



**Annual Report**  
of the  
**Independent Monitoring Board**  
at  
**Yarl's Wood**  
**Immigration Removal Centre**

**Annual Report 2016**

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*Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody*

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

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and immigration removal centre to be monitored by an independent board. Members of IMBs in Immigration Removal Centres are appointed by the Home Secretary from members of the community in which the centre is located.

The Board is required to:

- satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in the immigration removal centre.
- promptly inform the Secretary of State (or any official to whom she has delegated authority) of any concern it has.
- 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 every resident and every part of the centre and also the centre's records.

### **IMB Equality Statement**

Yarl's Wood IMB adopted the following equality statement in 2011:

The IMB will not discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, or sex and sexual orientation, in recruitment, in the treatment of members, and in the way it monitors the treatment of people in custody.

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### **3. Description of Centre**

Yarl's Wood IRC ("the Centre") is a purpose-built Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) operated under the Detention Centre Rules 2001. It is located outside the village of Clapham in Bedfordshire and was opened in 2001.

- 3.1.** Yarl's Wood is the principal UK centre for the detention of single women and families under immigration legislation. For the purposes of this report, the term "families" means couples or families detained with children over the age of 18. There is also a Short Term Holding Facility (STHF) at the premises, with accommodation for up to thirty-eight men. The Centre and the STHF are operated on behalf of the Home Office Immigration and Enforcement unit (HOIE) by Serco Limited ("Serco" or "the Contractor").
  
- 3.2.** The accommodation at Yarl's Wood IRC consists of five residential units housed in a large, two-storey building. Average monthly occupancy in 2016 was 302. The majority of detainees are single women. There is a family unit (Hummingbird), a male unit (Bunting) which is a short term holding facility, a female induction unit (Crane) and two female residential units (Avocet and Dove). The four main residential units are connected by a central corridor from which all ancillary areas, including the healthcare centre, can be accessed. Detainees in temporary confinement under rule 42 ("TC") are held in the separation unit, which also contains removal from association ("RFA") rooms. There is also a care suite to accommodate temporarily detainees who would struggle to cope on a residential unit.
  
- 3.3.** There is a healthcare centre on site, which currently is operated by G4S. This provides primary healthcare for detainees, with secondary care being the responsibility of the NHS England.
  
- 3.4.** In 2016 Yarl's Wood continued to attract intermittent media attention, but not to the same extent as in 2015. During the year, external pressure groups and non-governmental organisations organised four protests at the centre.

#### **4. Executive Summary**

- 4.1.** Yarl's Wood IRC has to cater for a variety of detainees from all over the world, often with quite complex needs. We feel that progress has been made in a number of areas, but still have some concerns.
- 4.2.** We commend the work of the religious affairs team at Yarl's Wood.
- 4.3.** We are pleased to note that the improvements in Healthcare, detected in the latter part of 2015, continued into 2016. This is reflected in the reduced number of applications to the IMB. **(5.4.14.)**
- 4.4.** In 2015 Healthcare was seriously understaffed and we recommended that urgent priority be given to the recruitment of permanent members of staff to allow Healthcare provision to be delivered effectively. By the end of 2016 the position was much better, but there are still not enough permanent members of staff. **(5.4.3.)**

**We recommend that the recruitment of permanent healthcare staff remains a priority.**

- 4.5.** We welcome the systems put in place in 2016 to support detainees with mental health problems, but still have major concerns about the detention of women suffering from serious conditions. There were four held in the first few months of 2016, and two of these were eventually sectioned. IRCs are not the correct environment for them, as the facilities are not suitable and the majority of staff do not have the expertise to deliver adequate care. **(5.4.6.)**

**We recommend:**

- **that women with serious mental health issues are not detained in IRCs, but in suitable mental health establishments (HOIE)**
- **that the Centre continues to improve the staffing, training and facilities to cater for detainees who are found to have mental health issues after they are detained. [HOIE, Serco, G4S]**

- 4.6.** We highlight the apparent inadequacy of the process to detain in preparation for removal from the country. We are particularly concerned about the effect of this on the detainees at Yarl's Wood. **(5.7.2.)**

