



**INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD**

**for**

**THE GLASGOW, EDINBURGH AND LARNE SHORT TERM HOLDING  
FACILITIES**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**for the fourth operational year**

**1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2013 to 31 JANUARY 2014**

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. The role of the Independent Monitoring Board</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Glasgow Airport</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Edinburgh Airport</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Reporting Centre, Festival Court, Glasgow</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Larne House, Larne, Northern Ireland</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. Issues</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. Other matters</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>8. Statistics</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>9. Summary</b>	<b>20</b>

## **1. The Role of the IMB**

1.1 The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for the Glasgow, Edinburgh & Larne Short Term Holding Facilities (STHFs), although based in Scotland, is appointed by and has a duty to report to the UK Home Office Immigration Minister, immigration being reserved to Westminster.

1.2 The duties of IMBs appointed to monitor STHFs (commonly known as holding rooms) are not yet laid down in statute but the general principles of independent monitoring apply as they have been developed in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) and prisons.

1.3 Fundamentally, the role of the IMB is to monitor the welfare of those in detention by observing their treatment and the environment in which they are detained. Members have unrestricted access to all detainees and to all designated Immigration Facilities. They are free to make unannounced visits and to speak in private to any detainee in detention (where it is deemed safe to do so). They do not become involved in the immigration status of those in detention unless there are reasons to doubt the legal continued detention of individuals.

1.4 The IMB has throughout the period of this Report monitored the non-residential Holding Facilities (commonly known as holding rooms) at Glasgow Airport, Edinburgh Airport and the Festival Court Reporting Centre in Glasgow and the residential holding facility at Larne House, Larne, Northern Ireland.

1.5 A visits rota of the 8 members of the IMB in post during the reporting period has been established for each of the four Facilities and intimated to each of the United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF), Home Office and Tascor which operates the Facilities under contract from UKBF. Currently four members visit Glasgow Airport and the Reporting Centre and the other four Edinburgh Airport. All members may visit Larne House. One unannounced visit a week is made to each of Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports and two visits a month to each of Festival Court and Larne House. (The frequency of visits has varied during the reporting period as required by the IMB Secretariat but they are presently fixed as stated and all the required rota visits have been carried out). Members of each group may visit the Facilities monitored by the other group. Four members were recruited and appointed in June 2013. At the end of this reporting period the probationary members have had their 9-monthly review and are included in the new rotas for 2014. This means that 12 members will be available to monitor each facility in the coming year.

1.6 During visits members pay attention to the interaction between staff and detainees, the environment in which detainees are held, the manner in which staff handle situations, the maintenance of satisfactory records about the detention and the provision of services such as food and healthcare available to detainees. They also monitor removals from the Facilities at airports, through the boarding gates

and across the apron to the steps of an aircraft, and the manner in which they are conducted. They may also monitor custody vehicles and are empowered to accompany detainees to the IRC at Dungavel or to police custody suites , for purpose of monitoring escorting, if they consider that to be necessary or desirable.

1.7 Members will respond to serious incidents arising at the Facilities.

1.8 Members will attend Family Removals in accordance with a protocol agreed with UKBF & Tascor Attendance at Family Removals are in addition to the Secretariat-determined visits referred to in Paragraph 1.5.

## **2. Glasgow Airport**

### **2.1 Overview:**

2.1.1 The Holding Room area is situated airside adjacent to the Immigration Control desks at International Arrivals, on the floor below the Immigration Officers' suite. It consists of a small office area staffed by two Detainee Custody Officers (DCOs), the Holding Room, and a single male and female (shared) toilet of generous size with adjacent washroom facilities. The Holding Room is operated by Tascor. DCOs are on duty daily from 08.00 until 20.00 hrs. Detainees are not kept in the Holding Room overnight. If they are not landed (conditionally or unconditionally) they will be transferred to Dungavel IRC or to a police custody suite or may be removed on a return flight the same day.

2.1.2 There is a drinks machine (hot and cold drinks) and microwave oven in the area and a land telephone is available for use by detainees. Mobile phones may be used by detainees if they do not contain a camera. If they do, the DCOs can provide a "house" mobile into which the detainee can insert his or her own sim card.

