. (page 11, paragraph 60)**

The building is designed to accommodate detainees for short periods. We are pleased to acknowledge the huge efforts made to improve the environment. This does not prevent us from raising again the unsuitability of the Centre for long-term residency.

**Issue 2: Standby places for charters. (page 11, paragraph 52 and 53)**

Whilst we acknowledge that detainees are now told if they have 'standby' places for a charter flight, the Board does not accept that this it is fair, decent and humane to expect a man to be subject to such uncertainties.

**Issue 3: Numbers of detainees from Brook House who are deported. (page 10, paragraph 50)**

Our analysis shows that only 57% of detainees leave the country from Brook House and 41% are either transferred to another IRC or allowed to return to the community (see Annex A).

**Issue 4: Treatment of detainees with mental health or behavioural problems. (page 7, paragraphs 15)**

The Centre does not have the facilities to treat men with mental health or behavioural problems. We are concerned that, occasionally, men arrive who cannot be cared for in a satisfactory manner as there are no suitable in-house services. We continually press for these men to be moved to more suitable conditions.

## Report

### General Accommodation

1. The management continues to work hard to improve conditions in Brook House. This includes paying attention to detail when decorating the wings. The use of softer colours has made a more significant improvement than could have been envisaged.
2. Paintings are hung on the walls and artwork done by Brook House detainees is gradually being added.
3. We are pleased to note the improvement to the Wings in the communal areas with televisions and seating. The 'enhanced' wing has a very large screen television with "Sky" channels available and extended comfortable seating.
4. The detainees on the designated Induction Wing have fewer opportunities to access the gym. Equipment has been provided on the second floor of the wing for their benefit.
5. A monthly Detainee Consultative meeting is held to involve those detainees who wish to have a voice in the running of the Centre. Generally this is of benefit to all and helps to promote a sense of inclusivity.
6. The Centre has introduced an Incentive Scheme whereby the detainees can be rewarded by better facilities for contributing to the smooth running of life in the Centre. Should men behave in an unacceptable manner this is challenged and some penalties may be invoked. It appears that this has encouraged greater consideration for others.

### Care and Separation Unit CSU

7. Board members monitor detainees held on this Wing more closely than in other areas of the Centre.
8. This small Wing has nineteen single rooms which can be used for either Rule 40 (Removal from Association) or Rule 42 (Temporary Confinement).
9. There has been a dramatic drop in the use of this Wing and fewer men are located here because of unacceptable behaviour. However, change to the system is imminent when the Board will expect the use of Rules 40 (RFA) and 42(TC) to drop further.
10. Many men are unhappy when given their Removal Directions (which inform them of their imminent departures from this country). When intelligence suggests there is a possibility of disruptive behaviour from a detainee which would threaten the smooth running of the Centre, he will be placed in the Unit for a period, usually just one day. The Board is unhappy that these men are denied use of the general facilities in the Centre, especially access to computers and fax machines which they may need if trying to sort out their affairs. However, we accept that the risk of disruption makes some action necessary. We urge the management to continue to find ways of easing this problem which has contributed significantly to the high use of this Wing. This situation is due for change with the introduction of a wing specifically for use when Removals Directions are given.

11. As the Healthcare Centre is so small there are times when men with health problems have to be held in this Wing and cared for by custody officers with frequent input from the nurses. (Please see Section on Healthcare, paragraph 14). There are 2 rooms in CSU with facilities specifically for a man to be continually observed in case of self-harm.

12. At times of unrest and difficulty the staff need to, and do, use the utmost in professionalism to cope with refractory behaviour.

Statistics for Use of Removal from Association and Temporary Confinement.

	2011 - 2012	2010 - 2011	2009 - 2010
Number of admissions to RFA (Rule 40)	644	1644	1442
Number of admissions to TC Rule 42	49	85	157
Number of times when force was used Rule 41	112	110	173

Healthcare

13. The healthcare department is quite small but there is 24 hour medical care available. There are trained mental health nurses on duty for much of the time.

14. The department appears to run smoothly but, when a detainee falls ill and needs more attention than is available on a main Wing, he will be placed in the Care and Separation Unit. The staff there look after the men very well and the healthcare staff visit the unit frequently to give treatment. However, the Board is concerned that this is not the best way to look after these men and, in the case of possible infectious illness, whether staff are put at unacceptable risk.

