



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at
The Glasgow, Edinburgh and Larne
Short Term Holding Facilities
for reporting year
1 February 2016 to 31 January 2017

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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Section 1. The Role of the Independent Monitoring Board

1.1 The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for the Glasgow, Edinburgh & Larne Short Term Holding Facilities (STHFs), whilst 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 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, where it is deemed safe to do so. Board members do not become involved in the immigration status of those in detention unless there are reasons to doubt the legality of an individual's continued detention.

1.3 The IMB has throughout the reporting period monitored the non-residential Holding Facilities (commonly known as holding rooms) at Glasgow Airport, Edinburgh Airport, the Festival Court Reporting Centre in Glasgow, The Board also monitors the residential holding facility at Larne House, Larne, Northern Ireland.

1.4 Visits rotas for members of the IMB were produced for each of the four facilities and intimated to the United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF), Home Office and Tascor, the company under contract from the Home Office with operational responsibility for the facilities. Currently five members visit Glasgow airport and the Glasgow Reporting Centre. The remaining four members (later three due to a resignation) monitor the Edinburgh airport holding rooms. All members may visit Larne House although not all choose to do so. One unannounced visit a week is made to the airports and Festival Court Reporting Centre, with a visit being made to Larne House twice a month.

1.5 During visits members pay attention to the interaction between Staff and detainees, the environment in which detainees are held, the manner in which staff deal with the various situations that may arise, the maintenance of satisfactory records about the detention and the provision of services such as food and healthcare available to detainees. They also monitor the manner in which removal of detainees is conducted from the holding facilities at airports, to boarding gates and, if necessary, across the apron to the steps of an aircraft. They may also monitor escorting custody vehicles and are empowered to accompany detainees to the IRC at Dungavel in Lanarkshire, or to police custody suites, if they consider it to be necessary or desirable.

1.6 Members will respond to serious incidents arising at the facilities.

1.7 Of particular interest to the Board are family removals (removals where children are involved). Members, whenever possible, will attend such removals in accordance with a protocol agreed with the Home Office and Tascor. Attending family removals is additional to the IMB Secretariat determined visits referred to above.

Section 2. Glasgow Airport

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The holding area is situated airside adjacent to the Immigration Control desks at International Arrivals, directly below the offices of the Border Force staff. The area used by staff consists of a small office, staffed by 2 Tascor Detainee Custody Officers (DCOs), the holding room itself and a shared male/female toilet with washroom facilities. There are two interview rooms used by Border Force staff and sundry rooms also used by them for other operational purposes. As indicated above, the holding room is operated by Tascor under contract to Border Force/Home Office where 2 DCOs on duty daily between the hours of 8.00 am and 8.00 pm.

2.1.2 For some time now the Emirates airline has been operating an evening flight between Glasgow and Dubai. If a detainee has to be returned on that flight it can mean that the DCOs on duty have to stay on until the flight has departed and the relevant paperwork has been completed. During the reporting year one of the experienced DCOs left and, after a succession of temporary replacements, another permanent staff member was recruited in July 2016. Shortly after that another long-serving DCO was required to take retirement on medical grounds. Her replacement was appointed in the autumn of 2016.

2.1.3 Detainees are not kept in the holding room overnight. If they are not landed they will either be transferred to Dungavel IRC, or a police custody suite. If possible, they could be removed on a return flight the same day.

2.1.4 There is a machine which serves both hot and cold drinks which was replaced towards the end of the reporting period. There is also a microwave oven which allows DCOs to heat the available food packs supplied. A landline telephone can be used by detainees, or they may use their own mobile phones provided it is one without a camera. DCOs can also provide a “house” mobile which can be used with the detainee’s own sim card.

2.1.5 By nature of its position within the airport there is no natural light in the holding room area and no access to fresh air. Smoking is not permitted within the airport which can cause problems at times. For someone to be detained by immigration control officers is stressful enough for most people. To be a smoker, who may have endured a long flight, who is then placed in a non-smoking holding room, can be the last straw for some detainees. Some can become very difficult when confronted with another spell of smoking prohibition. Whilst understanding the difficulty, the Board feels that it is necessary to keep the situation under constant review to try and find a way to alleviate the problem.