**We recommend:**

- **that there should be a maximum time-limit for detention (HOIE)**
- **that the decision to detain process is reviewed as it does not appear to be effective (HOIE)**
- **that detention should only be used in cases where removal is inevitable and imminent (HOIE)**
- **that greater use of is made of community-based monitoring (HOIE)**

4.7. We welcome the decrease in the use of RFA in 2016, but are concerned about the occasions on which detainees were removed from association prior to removal from the Centre. We feel that this was not always appropriate and in some cases, was too far in advance of the removal date. Towards the end of the year, initiatives were introduced to address this. (5.5.5.)

**We recommend that Serco continues to develop alternative strategies to manage removal from the Centre**

4.8. In 2015, we recommended that the use of RFA should be investigated, by Serco, to ensure compliance with DC rules. We welcomed the review, but were concerned about their findings that, on the face of the paperwork, 41 cases had not been authorised by HOIE as required under the rule, and that 15 cases of extended removal were also not correctly authorised. Also of concern was the apparent consensus amongst Serco managers, revealed by the review, that they were authorised to approve pre-planned RFAs.<sup>1</sup> (5.5.4./5.5.6./5.5.7.)

**We recommend:**

- **that Serco follow up on their recommendations from the review to ensure that staff are aware of the legitimate use of Rule 40**
- **that Serco share their findings with HOIE and create an auditable action plan to ensure that all uses (especially pre-planned) are fully documented and appropriately authorised.**
- **that the IMB is informed of all RFAs and given the relevant paperwork. (Serco)**

4.9. We are pleased to report a decrease in the use of force at Yarl's Wood in 2016. One incident highlighted the importance of the correct use of hand-held and body cameras to record occasions when force is used. (5.5.9.)

**We recommend that Serco continues to provide training in the use of body cameras during the use of force incidents.**

4.10. The Board welcomes the recruitment campaigns and ITC (training) offered to new staff, but we still have concerns that there are times when lack of officers can leave units unmanned or facilities closed. We are pleased that the percentage of female officers has increased to 52%, but we still feel that the target of 60% female staff is insufficient to cope with the demands of a vulnerable, predominantly female population. (5.12.3.)

**We recommend the recruitment of more staff, particularly female staff**

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<sup>1</sup> Serco Use of Rule 40 Review June 2015 - June 2016

## **5. Specific areas of monitoring**

### **5.1 Equality and Diversity**

- 5.1.1.** This area covers the monitoring of the ethnicity, social and demographic characteristics of the detainees and the efforts made within the Centre to address their social, cultural and religious needs.
- 5.1.2.** The detainees are multi-national, but precise numbers vary throughout the year. The most consistently represented nationalities in 2016 were Indian, Nigerian and Chinese, although there were slight variations due to charter flight removals and arrivals to the Bunting unit.
- 5.1.3.** They bring with them a range of different faiths and cultural needs. Christianity continues to be the largest faith group. There is a Christian chapel and detainees often conduct their own services. Buddhists and Muslims each have their own prayer rooms, while Hindus and Sikhs share one. The Centre has a religious affairs team led by a Christian pastor and supported by a Muslim cleric and Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh and Chinese Christian leaders. They collectively provide spiritual and emotional support for the detainees. The team meets regularly and works well together. They produce an annual calendar of cultural and religious events.
- 5.1.4.** The Centre recognises the specific needs of Muslim detainees during Ramadan and provides food packs which are distributed daily at sunset. These contain an evening meal, drinks and breakfast. In 2016 detainees were pleased with the provision at this important time in their year.
- 5.1.5.** The activities group at the Centre has organised various social events during the year to coincide with times in the calendar which have specific religious and cultural significance for detainees.
- 5.1.6.** The board welcomes the increasing awareness in the Centre of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) detainees. A named officer has been appointed to support LGBT detainees as requested. This is a significant improvement on the previous year when there was no designated officer.
- 5.1.7.** On arrival at the centre, transgender detainees stay on the induction unit and have the privacy of their own room.
- 5.1.8.** During the year, the care plans for detainees with disabilities were replaced by Supported Living Plans (SLPs). Any resident arriving at the Centre with a disability, restrictive medical condition or injury was placed on a SLP. There was a total of 42 SLPs in 2016. The majority of these were to support those with mobility issues, although they were also for people suffering from epilepsy, those requiring support with medication or whose mental health made it difficult for them to conduct daily activities effectively on their own.<sup>2</sup>
- 5.1.9.** Serco has an Equality and Regimes Manager responsible for this area who reports monthly to the EAT with an updated analysis of relevant demographic and religious statistics.
- 5.1.10.** We welcome the efforts made to recruit more female officers in 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> Serco Safer Detention Annual Report