2.1.3 There is no natural light in the Holding Room area and detainees have no access to fresh air. They are not permitted to smoke. There are no showers or beds although blankets, pillows and towels can be provided and the upholstered bench seating can be used to lie down.

2.1.4 Seating is reasonably comfortable and there is reading material in various languages for both adults and children, including The Bible and the Koran. A prayer mat can be provided on request.

2.1.5 The area is covered by CCTV cameras and monitor screens are in the DCOs' control room.

### **2.2 Operational experience & detainee numbers:**

2.2.1 As we have noted in previous Reports the IMB is pleased to record that detainees are respectfully and efficiently looked after by both UKBF and Tascor staff. The DCOs are professional and friendly, an attitude which helps generate a relaxed atmosphere, albeit some detainees are naturally anxious and distressed. Whenever members have raised issues with UKBF and Tascor at the the Holding Room the staff have invariably responded quickly and positively. There have been no complaints from detainees against any UKBF staff or Tascor DCOs.

2.2.2 Members of the IMB speak to detainees to explain their role and the feedback has invariably been positive so far as detainees' treatment and welfare is concerned.

2.2.3 The number of detainees held in the Holding Room in the period covered by this Report is shown in the Statistics (Section 8).

**2.3 Issues:** See Section 6.

### **3. Edinburgh Airport**

#### **3.1 Overview:**

3.1.1 The present Holding Room which was opened in about 2009, replacing one which was not fit for purpose, is located adjacent to International Arrivals in a suite below the Immigration Officers' office. It is staffed by two Tascor DCOs from midday until midnight daily. Like the one at Glasgow Airport (2.1.1) it is a non-residential Facility.

3.1.2 The Holding Room area consists of a spacious control room occupied by the DCOs with an observation window into the main Holding Room. An unlocked door from that room leads into a second, smaller, room which is used as a family room for adults with children. Both rooms are provided with a TV and extensive reading material in various languages, including the Bible and Koran. The smaller room has a baby-changing table which folds against the wall and toys and books for children. Tascor have provided information booklets currently in 11 languages.

3.1.3 There are two cubicles adjacent to the Holding Room where detainees are searched and a lockable cupboard for their property.

3.1.4 There are separate male and female toilets both accessed from within the main Holding Room. The toilets themselves are very modern and up to date but neither contains a shower. Disabled detainees in wheelchairs can access the staff toilet in the control room.

3.1.5 Neither of the two Rooms has a bed although it is possible to lie along the bench seating beside the tables. Blankets and pillows are available if requested.

3.1.6 There is a drinks machine and microwave cooker. Hot and cold food is provided in the form of dry packs and meal packs. If a detainee wants food of a type which is not stocked the DCOs will go landside and purchase it at Tascor expense. Members regularly check that all meal packs are in date.

3.1.7 Although the Rooms are bright there is no natural light. Detainees have no access to fresh air and they are not permitted to smoke. The whole area is well ventilated, artificially, with trunked heating and air conditioning.

3.1.8 A CCTV system covers the whole area and monitor screens are located in the DCOs' control room.

3.1.9 The Rooms are cleaned daily by contractors and are kept very clean and tidy.

3.1.10 A corridor separates the Holding Room from two UKBF interview rooms and a fingerprint room. One of the interview rooms contains a phone from which access to interpreters can be obtained using the Big Word system.

3.1.11 Tascor has been moving away from keeping paper records. It is steadily progressing towards keeping all its records on computer. The IMB has access to all records, whether on paper or on computer.

## **3.2 Operational experience & detainee numbers:**

3.2.1 The members' general experience at Edinburgh Airport is similar to that at Glasgow Airport (Section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above) and need not be repeated here.

3.2.2 The number of detainees held in the Holding Room in the period covered by this Report is shown in the Statistics (Section 8).

**3.3 Issues:** See Section 6.

## **4. The Reporting Centre, Festival Court, Glasgow**

### **4.1 Overview:**

4.1.1 The Holding Room is located in Building No 2 of a complex of three modern buildings occupied by UKBF at Festival Court, Brand Street, Ibrox, Glasgow. The Reporting Centre is where persons who have been temporarily admitted to the UK and are resident in Scotland are required to report periodically. Some of them are asylum seekers awaiting decisions about their status. The Holding Room is used by people, in the main, detained on reporting, detained during an operational enforcement visit or who are required for interview from an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC). Members of the IMB gain access to the Holding Room after first entering the complex by Building No 1 where they pick up a Proximity Pass at Reception which allows them to pass through the buildings.