2.1.6 There are no showers or beds in the holding room area, but pillows and blankets are available on request and the upholstered bench can be used for anyone wishing to sleep. The Home Office has been investigating the possibility of re-modelling the toilet/washroom area to include a shower. In our last annual report we were optimistic that this could be achieved within the timeframe of the current report, but this has not proved to be the case. We would fully expect this work to have been completed by next year, aware, however, that expectations are not always realised for one reason or another.

2.1.7 There has been an ongoing problem with the heating in the holding room for some considerable time with complaints from detainees about the low temperatures. Tascor managers have

monitored the temperature during the last reporting period and were satisfied that the legal requirement was being achieved. While this may be the case in the Board's opinion this is still inadequate to keep some people from warmer climates, even reasonably comfortable. The Board reiterates its request that some form of secondary heating be sourced should the holding room become too cold.

2.1.8 Seating in the holding room is of an upholstered bench-type, which is reasonably comfortable and allows detainees to lie down if desired. A large bean bag has been added during the last reporting period and is quite popular with many detainees. Reading material in a variety of languages is available and there is a copy of the Bible and the Koran. A prayer mat is available on request.

2.1.9 The area is covered by CCTV cameras, the monitors being in the DCOs' control room.

2.1.10 the holding area is cleaned on a daily basis under contract.

2.2 Operational Experience and Detainee Numbers

2.2.1 The Board is again pleased to report that detainees, as far as we are able to ascertain, are efficiently and respectfully treated by Border Force and Tascor staff. The DCOs make every effort to allay the natural anxiety of some detainees and their friendly yet professional approach helps to generate a relaxed atmosphere. Whenever IMB Board members raise issues with either Tascor or Border Force, staff have responded helpfully and promptly. Another year forward and there has still been no complaints against any member of UKBF staff or Tascor DCOs.

2.2.2 Whenever language allows IMB members speak to detainees to explain their role and ask their views on how they have been treated. Invariably, they advise having been treated very well by DCOs.

2.2.3 The number of detainees held in Glasgow Airport Holding Room during the period covered by this report is shown later in this report (Section 8).

Section 3. Edinburgh Airport

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Short Term Holding Facility [STHF] which is non-residential is situated airside of the International Arrivals Hall. The facility is on the ground floor of a two storey extension to the south end of the airport building. UK Border Force offices are on the first floor. The Holding area is staffed on a daily basis between noon and midnight by two Tascor staff, male and female. Any passenger detained outwith these times will be supervised by UKBF staff. The Board looked into the suitability of this position and found that agencies involved are perfectly happy with the matter as it stands. It would prove difficult to gain a detainee perspective on this.

3.1.2 Owing to the rapid increase in passengers flying in and out of Edinburgh a new arrivals hall has been erected, which includes two immigration interview rooms. Border Force advise they expedite passenger transfer to the purpose built STHF in the interest of detainee well being.

3.1.3 A particular problem arises when those detained need to be transferred to the main holding area which is situated at the opposite end of the airport. Where possible this is done by airside transportation, but in some cases either the detainees have to be transported across apron areas or need to be taken through the public area of the airport. Passenger movement through the main airside terminal building is very rare and, according to Border Force, would only occur where there is a strong business reason. These arrangements have been necessary since the port operator opened a second arrivals hall and the Board will take interest in how operations affecting detainees develop.

3.1.4 The STHF comprises a purpose designed suite of offices. The Control Room is occupied by Tascor staff who can observe any detainees in the holding room through a large window. Adjacent to the Holding Room there is a family room which can accommodate adults and children. Baby changing facilities are also available. Toys and books for children are available along with newspapers and reading material in different languages. A television is provided along with reading material and religious books. Information booklets are on hand in 16 different languages. Complaint forms are readily accessible, again in different languages. The complaint box is opened by Border Force personnel every day with the key held exclusively by Border Force. Two lockable cubicles adjacent to the Holding Room are used for detainee's property following routine searches.

