



# **C E D A R S**

## **Pre-Departure Accommodation**

### **Independent Monitoring Board**

### **2013 Annual Report**

# Contents

Page No.

## Section 1

Statutory role of the IMB. ....	3
IMB Diversity Statement. ....	3
Introduction. ....	4

## Section 2

About Cedars PDA .....	5
Population Profile.. ....	6

## Section 3

Executive Summary. ....	7
Recommendations.. ....	7

## Section 4

Family Activities. ....	9
Healthcare and Mental Health.....	10
Escorting Services... ..	10
Diversity and Equality.. ....	11

## Section 5

Complaints... ..	11
------------------	----

## Section 6

Role of the IMB. ....	12
-----------------------	----

# Section 1

---

## STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 requires every immigration removal centre to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in immigration removal centres;
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has;
- (3) **report annually to the Secretary of State on how far the Immigration Removal Centre has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those held in the centre.**

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to residents, the centre and also to the centre's records.

## IMB Diversity Statement

Cedars Independent Monitoring Board members, ("the Board"), are committed to an inclusive approach to diversity, and one which promotes sound interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds. Our commitment encompasses race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age.

The Board also recognise that a full and 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. The Board aims to increase its repertoire of skills and awareness and ensure it is able to positively reflect the diverse needs of the population within Cedars.

All members of the Board will endeavour to undertake their duties in a manner that is acceptable to everyone within Cedars regardless of their background or social situation. The Board will monitor to establish that the experience and interaction between staff, residents and visitors is fair and without prejudice. Where this is not the case, the Board will alert appropriate authorities and individuals including the respective managers, Director of Returns Directorate and the IMB Secretariat.

## Introduction

This report is presented by the Independent Monitoring Board for Cedars. This is the first IMB Report for Cedars and covers the period January to December 2013.

The Board sees its primary role as ensuring that all residents of Cedars are cared for humanely and with dignity. As board members we are committed to the task entrusted to us. Our concerns for the establishment are expressed in the body of the report, and form the basis of the recommendations we make. For ease of reference our key findings are summarised in the Executive Summary of the report, on page 7.

This report notes the independent findings arising from two inspection reports on Cedars, and mirrors many of their recommendations, namely:

- HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Announced Inspection Report on Cedars Pre-Departure Accommodation dated 30<sup>th</sup> April – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012
- HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Unannounced Inspection Report on Cedars Pre-Departure Accommodation and Overseas Family Escort 6 – 27 January 2014.

The latter report was published in May 2014 and covers in some considerable detail the PDA's 2013 activities, and the response made by the three agencies responsible for its operational running during our reporting period.

The figures quoted in our report are based on those used in the HMCIP report, and makes reference to the statistics supplied to us by the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team and G4S. These statistics have not been independently audited.

## Section 2

### **About Cedars Pre-Departure Accommodation**

Cedars, is the name chosen by staff for the pre-departure accommodation (PDA), for families subject to immigration control. The PDA was opened in August 2011 and is so named after the principles staff work to - Compassion, Empathy, Dignity, Approachability, Respect and Support. Its purpose is to ensure that the highest level of care and support is provided to immigration families prior to their removal from the United Kingdom. There is also a red cedar tree in the grounds, which is believed to be 200 years old.

Located near Gatwick Airport in West Sussex, Cedars has 9 individual apartments, including one with full access for disabled people. There are two specialist behaviour management apartments – Orchid for the care of vulnerable individuals, and Lavender for the management of individuals presenting challenging behaviour. All apartments are designed to create a family-friendly environment. Each apartment has a kitchen and lounge area, family bathroom and between 1 and 3 bedrooms to accommodate up to 6 people.

Cedars is run by three agencies: Home Office, Immigration Enforcement which has overall responsibility for overseeing the contracted services provided by G4S, and for the welfare of all residents. G4S are also responsible for providing security services and facilities management; and Barnardo's provide welfare, safeguarding, and social care services to the families. The immigration team have no hand in immigration casework but act as the main conduit of information between the residents.