4.1.2 The Holding Room area consists of a control room occupied by two Tascor DCOs on one side of which there is an observation window overlooking the Holding Room itself. The Holding Room is staffed from 09.00 until 17.00 Monday to Friday. It is a non-residential Facility.

4.1.3 There is no drinks machine but hot drinks can be provided using a kettle and there are cartons of cold water in the fridge. There is stock of snacks and meals. A microwave oven enables meals to be heated. The TV set in the Holding Room is controlled by the DCOs from outside the Holding Room.

4.1.4 The Holding Room itself is quite small. It contains 6 hard individual plastic seats fixed to the floor close to a table. The room contains two toilets which are cubicles in each corner of the back of the Room, one male and one female. As noted in our first Annual Report Home Office Immigration and Enforcement (HOIE) undertook substantial improvements to the accommodation, including toilets, during the period covered by our second Report. Whereas formerly there was nowhere for a detainee to lie down a soft bench was placed at the rear of the room, making it possible for one detainee to lie down but, as noted in last year's Report it is too short for anyone who is taller than medium height. The toilet arrangement, whilst greatly improved by extending the doors and partitioning, is still less than ideal as the bowls have no seats and are made of metal, providing no noise insulation. This is not a dignified solution. There is a baby changing table, and magazines in various languages are on hand. A prayer mat is available on request.

4.1.5 Like the two other non-residential Holding Rooms which the IMB monitors there is no fresh air and smoking is not permitted. There is no natural light.

## **4.2 Operational experience & detainee numbers:**

4.2.1 The members' general experience at Festival Court is similar to that at Glasgow Airport (Section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) and need not be repeated here.

4.2.2 The number of detainees held in the Holding Room in the period covered by this Report is shown in the Statistics (Section 8).

**4.3 Issues:** See Section 6.

## **5. Larne House, Larne, Northern Ireland**

### **5.1 Overview:**

5.1.1 The STHF is a modern residential Facility which opened in July 2011. It is located within the Police Station compound. It is a residential Facility and the only designated Facility in Northern Ireland where immigration detainees may be held. Persons may be detained there for a maximum of 7 days. Thereafter they must either be released (unconditionally or temporarily), removed from NI or transferred to an IRC on the UK mainland, there being no IRC in the Province. Prior to the Facility being opened detainees were kept in PSNI Custody Suites where monitoring was carried out by NI Independent Custody Visitors. The Home Office Immigration Minister appointed the IMB to monitor the Facility towards the end of 2012.

5.1.2 The Facility is managed by Tascor staff, usually a team (shift) of 6 DCOs working under a Duty Operation Manager (DOM). There is a mix of male and female officers. A total of 24 DCOs work (4 days on and 4 days off ) in 4 shifts on a 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year basis. There is no HOIE presence in the Facility. If there is a detainee who can not be managed after already being accepted at Larne House then there are contingencies and plans in place to ensure that the individual is moved to a more suitable location. in the first instance this would always be to the mainland and a long term IRC. Only in exceptional circumstances would police stations be used. There have been no such cases since the Facility was opened. Families with young children will not be detained but given Temporary Admission with a direction to report to Drumkeen Reporting Centre in Belfast.

5.1.3 The Facility can accommodate up to 19 detainees in 10 bedrooms, some single and some shared. Male and female bedrooms are located apart. The bedrooms are spartan, containing only a bed and wardrobe, with no wall decoration or reading lamp. The wooden edge of the bed is raised above the mattress making it very uncomfortable to sit there. There being no seat or table the detainee has no option but to be out of his or her room most of the time (if not sleeping or resting) and sit in the Recreation Room. But if the TV is on or the 2 computers are being used by other detainees there is little scope for peace and quiet. HOIE is also considering putting some kind of soft seating in the bedrooms as the IMB has requested and Tascor are leading on this. but at the time of writing this report there has been no progress on this.