3.1.5 There are male and female toilets which are clean, tidy and modern. Despite many discussions regarding the provision of showers there has been little progress so far.

3.1.6 The fixed seating in the Holding Room is not capable of being used as a bed. Blankets and pillows are available if requested.

3.1.7 A new drinks machine has recently been installed after many months of waiting. Hot and cold food, along with snacks is available. If there are any special dietary requirements Tascor staff will go landside to meet if at all possible.

3.1.8 The needs of detainees are paramount and while there is no access to fresh air ventilation is good.

3.1.9 The facility is covered by a CCTV system which covers both internal and external elements of the facility. This shows the outside area where the Tascor vehicles arrive and depart with their detainees. Monitors are positioned in the Control Room.

3.2 Operational experience and detainee numbers.

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

Section 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 Home Office/Immigration Enforcement staff 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 detained on reporting, during an operational enforcement visit or who are required for interview from an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC). Members of the IMB have authorised entry passes, which have been issued by the Home Office.

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 Hot drinks can be provided, for detainees, if required, using an electric kettle and there are cartons of cold water available. Snacks and meals are also available and a microwave oven is available to heat the meals. The TV set in the Holding Room is controlled from outside the Holding Room.

4.1.4 The Holding Room contains 6 individual plastic seats, which are 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. There is a soft bench, at the rear of the room, making it possible

for one detainee to lie down but, as noted in our last two Annual Reports, it is too short for anyone who is of even medium height, and we have asked that a longer bench be fitted. This request is still outstanding and IMB members do not understand why this has not been remedied. It has been suggested that there is no room for a longer bench. In our view the bench length could be extended by up to 2 feet, without impacting on any other function within the room.

4.1.5 The toilet situation remains a concern and IMB members feel that, if the existing stainless steel suites cannot be replaced, then plastic, fixed hinged, seats should be fitted to the existing WCs. It is our opinion that a stainless steel WC, without a seat, adds to the general lack of dignity for people using these toilets. It continues to be our opinion, for dignity reasons, that the location of the toilets, in the actual holding room, is unsuitable.

4.1.6 Magazines in various languages are available and a prayer mat can be provided on request.

4.1.7 As with the two other non-residential Holding Rooms, which the IMB monitor, there is no access to fresh air or natural light. An authorised smoking area is also not available at these locations.

4.2 Operational experience & detainee numbers:

4.2.1 The members' general monitoring experience at Festival Court is similar to that at Glasgow Airport (Section 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

4.2.2 Both DCOs are experienced, empathetic and highly professional. It is our opinion that this level of staff stability contributes to the smoothing running of the centre.

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

Section 5. Larne House, Larne, Northern Ireland

5.1 Overview:

5.1.1 The RSTHF is a modern residential facility which opened in July 2011. It is located within the Larne Police Station compound. It is a residential facility and the only designated service in Northern Ireland where immigration detainees may be held. Persons may be detained for up to 7 days where Removal Directions (RDs) have been served. Where these have not been served, the maximum period of detention at the provision is 5 days following which individuals must either be released (unconditionally or temporarily), removed from Northern Ireland, or transferred to an IRC on the UK mainland, there being no resource in the Province. Prior to the service 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 Glasgow IMB to undertake monitoring at Larne towards the end of 2012.

5.1.2 As with each of the other services monitored by the Board, the provision is managed by Tascor staff, usually a team (shift) of 6 DCOs working under a Duty Operational 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.

5.1.3 There is no HOIE presence at Larne. If there is a detainee who cannot be managed after being accepted at Larne House there are contingency arrangements in place to ensure individuals can be moved to a more suitable location. In the first instance, this would be to a mainland IRC. Only in exceptional circumstances would police stations be used. There have been no such cases since the Larne was opened.

5.1.4 Families with young children will not be detained but will be given Temporary Admission with a direction to report to Drumkeen Reporting Centre in Belfast.