Families are referred to Cedars on the advice of the Independent Family Returns Panel, which is an independent body of child welfare experts. Residents will typically stay for up to 72 hours before their removal from the UK. In exceptional circumstances, and with ministerial authority, this may be extended to 7 days.

The facilities and services available to residents include:

- Family and visitor lounge areas
- Play areas for small children
- A well stocked library with a range of books in different languages and suitable for different age groups
- Access to information technology, and controlled access to the internet
- A multi-sensory room
- Café and dining area, where families can eat with other residents three times a day, or prepare and cook in their apartments
- Access to landscaped gardens with a variety of age-appropriate play areas. There is a sensory garden which was developed during 2013
- Gym and fitness facilities
- Basketball court with outside equipment for residents to play football and other games
- Chaplaincy support including a multi-faith prayer room and mosque
- Childcare staff, including qualified social workers
- Welfare and counselling support to enable families, in particular children, to prepare for their return and receive assistance to manage emotional distress
- 24 hour healthcare, including daily access to a GP

## **Families Profile 2013**

During the year 2013 a total of 42 families were accommodated at Cedars comprising 17 men, 49 women and 99 children. The longest stay for a family was 6 days 11 hours and 13 minutes, while the average stay was 3 days and 13 hours.

The families represented 18 different nationalities of which the top three were Albania, Pakistan and Nigeria. The top three religions were Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.

Of the 42 families, 23 were removed from the UK, and 19 were released into the community. Among the 42 families held in 2013, force (mostly of a low level nature) was used on 10 occasions; suicide and self-harm procedures were initiated 25 times, and there were two recorded incidents of actual self-harm. On 12 occasions residents needed to be placed on constant watch.

## **Utilisation of Cedars**

This report notes the Coalition Government's commitment to end child detention, and Barnardo's undertaking to enforce its "Red Lines" commitment that Cedars would not take more than ten percent of families going through the Family Returns Process. Barnardo's have expressed the opinion that the underutilisation of Cedars is a testament to the success of the returns process, and more families now accepting assisted voluntary return.

## Section 3

### Executive Summary and Overall Judgement

2013 experienced a low occupancy rate at Cedars and throughout the reporting period the Board believes the overall standard of care given to families was satisfactory, The PDA was consistently and adequately maintained by G4S, and Barnardo's staff provided safe and excellent child support. The level of staff commitment and dedication to the care of the residents was high.

However, the Board is not completely convinced that should the occupancy rate increase in the future, there is adequate evidence that the various agencies involved would be able to cope to the same standards of care that they presently maintain, when only one or two families are present.

The production of this report has been delayed due to a recent high turnover of IMB board members. The newness of the current board, and the time taken to source the statistical data needed for the report have further added to the delay. Since this is the first report on Cedars, there are no previous year's concerns to be updated. However, certain recommendations included in the three external reports referred to above are highlighted. It should also be noted that Cedars has been subject to two extensive HMCIP Inspections within the past two years. It is inevitable therefore that many of the issues identified are not new and have not been fully dealt with.

There were 27 recommendations arising from the initial 2012 HMCIP Announced Inspection Report. During our reporting period of 2013 twelve of these were achieved, 11 not achieved, and 4 partially achieved.

### Key Issues

1. Utilisation of Cedars – As mentioned earlier, 2013 experienced a low level of family occupancy. Given the investment and running costs of the Centre, the resultant unit costs of each family accommodated at the centre will therefore have been high. Consideration should be given as to the measures needed to increase the number of families referred to Cedars and thereby reduce the unit cost per family, or take actions to reduce the overall cost to the taxpayer.
2. Arrivals to, and departures from Cedars – There is serious concern over the practice where families are escorted to and removed from Cedars by the Home Office arrest teams. The manner of their arrival, often in significant numbers and causing alarm and distress specially to children, was reported to us by the residents we interviewed. This concern was also highlighted in previous inspection reports. We support the recommendations proposing that:
  - arresting officers only wearing protective clothing under certain circumstances;
  - families being escorted should be transported in unmarked vehicles, and

- the Home Office should only utilise specialist escort teams trained to deal with distressed children. We note recent progress is being made in this area and Barnardo's are working closely on a training initiative with Tascor.