## **5.2. Activities, Education and Employment**

- 5.2.1.** Throughout 2016, the Serco activities team worked hard to offer a variety of events for the detainees. Sometimes the team joined forces with outside organisations such as Music in Detention or the Befrienders, who also provide support and friendship to a considerable number of the detainees.
- 5.2.2.** Social events in 2016 included Chinese New Year celebrations, Sports Relief, Zumba, bingo sessions and a whole range of activities to celebrate Black History Month. Music in Detention also contributed to this event, as they did during Diwali celebrations. A hugely successful summer fête was organised with the Befrienders. In December, there was a well-attended carol service and an equally popular Christmas party, again organised by the Befrienders and the WI.
- 5.2.3.** The gym is popular and the sports hall has been used by family groups and single women for impromptu team games e.g. badminton or volleyball. It has not been possible to collate information about the use of the facilities in Bunting unit due to the short time the men stay there, although they usually make use of the pool table and astro turf.
- 5.2.4.** The arts and crafts room has remained popular and has continued to provide a range of activities including origami and sewing. When the tutor is absent, cover is provided.
- 5.2.5.** The Café Central continues to be in high demand. Opening hours have been extended and it can now be booked for three sessions each day. It provides the opportunity both to prepare food that the detainees want to eat and to engage in a meaningful social activity. Unfortunately, it may be closed if the officer is absent. The kitchen in the family unit in Hummingbird is also available.
- 5.2.6.** The treatments offered in the salon are popular with detainees. There are also times specifically allocated to men. The salon provides two jobs for detainees and usually both positions are filled.
- 5.2.7.** The library is an important source of information and entertainment for detainees. There is a range of materials in relevant foreign languages. A lot of important information about access to legal advice and other services is displayed, along with the dates of focus group meetings and details of employment opportunities within the centre.
- 5.2.8.** Focus groups were set up to provide a forum in which detainees could air their views. There are several focus groups every month. Each one is aimed at a different nationality to provide the opportunity to raise culturally specific concerns. The dates are publicised well in advance and invitations are sent, but take-up has been very variable, with some nationalities never attending at all.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Serco Centre Manager's Report

**5.2.9.** There have been 64 opportunities for detainees to engage in paid work in the IRC. There has been no time in the year when all posts were filled and there has been considerable monthly variation, reflecting the changing population of the Centre. The majority of the employed detainees are in the 29-39 year age group and there have been monthly variations in other age groups, with people aged 18-28 and 40-50 being the next largest groups. Older detainees have been under-represented, but they say this is because they do not wish to work. The take-up of employment by nationality is representative of the nationalities in the Centre, although some nationalities (Jamaica and China) were consistently under-represented.<sup>3</sup>

**5.2.10.** The post room provides three employment opportunities which are currently filled. It is often very busy with detainees collecting post or sending faxes. The number of fax machines has been increased to help cope with the demand.

**5.2.11.** The IT room continues to be one of the most widely used facilities in the Centre. Five more computers have been added to the main IT suite, but the IT room in Bunting is under-used.

**5.2.12.** Tuition has only been offered in elementary English and keyboard skills this year. We do not feel that this is adequate. Certificated programmes of learning no longer run, as continuity of attendance cannot be guaranteed. Two PCs have been moved to the classroom to encourage detainees to use them to pursue personalised learning programmes.