5.1.5 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 lamps. The wooden edge beds are raised above the height of the mattress making it very uncomfortable to sit there. There being no seats or tables in the bedrooms means detainees have little option but to vacate rooms for much of the day and sit in the recreation dining rooms.

5.1.6 In previous reports this had been a problem raised by IMB members who had requested that some form of seating be placed in the bedrooms. This had been deemed to be unsuitable since the rooms are small and any seating would have to be secured. IMB has not contested this since new seating arrangements in the recreation room has to an extent resolved the problem.

5.1.7 Larne is compact, 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, the eco-lighting system is effective and efficient. There are no light switches and when areas are not in use the lighting reduces to a low lux level.

5.1.8 The small recreation room offers a TV with Freesat providing in excess of 100 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. Headphones are provided. Since improved facilities and seating arrangements have been established association amongst detainees is said to have generally improved. The size of the room, however, places certain limitations on these opportunities particularly when the complex is busy.

5.1.9 Other areas at the complex 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.
- A small, outside exercise area where detainees may smoke at and have access to fresh air.
- Showers and toilets
- A multi-faith Prayer Room with religious materials available for a variety of faiths
- A dining room/kitchen area with tables and fixed seating
- 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
- Washing and drying equipment

5.1.10 When a detainee is admitted he or she will be assessed for detention suitability. The duty nurse will also undertake a review of any medications brought in with the individual. There is a fully qualified nurse on duty 24 hours.

5.1.11 After being admitted to Larne detainees have freedom of movement and association within all areas except for the custody office. As indicated earlier, access to the exercise area and fresh air is available.

5.1.12 Should any detainee be admitted without adequate clothing, a pack containing basic underwear and tracksuit-type outer garments can be provided.

5.1.13 Detainees may use their own mobile phones providing no camera is fitted and internet access is not available. If required, detainees can be issued with a simple phone to be returned when he/she leaves Larne.

5.2. Operational experience and detainee numbers:

5.2.1 This is the only residential Facility monitored by this IMB.

5.2.2 People held at the non-residential holding areas at airports and the Glasgow reporting centre will typically be detained for just a few hours whilst those detained at Larne House can be held for up to a week if removal directions are set. There is, therefore, greater opportunity for interaction between the DCOs and detainees at Larne.

5.2.3 Our experience is that the DCOs demonstrate an extremely professional, caring and friendly attitude towards detainees and go out of their way to make their stay as comfortable and stress-free as possible. During our visits we speak with as many detainees as possible. We have consistently found that detainees have a very high regard for the staff who they find very helpful, friendly and straightforward. From our findings and observations, we are of the clear view that the relaxed atmosphere fashioned by staff (under operational circumstances that

see an ever changing detainee population) is a prime mover in the positive ambience we consistently find at Larne.

5.2.4 A number of relatively minor issues have been raised by members over the year. These have either been immediately resolved, or a satisfactory explanation provided as to the issue.

5.2.5 At one point during the reporting period, the facility had to manage a problem of suspected Legionella. No member of staff or any detainee was in any way affected and precautionary measures put in place were relatively quickly withdrawn.

5.2.6 The number of detainees held at Larne during the period covered by this report is shown in Section 8.

Section 6. Issues

6.1 The Board is pleased to report that quick and positive action has taken place during the reporting year on a number of issues brought to the attention of relevant agencies and Tascor. There remain, however, a number of issues which continue to cause concern.

6.2 Toilets at Festival Court

6.2.1 The lavatory facilities at Festival Court remain a source of concern to IMB members who feel frustrated that there has been no movement on the matter. The location of lavatories, in the corner of the small holding room, provides no real privacy (particularly when other detainees are being held), whilst the stainless steel bowls, without seats, are undignified and probably unhygienic, and should have no place in 21st century Britain. We seek an update on Home Office intentions regarding these extremely basic and degrading facilities.