These concerns cover the PDA's activities throughout our reporting period of 2013, and are detailed in the HMCIP Report of January 2014 and included in their recommendations on resident arrivals to and departure from Cedars. We support their recommendations.

3. Use of force –We support the recommendation that physical intervention should not be used with children or pregnant women except to prevent harm to self or others. A behaviour management policy should be developed, where the emphasis is on techniques that minimise the likelihood of using physical intervention, and its use only as a last resort.
4. Separation of children from parents – We recommend that children should not be separated from their parents at any stage of the removal process, unless there is a welfare or safeguarding concern. If that is a consideration, it should only take place with the support of the Independent Family Returns Panel.
5. Location of Medical facilities – Cedars medical facilities and their layout within the building should be reviewed. There is concern that the various rooms and clinics are too far apart, not properly furnished, and pose privacy and hygiene issues.
6. Use of handcuffs: - We strongly recommend that medical assessments of residents should always take place and be reported on when handcuffs have been used on them.

## Section 4

The successful running of Cedars is dependent on the ability of the agencies to work seamlessly and collaboratively towards a common goal. It is a tribute to staff that the three agencies, each with very distinct roles and responsibilities have been able to work effectively in promoting the care and welfare of residents at the Centre.

A key feature of the management process is the regular joint reviews that are undertaken following a difficult and often challenging family removal. “Lessons Learned” reviews are attended by representatives from the three agencies to discuss the issues, share best practice, and where appropriate develop action plans for improving staff performance. The meetings are chaired by either a Barnardo’s manager or social work practitioner, or a Home Office manager. The IMB are routinely notified of all lessons learned reviews, and have the opportunity to observe the meetings and contribute to the discussions.

This section considers the operational activities undertaken by the agencies to ensure the successful running of the Centre.

### Family Activities

The Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team have overall responsibility of the management of the Centre, and the detailed preparation of the family welfare data.

G4S have responsibility for the operational management of Cedar’s facilities, and family activities are overseen by their Family Care Officers.

The Centre’s low occupancy level during the reporting period has enabled staff to focus on regular contingency exercises including training in security procedures, review policies, and increase their professional attainment in order to utilise the available time. A total of 25 contingency exercises were conducted during the reporting period.

Our overall judgement of the Family Welfare activities is that the services were provided to a good level.

Barnardo’s contribution to the running of Cedars is detailed in their report: “*Cedars: 2 Years On*” April 2014. In summary we note that throughout our 2013 reporting period Barnardo’s have provided a good level of family support, including social work and welfare services to the children and families accommodated within Cedars. Throughout the reporting period:

- Barnardo’s had delegated safeguarding responsibility for the welfare and protection of the children and families held at Cedars. This included providing training on Safeguarding and Child Development to the Home Office’s new Family Engagement Managers, and training to the Tascor’s Family Team Escorts
- Barnardo’s were instrumental in the preparation of “Family Information Packs”, which provided tailored information and advice to assist families with their reintegration when they were returned to their final destination.
- The establishment of Barnardo’s “Red Lines” (which specify the conditional terms of Barnardo’s involvement at Cedars) meant they were able to speak independently on areas of policy and practice.

## Healthcare and Mental Health

The Centre has extensive healthcare facilities and access to registered mental health nursing. We consider the quality of healthcare is generally adequate, including the provisions for residents with stress-related behavioural problems. During the reporting period a total of 25 assessment care plans were opened for residents to enable staff to better manage and reduce their distress.

However, Cedars medical facilities are currently located in a window-less area of the building, and there is concern that the various rooms and clinics are too far apart, not properly furnished, and pose privacy and hygiene issues. We consider that the layout of the healthcare facilities within the centre should be reviewed by a professional medical team to identify how they can be reasonably improved.