**5.2.13.** In 2016 first aid training was provided, with an average of ten participants per month and the charity Hibiscus ran a series of workshops called Working Chance. These aimed to prepare women for release from the Centre by providing advice on job applications, interviews and writing CVs.

**5.2.14.** The opportunity to practise their faith is an essential activity for many detainees. Prayer meetings, services, communion and mass take place weekly. The International Christian Worship Service on Sunday morning is often attended by over 100 detainees, not only Christians, but also those from other faiths. The choir members are all detainees. Regular religious observances and celebrations took place throughout the year and reflected the important festivals in the calendars of the different religions represented in the Centre.

**5.2.15.** The weekly market organised by the charity Hischurch was very popular but it stopped running. We hope that it will be possible to restart the market in future.

### **5.3 Food**

- 5.3.1.** Following our recommendation in the 2015 report, we welcome the addition of salads to the lunchtime menu. However, lunch continues to lack variety, as there is still a lot of bread and some of the sandwiches can be very unappetising.
- 5.3.2.** There is a food comments book in each dining room and we are pleased to note that it is used and that staff respond to comments. However, some detainees have commented via kiosk surveys that the food is too English and still not sufficiently culturally diverse.

#### **5.4 Healthcare and mental health**

Many of the problems we highlighted in 2015 have been dealt with this year.

- 5.4.1.** The Home Office decision to restrict the detention of pregnant women to 72 hours, was most welcome. Pregnant women are now rarely detained at Yarl's Wood and when it does happen, they are released, as instructed, within 72 hours, except in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.4.2.** During 2016, 33 women were confirmed pregnant on arrival at Yarl's Wood. The restriction of detention to 72 hours, agreed by HOIE senior managers and the Secretary of State, was introduced in July and from then until the end of the year, 13 detained women were subsequently confirmed pregnant. Of these, 12 were released within 72 hours. One woman was in detention for seven days at her own request because of her vulnerability and personal circumstances.<sup>4</sup>
- 5.4.3.** In 2015 we expressed concern that for some of the year, more than half of the Healthcare posts were filled by agency staff. The position at the end of 2016 was better, but the recruitment of permanent staff remains an issue.
- 5.4.4.** The introduction of the medicine access point (MAP) with a full-time pharmacy technician and assistant, separate from Healthcare reception, has led to a welcome improvement in the efficiency of medication distribution and the time needed to do so. Nurses are also now able to supply over the counter medicines and to prescribe medication, avoiding unnecessary detainee consultation with a GP.
- 5.4.5.** The mental health of those in detention is an ongoing concern. Detainees have many worries which often have a far greater negative impact on their mental health than would be found in the community. In 2014 we reported that counselling services had been stopped, so we welcome the Kaleidoscope project which started in May 2016. This is a two-year pilot scheme set up and funded by NHS England to address some mental health issues. It is run by two full time staff and one part time member of staff. Any detainee can make use of it, but individuals can be referred by Healthcare, a member of staff or if they are on ACDT or SLP. The services on offer include group or one-to-one talking therapies, awareness groups (anxiety, depression and psycho

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<sup>4</sup> HOIE

education), wellbeing and self-help. Currently there are ten two-hour group sessions a week. Since it started in May, 354 detainees have accessed the service, many more than once, either in a group or one-to-one capacity. There will be a review of the effectiveness of Kaleidoscope at the end of January 2017.<sup>5</sup>

**5.4.6.** 2016 saw a reduction in the number of detainees suffering from serious mental health conditions although in January and February there were four seriously unwell women who were referred to secure NHS facilities. One, who was sectioned, was detained in Kingfisher for at least 23 days until a bed could be found for her. As we said last year, this is not appropriate accommodation for somebody with serious mental health problems.

In September 2016 HOIE's new Adults at Risk policy for immigration detention came into effect. This introduced the concept of "vulnerable adults", in respect of whom there is a presumption against detention. Individuals suffering from a mental health condition or impairment are included in the category of vulnerable adults and there is a presumption that detention is not appropriate in these cases, except when the immigration factors outweigh the risks.