15. In cases of men with mental health or behavioural problems the Board has concerns about the level of care the Centre is able to offer. Such patients are, occasionally, moved from Centre to Centre but this does not satisfactorily address the problems these men are suffering.

16. If a man is too ill to be cared for within Brook House he has to be transferred to IRC Harmondsworth where there is a full inpatient facility. This Centre is over forty miles away.

17. Acute cases and men with injuries requiring hospital treatment are taken to the local NHS hospital.

Safer Custody

18. Extra care has been offered to 288 detainees during the year who were considered to be at risk of harming themselves. The systems in place provide extra support at times when men are feeling desperate and at risk of self-harm. Safer Custody Orderlies are recruited from the

general population of the Centre, and their efforts contribute to the level of care being offered within the Centre. This is a great help in improving the safety of detainees.

19. The Safer Custody Coordinator has excellent knowledge of each person who is at risk.

20. On occasions during the year men have been kept on constant watch as it appeared that they were in significant danger of harming themselves. These men are held in the Care and Separation Unit and place a considerable strain on the staff especially at times when the Wing is very busy. The Board believes that those men in such distress are cared for as well as possible within the confines of the IRC but that the surroundings in which they are kept are not always as peaceful and quiet as may be needed at such difficult times.

21. During the year there were 33 men for whom a constant watch was deemed necessary; the same number as last year.

22. The introduction of an Induction Wing has allowed staff to assess newly arrived detainees and this has brought benefits to this area.

#### Diversity & Race Relations

23. The Race Relations and Diversity Coordinator leads the Diversity Equality Action Team (DEAT). She produces an excellent monthly report in great detail and runs an efficient department. Decisions that may impinge on respect for different cultures are always challenged. The Centre is addressing the needs of men in matters of race, disability, age and all other areas as they arrive. It is to be noted that detainees are, on most occasions, greeted shortly after arrival by a diversity orderly, who is another detainee. This is of great benefit and gives much needed reassurance to men when they arrive.

24. The diverse needs of every man arriving at the Centre are assessed whilst he is resident on the Induction Wing.

#### Welfare

25. There is a very busy Welfare Office where one officer is available to help men with their many and diverse welfare problems. He tries to address the varied needs of detainees but the Board would like to see greater resources available to help men with their many welfare queries.

#### Religious Affairs

26. The Head of Religious Affairs and his team of visiting chaplains cover the many faiths represented in the transient population of the Centre. There are twelve paid (including four Imams) and two voluntary chaplains who cover Brook House and the two other local Centres run by the contractor.

27. There are frequent services for the different faiths and, from time to time, there are very lively sessions for detainees to discuss and celebrate their faiths.

28. The Muslim population of the Centre is often between 30% and 40%. This means that there is insufficient room in the Mosque and some men have to pray in the corridor outside. They prefer to do this rather than move Friday prayers to the Visits Room.

29. A Carol Service and the celebration for Eid were held in the Visits Room at appropriate times.

#### Catering and Kitchens

30. Detainees are offered breakfast and two cooked meals each day with an option of sandwiches. A number of detainees work in the kitchen to assist in the preparation of meals. This is a popular work choice.

31. With help from detainees there are, from time to time, special dishes served to celebrate different nationalities e.g. the Chinese New Year.

32. Muslim detainees observing Ramadan are provided with heated food trays which are issued in the early evening. These are designed to keep the food at the correct temperature until after sunset.

33. The contractors, Aramark, continually strive to vary the menu to suit the many cultural tastes of the residents. With rising food prices and a limited budget this is a considerable challenge.

34. IMB members sample the food when visiting the Wings and, generally, we find the food tasty and acceptable.

35. There is a small shop which holds a range of provisions for detainees. This is operated within the cashless society of the Centre.

#### Activities (including Learning and Skills)

36. It is not possible to provide sufficient activity for 426 men within the Centre as it stands. Every area is fully utilised. If detainees were resident for only a few days this would not be as important. However, with men held for weeks, months or more than a year this can lead to frustrations.

37. **Basic Education and Arts and Crafts.** The teachers in the two education rooms attract a fair number of students. The newly appointed teacher of Art and Crafts is enthusiastic and has initiated a number of programmes which have been very well received.

38. Artwork created by detainees has been used to decorate the Centre. This is a boost to the morale of the artists and lifts the atmosphere of corridors. The Art room is a delight to visit. The murals on the walls of the garden area were created by detainees.