5.1.4 The Facility is fresh, clean, well decorated and bright. It is cleaned by contractors daily and given a deep clean every few months. Although there is no natural light throughout, the eco-lighting system is very effective and efficient. There are no light switches and when areas are not in use the lighting reduces to a low lux level.

5.1.6 The Recreation Room, which is quite small, offers a TV with 4 terrestrial channels, a selection of DVDs, books newspapers and magazines in various languages. English language newspapers are provided daily, those in other languages tending to be older and not changed so frequently. There are 2 computers with limited access to the internet. The seating which formerly consisted of hard plastic chairs bolted to the floor in two rows opposite the TV screen has now been replaced with soft seating set out in 3 sides of a square with a table in the centre. This improvement was in response to a request by IMB members after the start of their visit programme. Staff report that the change has been beneficial and that more detainees take advantage of association in the recreation room. As requested by IMB, Tascor have agreed to provide headphones for computer users so that others using the recreation room will not be bothered by the audio.

5.1.7 Other facilities include –

- Reception, offices and Staff Room (adjacent to but outwith the residential part of the Facility)
- Interview Rooms
- A Custody Office for use by a Tascor manager, containing a small “shop” selling basic things like soap, cigarettes etc, and being the bedding store
- An outside Exercise Area where detainees, under DCO supervision, may smoke at limited times and generally have access to fresh air
- Showers and toilets
- A multi-faith Prayer Room (with various prayer mats and Korans),
- A Dining Room/Kitchen Area which has a number of tables each having four fixed seats
- A hot and cold drinks machine
- All day supply of cereals, milk and fruit: with the provision of hot meals prepared by DCOs from frozen/chilled packs using microwave and other ovens
- A washing machine and drier

5.1.8 When a detainee is admitted he or she will be assessed for suitability to be detained. The nurse on duty would also undertake a review of any medications taken in with the individual. Subsequent assessments might identify any further medication required. There is a fully qualified nurse on duty all the time.

5.1.9 After being admitted to the secure residential part of the Facility detainees have freedom of movement and association within all areas except to the Custody Office which is locked. As noted above access to the Exercise Area is subject to supervision.

5.1.10 Should any detainee be admitted without adequate clothing he/she can be issued with a pack containing basic underwear and tracksuit-type outer garments

5.1.11 Detainees may use their own mobile phones so long as they are not fitted with a camera or have internet access. Otherwise they can be issued with a simple phone without a camera which will be returned when the detainee leave

## **5.2. Operational experience & detainee numbers:**

5.2.1 This is the only residential Facility monitored by this IMB. Whereas persons held at the non-residential Facilities at the airports and Glasgow Reporting Centre will typically be detained for only a few hours those detained at Larne House can be there for up to a week if removal directions are set. Thus there is a greater opportunity for interaction between the DCOs and detainees. And as the Facility is operational 24/7 and able to accommodate up to 19 persons there is clearly a need to have more staff on duty (see 5.1.2). Our experience is that the DCOs demonstrate an extremely professional, caring and friendly attitude towards the detainees and go out of their way to make the detainees' stay as comfortable and stress-free as possible. During our visits we have spoken to as many English-speaking detainees as possible. Whilst obviously none of them wants to be there we were heartened to find a generally relaxed and unapprehensive environment. From our observation this is in great part down to the positive way in which they are treated by the DCOs. There was no record of any complaint having been made to or against any of the DCOs and the detainees themselves confirmed that they were content with the manner in which they were treated. Indeed many detainees have written letters expressing thanks for the care they have receive and a DCOs have kept these in a book which is available in the recreation room for detainees and visitors to read.

5.2.2 The number of detainees held in the Holding Room in the period covered by this Report (December 2012 through January 2013) is shown in the Statistics (Section 8).