**5.4.7.** During 2016 Serco included mental health awareness in their training programme for newly appointed DCOs. Established staff can also attend but only if they have the time. Two or three members of staff are allowed to join each training session, generally held monthly. We welcome this initiative, but feel that all staff should be required to attend this training.

**5.4.8.** Last year we recommended that all detainees be actively encouraged to attend a GP's appointment within 48 hours of arrival at Yarl's Wood, not just those who want one. The situation remains the same as last year, with detainees being offered a GP's appointment on arrival at the centre, but not automatically given one.

**5.4.9.** We acknowledge that a far higher proportion of detainees visit a doctor or nurse whilst in Yarl's Wood (well over 90%) than in the community, but we still believe that more could be done to persuade all detainees that a medical check by a GP is in their interest, as well as being a requirement under DC rules.<sup>6</sup>

**5.4.10.** Last year we recommended that the Healthcare contract be shared with Serco, HOIE and the IMB, so that the healthcare provision can be effectively monitored and for all parties to be aware of the extent of the provision. This has not happened.

**5.4.11.** GP waiting times have been consistent at 2-3 days. Waiting times for Rule 35 appointments are still a problem. In November, it was within two weeks, with an average of three Rule 35 appointments a day. There is a need for more GPs willing and able to offer these appointments when they are requested and to reduce waiting times.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Kaleidoscope team

<sup>6</sup> NHS England

<sup>7</sup> G4S

**5.4.12.** From January to September 2016 there were 2,162 Rule 35 reports from all IRCs in the UK and 782 of the detainees were released (36%). At Yarl's Wood there were 374 reports with approximately 45% released. As less than half of the number of detainees with Rule 35 applications are released, this policy seems to be at odds with the Adults at Risk Policy principal 1(of 6), 'The intention is that fewer people with a confirmed vulnerability will be detained in fewer instances, and that, where detention becomes necessary, it will be for the shortest period necessary'.

**5.4.13.** There is still a problem with detainees failing to turn up to GPs' appointments. In 2016 there were on average 60 DNAs a month or 2 a day. This is about 17% of all appointments. Some of these are because detainees leave the centre before their appointment, but that is a small number. We feel more could be done about addressing this issue, as it affects timely access to the GP for other detainees.<sup>8</sup>

**5.4.14.** The IMB received 14 applications (written or oral) about Healthcare during 2016, a marked reduction in those received in the past two years. There were 40 in 2015. This is not surprising as many of the issues we raised last year have now been addressed. Of those 14, seven were about dissatisfaction with medication, two each for rudeness, minor misconduct and missed rule 35 appointments. One was for being unable to see a doctor before being removed. There were also 21 applications about health-related matters e.g. objections to being escorted to collect medication or not being allowed to keep paracetamol in rooms.

**5.4.15.** There were about 40 official Healthcare complaints in 2016 compared to 122 in 2015. We have only been given detailed figures for five months and in this period, there were 20 complaints, one of which was upheld.<sup>9</sup> These figures reflect our observations that Healthcare provision and delivery has improved during the past eighteen months despite being without an on-site clinical lead for four months of the year. (It was managed during this time by the G4S Head of Healthcare).

**5.4.16.** There have been efforts made to ask those who use Healthcare services for feedback on their experiences. Prominently in reception there is a poster asking users to rate their experience in Healthcare with either a smiley face or a sad one. There is a more detailed questionnaire on the kiosk that anyone can complete. At the moment, this is being updated as it was considered to have 'leading' questions.

**5.4.17.** For a few weeks, earlier in the year, the centre was quarantined to prevent the spread of illness. This meant there were no arrivals or departures for a short time.

## **5.5. Removal from Association, Temporary Confinement and Use of Force**

**5.5.1.** The Security Committee meets monthly to review the monthly intelligence reports and security threats. During this year, a more strategic security meeting was introduced to plan ahead by devising clearer strategies for dealing with potential

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<sup>8</sup> HJIP Performance Report 2016

<sup>9</sup> G4S Yarl's Wood

security issues. The IMB is represented at these meetings wherever possible and in 2016, was present at six out of twelve.