39. Basic English is popular but there are occasional requests for more advanced education than is available. These needs are not met. An accredited Information Technology course is being introduced.

40. **Paid work.** There are 77 paid positions available to detainees compared with 75 at this time last year. The contractor regularly exceeds its contractual requirement to provide paid work for the detainees. This is a popular way for a man to fill his time whilst at the Centre and earn a small amount of money.

41. **Cultural Kitchen.** The Cultural Kitchen gives detainees the opportunity to cook a meal and invite fellow detainees to share it with them. This is a well-used facility and gives detainees a great sense of satisfaction. The catering contractor, Aramark, supervises this facility.

42. **Physical Activity.** Unless the weather is inclement there are frequent volleyball, football or cricket matches taking place in the exercise yards. These are well supported. The fitness rooms are also popular and well used.

43. One, previously tarmac covered, exercise yard was converted into a garden. This was so well used that it had to be closed for a period so that the grass could recover. This prompts one to ask whether more exercise yards should be converted but they are well used as sports pitches and there is no other area available. This demonstrates the huge need for a sports hall or further outside games areas as in other Centres.

44. **Wing Competitions.** Bingo, Jenga and domino competitions are always popular on the Wings and small prizes of cash credited to a man's account are appreciated by the detainees

45. **Internet Facilities and Library.** The Internet Rooms are well used, as is the Library. Internet sites accessed by the men are carefully monitored and, if deemed inappropriate, are blocked by the management and/or UK Border Agency. The Board is satisfied that these measures are necessary.

46. **Cultural Activities.** An All Nations' Day was held in the summer and culminated in some exciting cricket and football matches. This was one of several activities arranged for the benefit of detainees.

47. Other events are held to celebrate different national festivals.

#### Reception and Discharge including Charter fights

48. The reception area where detainees must wait upon arrival has been improved with soft easy chairs, a coffee table and some large paintings on the walls.

49. The discharge waiting rooms have been changed to make them slightly more comfortable with, at least, a table from which the men can eat their meals.

50. An analysis of where men go when discharged from the Centre shows a slight drop in the number of men returned to their home countries (57%) compared with 59% last year. It is the hope of the Board members that, following a period of detention, more men would leave the country. See Annex A.

51. The Board still has concerns that men are moved in or out of the Centre during the night.

52. On occasions men have been taken by coach in the early evening to the airport to leave on a chartered flight. It is understood that more men than there are seats available are always taken to the airport in case some men are allowed, at the very last minute, to remain in the UK due to the issue of an injunction or Judicial Review. This means that a number of men do not board the flight and have to be returned to a Centre (not always the one they have just left) and on occasions these men arrive at Brook House in the early hours of the morning.

53. The Board is pleased to acknowledge that those men with 'standby' places are now advised that they may not actually leave the country but this is still a most difficult situation for any detainee to understand.

54. The number of charter flights has increased. On average there is one each week. The system for processing the men through the departure system is satisfactory but the Board still has concerns about the length of time men have to wait either in the Centre or on the coach. All these times will be on top of any period of waiting at the airport.

#### Introduction of an Induction Wing

55. The smallest of the four main Wings has been made the Induction Wing.

56. Newly arrived detainees will stay on this Wing for a few days while they learn about life at Brook House and, importantly, while their needs can be assessed so that they can safely join the population in the rest of the Centre.

57. The Board has noted the impact this has had upon the smooth and safe running of the Centre especially in areas such as Safer Custody and Diversity.

#### Length of stay within the Immigration Removal Estate and at Brook House

58. One of the greatest frustrations for detainees is still the unknown length of stay in detention.

59. We frequently speak with men who are anxious to return home as soon as possible. They are exasperated when they cannot understand the reason for any delays. We realise that there are also detainees who are desperate to remain in this country and use any possible means to delay their departure. In all cases it would be better if the situation could be resolved as soon as possible.

60. On 14 March 2012 there were 14 men who had been resident in Brook House for more than a year and one who had stayed for more than two years. This is unacceptable.

#### Complaints

61. The number of complaints has dropped from over 400 last year to 289 in this reporting year. The summary of reasons for complaint is shown in Annex B.

62. Again the principal topic of concern is detainees' property which accounted for 29% of complaints passed to the contractor. However this shows a marked improvement.