**5.3 Issues:** See Section 6.

## 6. Issues

**6.1 Persistent failure by Border Force Immigration Officers properly to complete Forms IS 91:** In last year's Annual Report we raised the issue of Immigration Officers (IOs) not completing an important part of the Form. The IS 91 is the authority to detain issued by IOs to Tascor DCOs authorising them to detain a person in the Holding Room. It is thus a fundamentally important document. Part 3 of the Form, headed "Risk Factors", contains the following warning/notice from the IOs who sign the forms to the Tascor DCOs –

"It is considered that this detainee may require special monitoring or supervision due to: (PLEASE STATE CLEARLY IF NO SPECIAL CONDITIONS/RISK FACTORS ARE IDENTIFIED) National Security Case, Serious Criminal Activity, Known Associations. Violence toward or Assaults on Others, Escape Attempts, Suicide/Self Harm Risk, disruptive Behaviour, fluid Refusal, Food Refusal, Psychiatric Illness, Disability, Pregnancy, Other Medical Concerns, Minor, Other & None" (and tick boxes are shown against each of these categories) –

and provides space for comments and details of any Medication."

Presumably the purpose of the Instruction is to give relevant warning/notice to Tascor DCOs in the interests of their and the detainees' health and safety and, indeed that of visiting IMB members.

Home Office has taken robust action during the reporting period to remedy this shortcoming including retraining of IOs and the redesigning of the IS91 forms. Initially this provided a marked improvement but some slippage began to creep in. Home Office have addressed this with an instruction that all OLD copies of the IS91 forms should be destroyed. In addition an IS91 Analysis is being completed quarterly in an attempt to tighten up the completion of the risk assessment section. We are continuing to monitor accurate completion of forms and provide feedback to associated offices where necessary.

Home Office is confident that by identifying the officers who are failing to complete the risk assessment correctly they can take retraining to the right areas and thus resolve the problem.

The completion of these Forms is not an academic exercise and whilst there has been some improvement in recent months there are still too many failures.

**6.2 Family Removals:** The IMB was concerned to observe the removal of families with young children (this, against the background whereby children are no longer detained but such families are granted Temporary Admission to the UK and housed in the community). We agreed a protocol with Home Office and Tascor that we

would be given prior notice of a family removal, especially where this would follow an enforcement visit. In the period there were 6 family removals of which we are aware – 2 of which were aborted because the family was unable to be picked up by the enforcement team. In one of the removals which was aborted a further problem was identified. An IMB member was called out, attended and was waiting within the holding room for the arrival of the overseas team and the family when the removal was aborted. Unfortunately when the other personnel were stood down the IMB member's presence was overlooked. Tascor has acknowledged this oversight and has now produced a list of those who must be contacted when a removal is stood down. Hopefully this will not happen again.

**6.3 Mixed gender of DCOs:** In last year's Annual Report we noted that on several occasions there had been no female DCO on duty: and that this could result in delay in processing a female detainee as male DCOs were not permitted to carry out a full body search of a female. The HOIE Action Plan referred to accepted our concern in principle.

Permanent staff of the holding rooms consist of male and female DCOs but the problem arises when covering holidays and sickness at the holding rooms. Tascor makes every effort to keep the gender mix but have not always found this to be possible.

Unfortunately, the issue we raised last year has not been resolved. There have been a number of instances, especially at the Edinburgh Airport Holding Room where only male DCOs have been on duty. Tascor accepts that it has had difficulty in employing sufficient numbers of female DCOs but will continue their efforts to recruit.

**6.4 Escorts with no airside passes:** In recent months a number of new Tascor vehicle escorts have not had airside passes which has resulted in one or both of the two DCOs in the Edinburgh Airport Holding Room having to leave the Holding Room and go landside to bring the escort airside either to deliver or collect a detainee. We have experienced similar situations at Glasgow Airport.

**6.5 Toilets in Festival Court Holding Room:** In previous Annual Reports we have referred to the inadequacy of the toilets, particularly as both male and female toilets are sited in cubicles in the same room. The HOIE Action Plan referred to accepted our concern in principle and stated –

“The current toilet provision falls within the recommended standards for holding room facilities. UKBF will look into the possibility of an appropriate solution”

We are surprised that the facilities are deemed to be of an acceptable standard. That is certainly not the view of the IMB. Some improvement in privacy standards has certainly been made by lessening the gap between the toilet door and the floor which does help to some extent. The toilets however are far from acceptable in our

view as they are stainless steel, with no seat. Male and female toilets are situated in the holding room itself with no privacy whatsoever, no soundproofing and overlooked by whoever happens to be in the DCOs' office.