- 5.5.2.** Intelligence-led room searches take place when concerns have been raised. There are also area-specific searches e.g. outdoor areas or association rooms.
- 5.5.3.** Contingency plans are regularly reviewed and updated.
- 5.5.4.** In 2016 there were 71 occasions on which RFA was employed.<sup>10</sup> In such cases, as is required under DC Rules, the IMB should be informed and the member on duty should visit the resident concerned to ensure that a full explanation has been provided for the action taken. There were consistent problems during 2016 with the system of notifying the IMB of the exercise of rule 40. On several occasions the Board was not informed or did not receive the relevant paperwork, so no visit could take place
- 5.5.5.** The incidences of RFA have decreased from 93 in 2015. This is welcome, but the Board continues to be concerned about the occasions on which detainees are removed from association when intelligence suggests they may try to disrupt removal from the Centre. (24 in 2016). In November, one woman was held for three days before her removal.
- 5.5.6.** The Board welcomed Serco's Rule 40 review, as recommended in our 2015 annual report. It revealed that in the twelve months from June 2015 to June 2016, there were 80 uses of Rule 40. Of these, only 34% of RFAs were found by the review to have been necessary, with 61% deemed partially necessary and 5% unnecessary. It also found that 15 instances of extended removal beyond 24 hours took place without the correct authorisation.<sup>11</sup> The review concluded that correct procedures had not always been followed and highlighted areas for improvement.<sup>11</sup>
- 5.5.7.** There were 41 cases where the documents recorded that pre-planned removals had been approved by a Serco manager. Each one of these cases should have been approved by HOIE, on behalf of the Secretary of State. According to the review, there was a consensus among Serco managers, that they are authorised to approve the use of Rule 40 for pre-planned removals, which is not the case. The Board accepts HOIE's assertion that in some cases verbal approval may have been given to the Serco manager, but it is paramount that all paperwork is completed fully to show compliance with DC Rules.
- 5.5.8.** HOIE were aware of the Rule 40 Review, but had no direct input into it. We ask that Serco share the findings with HOIE and formalise an auditable action plan. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency to address any issues highlighted to ensure that this area is fully compliant.

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<sup>10</sup> Serco reports

<sup>11</sup> Serco Use of Rule 40 Review June 2015- June 2016

**5.5.9.** Temporary Confinement was used on 18 occasions in 2016 which is the same as in 2015 and one fewer than in 2014.<sup>12</sup>

**5.5.10.** Force was used on 45 occasions in 2016 compared with 78 in 2015 and 75 in 2014. This represents a significant reduction and is a welcome return to the downward trend of previous years.<sup>12</sup>

**5.5.11.** When a Board member asked to see the footage of one particular use of force incident, it was not of good quality and so was of little value. The practices for the use of body and hand-held cameras have now been reviewed and checks have been put in place. Use of force video recordings are now reviewed every month. Where necessary, issues identified are incorporated into training for staff.

**5.5.12.** In 2016 there were 404 external, escorted visits by detainees. Handcuffs were employed on 23 occasions, representing about 6% of all external, escorted visits.<sup>12</sup>

## **5.6. Safer Detention**

**5.6.1.** Safer Detention is the process of identifying, monitoring and supporting the most vulnerable detainees. It involves everybody, including HOIE, Healthcare, Religious Affairs, managers, DCOs and the IMB.

**5.6.2.** A Safer Detention report is produced and a monthly meeting is held to review the number of ACDTs (Assessment, Care in Detention and Teamwork) opened every month, why it was opened and by whom. These figures are compared month by month and year by year. Other variables are considered, such as nationality and religious faith to assess whether there are any trends. The IMB monitors these documents on rota visits and attends the monthly meetings wherever possible.