## Escorting Services

An area of continued concern is the level of distress caused to families and their children during the arrest and escorting process; in particular when families are removed from their homes and transported to Cedars. This service is contracted out and we do not monitor this stage of the removal process which is outside our remit. However, we take seriously our role to investigate any incident reported to us that suggests a resident's mental or physical health is likely to be injuriously affected by any condition of their detention. For example, we were concerned to note a family escorted to the centre without luggage and wearing flimsy clothing; the aggressive use of handcuffs; and the separation of children from their parents when they were made to travel in separate vehicles. On each occasion we have raised our concerns with the Immigration Team, and although these were subsequently escalated to the Professional Standards Unit for investigation, the outcomes, if any, were rarely fed back to the IMB. We also witnessed unprofessional behaviour by escort staff when searching residents' personal belongings. The late arrival of escort staff was a frequently reported problem during the reporting period.

An early concern for the IMB was the high number of staff (comprising Enforcement Arrest and Family Care officers) who were involved during the arrival and departure process. The high numbers of staff crowded into a relatively small space were disproportionate and did little to minimise anxiety for the families. We are pleased to report that this has since been radically reduced.

Previous inspection reports have highlighted the fact that anxiety for escorted families can be minimised with careful planning and preparation for the needs of each family. As a result we support the recommendation that arresting officers should only wear personal protective clothing where risk assessments indicate that this is necessary to protect themselves or others. Where possible, officers should not wear uniform, and should transport families in unmarked vehicles.

We are equally in agreement that the Home Office should put in place a specialist escort team specifically for family returns. This team should include in-country and overseas escorts; and be fully trained in safeguarding and working with children and families.

## **Diversity and Equality**

The Diversity and Equality Committee was set up under the leadership of the Cedars chaplaincy. The committee meets quarterly and comprises representatives of the Home Office, G4S, Barnardo's, G4S Healthcare providers, and Aramark Catering services. Its policy statement aims to work towards "a vision of respect, humanity and fairness and embracing a positive commitment to equality". Steps to achieve this are identified under the acronym GRAPES which cover key areas of: Gender; Religion; Age; Personal Characteristics; Ethnicity; and Special Needs.

Throughout the reporting period the Equality and Diversity team were actively involved during the family arrivals process to determine any needs, and where appropriate ensured these were met.

The Equality and Diversity Committee also worked to ensure that training and annual refresher/cultural awareness programmes were followed.

The Board can confirm that the Cedars ethos of diversity, equality and inclusion has been a common theme across all the Centre's activities.

## **Section 5**

### **Complaints**

The IMB can confirm that throughout the period covered by this report the Board did not receive any complaints relating to Cedars. Families have reported positively on their experience at Cedars, and the level of care received.

## Section 6

### The Role of the IMB

During the 2013 reporting period the number of IMB Board members was below the recommended level of 12, for a variety of reasons. These include resignations, and delays in the recruitment, vetting and training procedures. The Board has however maintained regular board meetings which have consistently been held throughout the year. Towards the latter part of the year, and following extensive consultation, the Board and Secretariat agreed to change the frequency of Board meetings to quarterly. This would come into effect during 2014, unless utilisation of Cedars increases or other compelling reasons arise to meet more frequently.

Set out below are the IMB Board Statistics.

<b>Cedars 2013 IMB Statistics</b>	<b>Board Numbers</b>
Recommended complement of Board Members	12
Actual number at start of 2013	4
Actual number at end of 2013	4
New members joining during 2013	3
Members leaving during 2013	3
Total attendances at Board Meetings	33
Attendances for other than Board meetings	52
Complaints received by the IMB	0

IMB members conduct weekly visits to Cedars and attended meetings held within Cedars as observers. Members have witnessed arrivals and removals of families and continue to build professional relationships with the Home Office, G4S and Barnardo's to ensure constructive monitoring of the facility.