**6.6 Seating at Larne House:** Following our first visits to the Facility in November 2012 we recommended that soft seating be provided in the Recreation Room and bedrooms. Tascor and HOIE were very supportive of the recommendation and soft seating has now been provided as stated in 5.1.6 above. This has been a big improvement with DCOs stating that detainees are far more likely to be in association, to play games, to have a cup of coffee together or just to talk. It is hoped that this may be extended to providing some sort of suitable seating in the bedrooms. Provision of both types of seating will go a long way to making both the public room and the bedrooms more comfortable.

**6.7 Pillows in Larne House:** There have been consistent complaints from detainees about the pillows provided in Larne House as detainees find them very hard and uncomfortable. Following on our comments new pillows were provided which were much more comfortable but very soon these were withdrawn, apparently because of potential risk of smothering. It is hoped that efforts will be made to find something both comfortable and safe.

**6.8 The soft sofa in Festival Court:** See 4.1.4. We recommend that a more suitable – longer – sofa be provided in place of the current one which is too short.

**6.9 Smoking, access to fresh air and showers:** As we have noted in previous Reports detainees in the Airports and Festival Court Holding Rooms are not permitted to smoke, they have no access to fresh air and no showers are provided. Whilst we are only too well aware of the response to our earlier requests we feel bound to restate our concern that no one in authority seems to be willing to seek a solution. Showers are being installed in at least one of the Heathrow Airport Terminals. The Home Office Action Plan issued last year accepted this in principle and stated - "The Home Office now includes the installation of showers at new holding rooms at ports if space permits. An approach will be made to the airport authority at both Glasgow airport and Edinburgh Airport." We hope that some progress can be made here.

With regard to smoking, we understand the difficulty in airports but also understand that after a long journey, sometimes many hours, being detained and denied the chance to smoke can be unnecessarily stressful for detainees who will already be upset by the very fact of being detained. Electronic cigarettes were deemed to be too expensive. Would it not be possible for staff to keep a small supply so that a detainee could purchase one if it was a huge issue?

**6.10 Disruptive airport removals:** An incident occurred at Glasgow Airport where a Chinese national became disruptive during the walk to the aircraft on which he was to be removed. Unfortunately the way to the aircraft was through a public area where many passengers were waiting to board at another gate. He could not

be put onto the aircraft and so had to be returned through the same public area where bystanders were filming the proceedings on their mobile phones. IMB made representations to DEPMU North so that an alternative route could be found to take a detainee to the aircraft so that in the event of an incident happening it was not played out in public. DEPMU North reported to our next meeting that they were having discussions with BAA to address this. We did not hear the outcome of these discussions but it is worth reporting that some time later an Albanian family was taken to Festival Court prior to being removed from Glasgow Airport. The mother was extremely disruptive at Festival Court and it was quite some time before she was composed enough to board the bus. When the bus arrived at the airport and the passengers disembarked they were taken on a quiet route to the holding room which did not involve passing through any public areas at all. As it happened the lady was quiet and gave no trouble but the main point is that an alternative route was made available, which I can only assume was due to successful negotiation by DEPMU with BAA.

## **7. Other matters**

**7.1 The Short Term Holding Facilities Rules:** There are presently no Rules governing the operational requirements, standards and duties to which the IMB should adhere. After many promises to complete the task of providing the Rules this has apparently been “put on the back burner” for now. New holding rooms are urgently required at Gatwick and Stansted airports and these are not being permitted to open at the time of writing because no Rules are available. It is hoped that this might make the provision of Rules all the more urgent.

### **7.2 Amenities**

The Home Office Action Plan accepted in principle the IMB’s recommendation that showers should be installed within Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports. Whilst it is appreciated that this would have to be negotiated with the airport authorities at both airports, we have had no word of whether progress has been made with this.

**7.3 Recruitment:** As noted in 1.5 above the IMB was authorised by the Immigration Minister to recruit additional members. This is partly because the IMB now has four Facilities to monitor, one of which is outwith Scotland. A recruitment campaign started in November 2012 as a result of which 4 probationary members were appointed during the reporting period. At the time of writing this report all of the probationary members have had their 9 monthly review, are on the visit rota and are performing their duties with efficiency and commitment.