**5.6.3.** 364 ACDTs were opened in 2016 (355 in 2015), which include 105 ACDTs opened when a resident missed six consecutive meals in the Centre. In June, the number of ACDTs for missing meals was very high. This was due to a protest organised by external pressure groups encouraging detainees to go on hunger strike. We did not have any major concerns for the detainees who took part in this action.<sup>13</sup>

**5.6.4.** A change of policy, following a review of DSO 03/2013, was implemented in September 2016. It used to be the case that anyone missing six consecutive meals would automatically have an ACDT opened. From September 2016, ACDTs for missed meals were opened only for those detainees about whom staff were worried.

**5.6.5.** In our last report, we highlighted our concern about the increase in instances of actual self-harm to 96 from 58 the previous year. We are pleased to note that the number of actual self-harm instances has decreased to 32.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Serco Centre Manager's Reports

<sup>13</sup> Serco Safer Detention Reports

<sup>14</sup> Serco Safer Detention Reports

**5.6.6.** Constant Supervision is the highest level of ACDT observation, used when a resident is deemed to be at a high risk of self-harm. In 2016 there were 58, a reduction from 86 in 2015.

<sup>14</sup>

**5.6.7.** Additionally, there is a weekly Complex Case Review process and Individual Needs meeting at which, a multi-disciplinary team including the IMB, discuss any resident's needs and assess whether there has been any change.

**5.6.8.** The centre used to have a system of care plans that would be opened to provide support for detainees who had poor mobility. In 2016, Supported Living Plans (SLPs) were introduced that were created in collaboration with G4S Healthcare and Serco. These are better tailored to the needs of the individual resident and can be utilised for a broader range of reasons that include language barriers, epilepsy, mobility etc. In 2016, 42 SLPs were opened.<sup>14</sup>

## 5.7 Length of detention

**5.7.1.** In 2016, 2,623 women left the Centre compared with 3,011 in 2015. Figures published by the Home Office shows the following figures for women leaving the Centre based on the length of stay.<sup>15</sup>

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
A: 3 days or less	230	217
B: 4 to 7 days	268	206
C: 8 to 14 days	493	525
D: 15 to 28 days	561	769
E: 29 days to less than 2 months	607	718
F: 2 months to less than 3 months	227	250
G: 3 months to less than 4 months	92	135
H: 4 months to less than 6 months	79	130
I: 6 months to less than 12 months	57	51
J: 12 months to less than 18 months	7	8
K: 18 months to less than 24 months	2	2
L: 24 months to less than 36 months	0	0

<sup>15</sup> Home Office 'Detention data tables immigration statistics October to December 2016'

M: 36 months to less than 48 months	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,623</b>	<b>3,011</b>

**5.7.2.** Every year, we comment that a high proportion of detainees are subsequently released. During 2016, only 21.29% of Yarl's Wood detainees were removed from the UK, compared to the national average of 46.98%. We draw the conclusion that policies for removals from Yarl's Wood are less effective than those from other IRCs.<sup>16</sup>

<b>2016 Outcome</b>	<b>All IRCs</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Yarl's Wood IRC</b>	<b>%</b>
Total	28,661		4,433	
Returned from the UK	13,466	46.98	944	21.29
Granted leave to enter / remain	61	0.21	7	0.16
Granted temporary admission (TA) / release (TR)	11,931	41.63	3,128	70.56
Bailed	2,833	9.88	335	7.56
Other	370	1.29	19	0.43

**5.7.3.** Based on this data, we would again question the initial decision to detain. HOIE's guidelines state that people should only be brought into detention for the shortest possible time and where there is a realistic expectation that a removal can be effected. Some women are held for a very long time, with one woman facing her third Christmas in the Centre. As 70.56% of Yarl's Wood detainees are subsequently granted temporary admission or released, it would seem that the process leading to the initial decision to detain needs to be improved.

## **5.8 Preparation for removal from the Centre**

**5.8.1.** In 2016 the practice was increased of removing detainees from association prior to departure to avoid disruptive behaviour. (See **5.5.5** above). There has been at least one occasion when this has been done too far in advance of departure and we would question whether it was always justified.

