



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

**The Glasgow, Edinburgh and
Larne Short-term Holding
Facilities**

for reporting Year
(1 February 2017 – 31 January 2018)

Published
(August 2018)



Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory Sections

Section	Topic	Page
1	The role of the Independent Monitoring Board	3
2	Executive Summary	4
3	Issues	5
4	Internal Board Interests	7

Evidence Sections

5	Glasgow Airport holding rooms	11
6	Edinburgh Airport holding rooms	13
7	The Reporting Centre, Festival Court, Glasgow	16
8	Larne House, Larne, Northern Ireland	18

	Appendix - statistics	22
--	------------------------------	-----------

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 a power 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 and the residential holding facility at Larne House, in Northern Ireland.

1.4 Visits rotas for members of the IMB are produced for each of the four facilities. Currently five members visit Glasgow airport and the Glasgow Reporting Centre. The remaining four members monitor the Edinburgh airport holding rooms. All members may visit Larne House. 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 the 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. In certain circumstances members may not be allowed to monitor in this way if escorting staff deem the situation to dangerous for an IMB member to join the vehicle. If such cases arise the Home Office has agreed that a full report will be provided to the IMB on the move.

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.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board on the short term holding facilities located at Glasgow and Edinburgh airports, the reporting centre at Festival Court, Glasgow and the residential unit at Larne, Northern Ireland. The report covers the 12 month period ending 31st January 2018. Conclusions in the report draw on observations made during rota visits, the scrutiny of records and data, informal contact with detainees and discussions with staff from the various agencies involved in the detention process. A draft report was presented to interested agencies to confirm accuracy in reporting.

2.1.2 This has been another year where engagement by the Board with the agencies involved in immigration has proved to be of interest. Generally, we have been highly satisfied with the professionalism of staff involved in the care of detainees and, despite occasional disagreements, are pleased to report the continuation of good working relationships with those agencies which have developed over the years. The sometimes vigorous debates with both the Home Office and Tascor, featured in previous years reporting, continued into this year. As before, arguments have been put forward professionally, but there remain areas where we fail to accept the line of reasoning put to us. Where this situation exists, we will continue to highlight our concerns in our reporting.

2.2 Main Judgements

a) Are detainees treated fairly?

Overall, the Board believes that detainees are treated fairly at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Larne STHFs. However, the Board remains concerned that at Festival Court the police service is routinely used to separate a child from a parent/carer. The Board believes that should this action be absolutely necessary, a more appropriate agency (i.e. social services) should be employed.

b) Are detainees treated humanely?

Detainees spend relatively short periods of time in the facilities monitored by the Board. From our observations and discussions with detainees, all have been treated humanely and, indeed, we continue to be impressed with staff efforts in this regard. We are however concerned that the location of the toilet facilities at Festival Court compromises the dignity and privacy of detainees and that the lack of toilet seat at both this holding facility and at Edinburgh STHF is unhygienic.

c) Are detainees prepared well for removal or release?

This particular judgement has limited relevance to this Board and, as such, we cannot generally make informed comment. The Board has, however, raised questions with the Home Office on the after care arrangements for one vulnerable detainee discharged from the Larne STHF. Initial responses to our questions suggest care management arrangements may not have been as satisfactory as they should have been, but we await the full findings of an investigation being conducted by the Home Office (p.8.2.5)

3. ISSUES

3.1 Festival Court

3.1.1 We note with concern the regular use of the police service by Border Force/Immigration Enforcement in dealing with certain cases, particularly those where children are involved. We have noted that in one case, where it was clearly anticipated that a child would be taken from a parent during a routine reporting session, the child was handed to the police. Whilst we are told that the child was taken to a relative within a matter of hours, we find such action highly inappropriate and are of the firm opinion that if removal of a child from a parent/carer is absolutely necessary, then social services is the more appropriate agency to be used. It appears to us the separation of a child from a parent in this manner can have a traumatic effect on both child and parent and should only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances.

- **We recommend that the routine use of the police service when separating a child from a parent/carer be reconsidered by the agencies involved. We are of the clear view that such action should only be taken in exceptional circumstances and that social services the more appropriate agency employed.**

3.1.1 The lavatory facilities at Festival Court remain a source of concern to IMB members who feel frustrated that there has been no improvement of the facilities. The location of lavatories, in the corner of the small holding room, provides no real privacy (particularly when other detainees are being held), and the stainless steel bowls, without seats, are undignified, probably unhygienic, and should have no place in 21st century Britain.