### **7.4 Clerk to the IMB**

Some years ago a Memorandum of Understanding between the then UKBA Detention Services and the National Council of the IMB decreed that the former (now Home Office) would be responsible for providing a clerk to our IMB. This has not been easy for either organisation mainly due to the distances involved – the IMB is 400 miles from its Secretariat and 200 miles from its clerk. Both IMB and DEPMU have had to cope with many changes of clerk – promotion, maternity leave and sick absence have all played a part. It must be said that the team from DEPMU North do an excellent job for us and we have no complaints about the efficiency and commitment we receive from them, indeed we have always had an excellent working relationship with them. Nevertheless there are inevitably difficulties when such distances are involved and I am sure that when this arrangement was agreed no thought was given to a northerly IMB without office premises - prisons and removal centres being the norm. There are times when it would be really helpful to be able to speak to a clerk face to face without travelling 200 miles to do so. Is there really no-one in Scotland who could be appointed as our clerk so that if we required to meet with them we would only have to travel to one of the airports or Festival Court?

## 7.5 Family Detention Overnight

The detention of an Albanian Family overnight at Edinburgh caused the Board great concern during this reporting period. Our member reported that due to the lateness of the hour the holding room was not manned and yet the family was detained in the unmanned holding room for the whole night. Our member was told that there were only 2 relatively inexperienced IOs on duty and they had not been supervising the family continuously during the night, and in addition IOs do not have training in how to manage or deal with young children. No bedding had been provided and the travelling cot which could have accommodated the youngest child had not been used. None of the Tascor food or drink stock had been used and it was not clear if the family had been offered any food or drink. When the Tascor DCOs came on duty at midday IS91s were issued and the family was placed in their custody whereupon they took the appropriate steps to comply with Tascor's Child Care Plan (most recently issued on 8.8.13). The family was eventually TA'd with directions to report back to the airport the following day, having been detained for over 26 hours. The Local Authority Social Services were not informed.

DEPMU North subsequently reported that food and drink were in fact provided from some other source. They also provided an explanation for the detention saying that there were concerns that the family were being trafficked and that since the family did not have an address they were unable to be released. There was difficulty in finding hotel accommodation due to the Edinburgh Festival taking place. They were temporarily released for interview the following day but subsequently absconded. Social Services had apparently indicated that they were unable to help and it was believed that the officers acted in the family's best interests. DEPMU North indicated that they would investigate the failure of Social Services to be of assistance. The Board understood the situation but still takes a very serious view of this incident and would be interested to know what the outcome of the dialogue with Social Services was and also what protocols had been put in place to inform IOs if they were placed in a similar situation in the absence of Tascor DCOs.

## 8. Statistics

(last year in brackets)

8.1	Members at the start of the reporting period	8	(8)
8.2	Members at the close of the reporting period	12	(8)
8.3	Board meetings held	12	(12)
8.4	Member attendance at Board Meetings Feb/May 8 members, from June 12 members)	102	(81)
8.5	Visits to Glasgow Airport (includes 4 double member visits ie 53+4)	57	(38)
8.6	Visits to Edinburgh Airport (includes 6 double member visits, ie 53+6)	59	(43)
8.7	Visits to Festival Court (includes 3 double member visits, ie 24+4)	27	(33)
8.8	Visits to Larne House (includes 4 double member visits, ie 24 + 4)	28	(4)
8.9	Detainee movements at Glasgow Airport	323	(277)
8.10	Detainee movements at Edinburgh Airport	371	(283)
8.11	Detainee movements at Festival Court	300	(208)
8.12	Detainee movements at Larne House (Last year's figure was for 2 months only)	2035	(75)

## 9. Summary

- a. We have now been operational for over four years and this is our Fourth Annual Report. We have highlighted some issues and made some recommendations but we continue to find both UKBF and Tascor to be committed to the welfare of the detainees held in custody in the Holding Rooms. As we noted in our previous three Annual Reports the Rooms are well and professionally managed by caring DCOs: and we continue to have full co-operation from UKBF and Tascor at all levels. Nevertheless, some issues, especially that of UKBF's failure to complete important warrants, are a continuing concern. There has been significant improvement since Home Office have been monitoring the situation but we will want to see a continuing improvement in performance on the IS 91 issue in the coming year.