6.3 The bench seating at Festival Court:

6.3.1 We recommend that a more suitably sized bench/sofa be provided to replace the existing furniture which is too short for purpose. Our views on this have been stated in previous reports and now request action on the matter or the provision of a reasonable explanation as to why this cannot be remedied.

6.4 Smoking, access to fresh air and showers:

6.4.1 We have noted in previous Reports detainees at the airports and Festival Court are not permitted to smoke, do not have access to fresh air and have no showering facilities. We recognise and understand the impediments that make for the first two positions difficult to remedy. We have been less sure about the third.

6.4.2 We were, therefore, pleased to learn that the Home Office had been planning the installation of showers at Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports. The Board had hoped for more progress on installation than has been the case which we will closely monitor over the coming months.

6.5 Transfer of detainees between holding areas at Edinburgh airport

6.5.1 As stated earlier in this report, Edinburgh airport has a relatively new passport control area which is situated at the opposite end of the airport to the main detention holding area. This means that anyone who becomes subject to detention at the new facility either has to be escorted across apron areas, or through public areas of the airport. The Board would be concerned if the former were necessary as this would bring public attention to detainees which could be demeaning and undignified. The Board has no information as to the operational and procedural aspects of this situation, but which it intends looking to monitor over the coming year.

Section 7. Other matters

7.1 The Short Term Holding Facilities Rules:

7.1.1 There are presently no Rules governing the operational requirements, standards and duties to which the IMB should adhere. Year on year IMBs have been expecting these to be published so that a solid base for operating is available to members. Finally, this year, we received a consultation paper on the proposed Rules. This we commented upon and given there was nothing particularly controversial in the document, we anticipated a relatively rapid process of acceptance and implementation. Not so, because of various encumbrances we still await enactment of the Rules.

7.2 UKBF - IMB Board Meetings

7.2.1 The Board has welcomed and very much appreciated representation from Edinburgh and Glasgow UKBF staff in the past. Unfortunately, due to operational pressures, this will unlikely continue in future. Staff have advised that they would be happy to answer any questions that arise for them where we have contact points to achieve this. We would much prefer a physical presence at our Board meetings, but understand the operational imperatives at play. We hope these may relax at some time in the future so that we can again have UKBF staff directly involved in our deliberations.

7.2.2 It was reported last year that the then Border Force Senior Officer at Glasgow Airport who had always been very happy to liaise and co-operate with IMB had suggested that Border Force should be represented at our meetings as are Home Office and Tascor. Edinburgh Airport followed suit and it was a very satisfactory change. However as

reported this rather quickly degenerated as attendances became less and less regular. The Board understood the difficulties which can arise through pressure of work, frequent shortage of staff and in the case of Edinburgh, distance and time. The Border Force Senior Officer now in post at Glasgow is equally keen for this arrangement to continue and understands that the Board considers Border Force representation to be a valuable contribution to our meetings. Every effort is being made to ensure that this happens concerning both Glasgow and Edinburgh staff.

7.3 Family removal arrangements

7.3.1 During the course of the reporting period the Board had cause to comment on what it saw as unsatisfactory arrangements for the transfer of families from Festival Court to their designated flight at Glasgow airport. In particular, concerns centred on the very 'loose' arrangements in getting families from the airport holding area to the aircraft. There was no contractual arrangement for Tascor escorting staff to do this and much relied on the co-operation of airport security in assisting with the process. The Board's main concern was that if normal transfer arrangements fell through, the family would need to be escorted through the public areas of the airport with the required entourage of escorting family returns staff. This, we felt, was undignified and drew unnecessary attention to families. The Board is, however, pleased to report that, following lengthy discussions, more formal arrangements were agreed which obviated the chance of public notice taking place.

7.4 IS91s

7.4.1 Our concerns about the failure of some IS91s not being completed appropriately is a matter we raise each year. The problem has certainly improved, but there remain a number that continue to be produced at holding areas incomplete. The part of the documentation which causes primary concern, through omission, is the section on risk assessment. In theory, this should not happen as Tascor staff should refuse to accept any detainee without fully completed paperwork. The Home Office has

been working to rectify the failings and we hope the situation will feature less in our future reporting.