### Applications to the IMB

63. The number of applications to speak with the IMB is similar to last year.

64. For the second consecutive year, approximately one third of these applications is concerned with detainees' problems with their immigration status. We have to explain to detainees that it is not within our remit to help them in this area. However, invariably, we approach the UK Border Agency staff in the Centre who are most helpful in giving us information about each man's situation.

65. Immigration issues are, naturally, of great concern to detainees and we must again raise this issue and urge the minister to introduce further measures to speed up the deportation process or the release of detainees who are granted bail or temporary admission. The Board is aware that many detainees are trying to gain admission to the UK but this process often seems very protracted. We acknowledge that there are also men who will use any obstacle to prevent removal and this will prolong their detention.

66. Other reasons for application are shown in Annex C.

### Serious Incident

67. On a warm evening at the end of May a large group of detainees refused to return to their rooms at 21.00hrs. They stayed outside to protest that some other detainees had been moved to CSU earlier in the day. The incident continued until the early hours of the next day when the Deputy Director with his staff persuaded the men to give up their protest without the use of force.

### Delays in clearance for CRB and CTC for staff and volunteers

68. There have been repeated delays with the issue of Criminal Records Bureau and Counter Terrorism Certificate clearances for staff and volunteers. This has resulted in staff being appointed but unable to carry out their full duties. The Board is aware of one recruit who was unable to wait for the clearance and had to take alternative employment.

69. The Samaritans organisation has struggled to obtain clearance for volunteers to be able to work in the Centre.

70. The IMB has also suffered from this problem. We have two members who were appointed in December but for whom CTC clearance is still awaited. They have been given dispensation to come in to the Centre to train for our work but they cannot move about the Centre unescorted and they cannot draw keys.

71. We are advised that UK Border Agency has attempted to address the problems which have caused these delays and we look forward to an improvement in the situation.

### IMB Membership

72. Since the end of 2010 the Board membership has comprised only women. With a population of over 400 men in the Centre this is not satisfactory. The current recruitment process should result in one man joining the board next year.

73. Many members live a considerable distance from the Centre and face a journey in excess of forty minutes each way. As a result a rapid response to any incident is difficult. New members have been recruited who live nearer the Centre and this will ease problems over time.

74. One member was on sabbatical leave for six months of the year. We are pleased to welcome her back to Board duties.

75. Two members who were also serving on other Boards have left during the year. We have been grateful for the wider experience they brought to the Board.

Annex A – Destination of detainees who leave the Centre

<b>Destination</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>
Left the country	57%	59%	57%
Released	25%	19%	21%
Transfer to another IRC	16%	20%	16%
Taken to prison or police custody	2%	2%	6%

These figures are compiled by the IMB from the G4S database.

Annex B – Summary of complaints to Contractor

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
A	Accommodation	46	52	n/a
C	Diversity related	12	0	n/a
D	Education/employment/activities	37	41	n/a
E	Family/Visits	9	12	n/a
F	Food	18	22	n/a
G	Health Related	19	37	n/a
H	Property	84	147	n/a
I	Concerning Immigration Status	Not included	Not included	n/a
J	Staff/detainee related	56	85	n/a
K	Transfers	1	0	n/a
L	Miscellaneous	7	16	n/a
	Total	289	412	337

All figures quoted are based on the IMB's analysis of statistics supplied by the Contractor, G4S.  
 Figures for 2009-2010 have not been broken down on this basis.

Annex C – Summary of applications to IMB

<b>Code</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>
A	Accommodation	8	1	1
C	Diversity related	1	4	1
D	Education/employment/activities	7	2	1
E	Family/Visits	2	2	0
F	Food	12	2	0
G	Health Related	13	17	3
H	Property	16	16	15
I	Concerning Immigration Status	42	43	8
J	Staff/detainee related	14	17	16
K	Transfers	3	8	1
L	Miscellaneous	4	13	7
	Matter settled or detainee no longer in Centre	5		
	Total	127	125	53

## Annex D – The work of the IMB

<b>Board Statistics</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>
Recommended complement of Board Members	12	12	12
Number of members at start of reporting period	9	5	5
Number of members at the end of reporting period	8	9	5
Number of new members joining	1	5	1
Number of members leaving	2	1	1
Total number of Board meetings	12	12	9
Average no of attendances at Board meeting	6	6	4
No of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	47	35	30
Total number of visits to the IRC including all meetings	246	191	183
Total number of applications received	127	125	53