**5.8.2.** Detainees of all nationalities make use of the valuable welfare services. Although new arrivals are given an appointment, they do not all take it up and detainees often use the services before removal from the Centre. Some of the matters dealt with include missing property/money, complaints related to legal representation and other removal issues.

**5.8.3.** In the Working Chance workshops, detainees were given advice on job applications, interviews and writing CVs in preparation for release. (**See 5.2.12.**)

<sup>16</sup> Home Office 'Detention data tables immigration statistics October to December 2016'

## 5.9 Complaints

**5.9.1.** HOIE CMS received 119 complaints in 2016, a slight decrease from 122 in 2015.<sup>17</sup> These do not include clinical complaints about Healthcare which are dealt with by NHS England. More serious complaints are dealt with by the Professional Standards Unit.

**5.9.2.** The largest category of complaints concerned minor misconduct (54), followed by delivery of service (51) and serious misconduct (14). Six complaints were upheld. Four concerned missing property, one concerned availability of service and one concerned minor misconduct.

**5.9.3.** Most complaints received a substantive response within four weeks.

## 5.10. Staffing

**5.10.1.** There have been times during the last few years when the recruitment and retention of suitable staff has not been easy, but two successful recruitment campaigns were run in 2016. The Board welcomes the increased number of female staff, up to 52%.<sup>18</sup> We still consider that the target of 60% female staff is not enough, as the detainees at Yarl's Wood are predominantly women, some of whom are wary of men because of incidents in their past. Some tasks, for example searches, ACDT checks and the constant supervision of women, should only be undertaken by female staff.

**5.10.2.** An ongoing programme of training and refresher courses has been set up for both new and existing staff. Participation takes staff away from their other duties and at times, this has led to noticeable shortages of officers on the units. However, the Board appreciates that training opportunities are provided and during rota visits has seen evidence of good practice.

**5.10.3.** In 2016 the Board monitored staffing levels during rota visits and night-time monitoring. We observed:

- several occasions where there was no officer on units when we visited
- during night monitoring, we did not see many staff anywhere
- the Café Central closed due to the absence of the member of staff who runs it and there being no other officer available to supervise it
- the library closed due to there being no staff available to supervise it

**5.10.4.** The observations recorded above are matters of potential concern. The safety of everyone in the centre could be at risk in the event of an incident if there were no staff immediately to hand. It is also regrettable that sometimes the lack of staff prevents detainees from being able to use the facilities.

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<sup>17</sup> HOIE CMS Report

<sup>18</sup> Serco staffing figures

**5.10.5.** The Board has commented in previous reports on the real need for vulnerable and anxious detainees to find someone sympathetic to talk to. During our rota visits in 2016 we were told by some staff that they felt stretched and that they did not have as much time as they would like to devote to supporting detainees in this way.

## **5.11. Resident Protests**

**5.11.1.** There have been four externally-organised protests at the Centre during the year. Most of these went off relatively peacefully, without any breaches of the Centre's security. However, at the most recent protest (December 2016), some public order offences were committed and the external fabric of the Centre suffered damage. Action is being taken to minimise the opportunities for such offences in future so that the security of the Centre and the safety of detainees and staff can be guaranteed.

## **6. The work of the Independent Monitoring Board**

<b>Board Statistics</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Recommended complement of Board members	12	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3	3
Number of members leaving within the reporting period	1	4

Total number of Board meetings within the reporting period	12	12
Average number of attendees at Board meetings during the reporting period	7	7
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings	45	54
Total number of visits to the IRC (including meetings)	301	263
Total number of applications/complaints received (written and oral)	104	84

### **Subject-matter of applications to the Board**

Code	Subject	2016	2015
A	Accommodation	0	2
B	Access to/quality of legal advice	1	0
C	Diversity related	0	0
D	Education/employment/training/ activities	2	0
E	Family/visits	3	2
F	Food/kitchen related	5	4
G	Health related	35	40
H	Property	8	0
I	Related to detainee's immigration case	20	19
J	Staff/ detainee related	21	9
K	Transfers/escorts	3	2
L	Miscellaneous	6	6
Total		104	84