7.5 Risk assessment limitations:

7.5.1 In association with the foregoing paragraph, the Board is also concerned as to the usefulness of many risk assessments that are completed. We appreciate that staff can only assess information made available to them, which, in our opinion is sometimes poor. In many cases the term 'risk assessment' is flawed, as information (where it exists) is more descriptive than an appraisal of risk behaviour. As such, this is of less use to staff that could be the case.

7.6 HMIP visits:

7.6.1 All four facilities which the Board monitors were visited by the prisons inspectorate during the year. The Board engaged in discussions with the inspectors where this was appropriate. Where we have mutual interests in detainee welfare matters we will seek to address these and, in this connection, are still awaiting the Home Office and Tascor responses to the recommendations made by the Inspectorate.

7.7 Recruitment:

7.7.1 The Board has started a process of recruitment to fill the four existing vacancies which exist. As a long serving member also indicated her intention to leave once the process has been completed, we will be seeking to fill five openings. From the applications received we are confident that all the positions can be filled.

7.8 Proposed new RSTHF for Glasgow.

7.8.1 The Home Office indicated its intention to open a new RSTHF (based on a similar operational basis as that of Larne) close to Glasgow Airport. The intention in opening this proposed, new- build facility was

to close Dungavel IRC. Planning permission proposals were submitted to Renfrewshire Council who refused the application. At this time the Home Office is considering an appeal against that decision.

7.9 Dual Boarding

7.9.1 Only marginally related to the preceding paragraph, was a request from the IMB Secretariat seeking member interest in dual boarding with Dungavel. The IRC was in a position of having no members and just two office bearers. Several members of this Board agreed to assist until such time as Dungavel completed its own recruitment drive. This was agreed on a non-detriment basis to this Board.

7.10 Consultations:

7.10.1 As with all Boards, we have engaged in a number of consultations over the year. Each had its own importance, but of particular note were the proposed Rules on the operation of STHFs and the future Governance of IMBs. The latter (now agreed) sees a fundamental shift in the organisational arrangements of IMBs which this Board sought in its consultation return.

Section 8. Statistics (previous year's figures in brackets)

8.1	Members at the start of the reporting period	9	(11)
8.2	Members at the close of the reporting period	8	(9)
8.3	Board meetings held	12	(12)
8.4	Member attendance at Board Meetings	82	(99)
8.5	Visits to Glasgow Airport	48	(56)
8.6	Visits to Edinburgh Airport)	54	(60)
8.7	Visits to Festival Court	49	(34)

8.8	Visits to Larne House	26	(24)
8.9	Detainee movements at Glasgow Airport	460	(383)
8.10	Detainee movements at Edinburgh Airport	499	(472)
8.11	Detainee movements at Festival Court	231	(321)
8.12	Detainee movements at Larne House	2233	(2658)

Section 9. Summary

9.1 This has been another year where the Board's work with the agencies involved in immigration and Tascor, the company charged with detainee welfare, has proved to be of interest. Again, we applaud the professionalism of all staff involved and appreciate the good working relationships that have developed over the years. That is not to suggest we have not had our differences. Over the course of the reporting year, the Board has entered into vigorous debate with both the Home Office and Tascor on certain issues involving interactions between each. Arguments have been put forward professionally and at times we have found it necessary in agreeing to disagree. It should be made clear that differences of opinion have never involved the treatment of detainees, which we have always found to be exemplary. But more to do with issues surrounding the Board's ability to effectively monitor under official agreements it finds disagreeable.

9.2 As in previous years, we have found many issues raised by the Board being dealt with quickly, or being provided with an acceptable reason why a matter cannot be remedied either immediately, or in the near future. As such, we only list in this report issues which have been outstanding for some time and which we believe need urgent remedy. We will not, in most cases, accept financial impediments as an acceptable reason for inaction. New issues of interest to us will be monitored during the coming year.