- **The Board would like an update on Office intentions regarding these extremely basic and degrading facilities.**

3.1.2 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 we now request action on the matter, or the provision of a reasonable explanation as to why this cannot be remedied.**

3.2 Edinburgh airport

3.2.1 Described later 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 latter were necessary as this would bring public attention to detainees which could be demeaning and undignified.

- **The Board understands that all those subject to transfer have been escorted by transport airside. We would appreciate confirmation of this.**

3.3.2 The Board has raised the issue of contracted hours at its meetings during the year. In the Board's view these are not conducive to detainee welfare. There is concern about how detainees are held when Tascor staff are not on duty which under present arrangements will be for a good part of the day. We understand that during such absences, Border Force staff supervise detainees which is not their primary job or area of expertise. It is understood, but yet to be confirmed, that anyone held during such periods naturally require to be 'in sight' of Border Force personnel. When short staffed, this, we believe, often coincides with being 'in sight' of the public, as some are held in areas where members of the public have full view of the detainees. This, in our view, contravenes Section 10 of the draft Short Term Holding Facility Rules. In discussions on the timing of contracted hours, no agency has expressed any concern given it meets operational requirements at the airport.

- **The Board is concerned about the existing contracted hours and would ask the Home Office and UKBA why such arrangements are necessary?**

3.3 Airports and Festival Court

3.3.1 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. We understand the Home Office had been planning the installation of showers at Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports, but we have seen no movement on the proposal.

- **The Board would wish to be updated on the proposals, please.**

4. INTERNAL BOARD INTERESTS

4.1 Response by Minister to the Board's 2016/17 annual report

4.1.1 As with other Boards, we are very disappointed at being in a position that at the time of drafting this report, no response had been received to our previous annual report. We appreciate the unusual circumstances that have prevailed, but nonetheless consider the position highly unsatisfactory.

4.2 The Short Term Holding Facilities Rules:

4.2.1 At the time of drafting this report there were only draft Rules governing the operational requirements, standards and duties to which the IMB should adhere. Year on year IMBs have been expecting the Rules to be published through a Statutory Instrument so that a solid base for operating is available to members. We earlier received and commented on a consultation paper on the proposed Rules. Given there was nothing particularly controversial in the document, we anticipated a relatively rapid process of acceptance and implementation.

4.3 Proposed new RSTHF for Glasgow.

4.3.1 The intention to open a new RSTHF (on a similar operational basis as that at Larne) close to Glasgow Airport has been aborted in face of local opposition. At this time last year the Home Office was considering appealing the local authority's opposition to the plan, but decided against this after further consideration.

4.4 UKBF - IMB Board Meetings

4.4.1 The Board has welcomed and very much appreciated representation from Edinburgh and Glasgow UKBF staff in the past. Unfortunately, due to operational pressures, this has not proved possible during this reporting year. Whilst Border Force staff have made clear they would be happy answering any questions or concerns that arise we would much prefer a physical presence at our Board meetings. We understand the operational imperatives at play, but it is clear that there is no substitute for face to face contact. We hope the position may relax at some time in the near future so that we can directly convey our concerns to UKBA staff.

4.5 Family removal arrangements

4.5.1 In the past 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. Our concerns led to more formal arrangements being made. The position has seen further change in that most planned family removals will now likely be made by bus from Scotland to London. Thusfar, no planned departure using this method, of which there has been a number notified to the Board, has actually taken place.

4.6 IS91s

4.6.1 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, though there has been an increasing number which fail to detail a reason for detention.

4.7 Risk assessment limitations:

4.7.1 In association with the foregoing, the Board wonders 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.

4.8 HMIP visits:

4.6.1 We stated in last year's report that all four facilities which the Board monitors were visited by the prisons inspectorate during that year. Where there are mutual interests between the Board and the Inspectorate in detainee welfare matters, we will seek to address these. We have been waiting for some considerable time now for the Home Office and Tascor responses to the recommendations made by the Inspectorate. We still await these responses.

4.9 Recruitment:

4.9.1 During the reporting period the Board completed a programme of recruitment to fill five vacancies. Events which caused delay in other areas mentioned in this report were similarly responsible for a long, drawn out process in finalising engagement. We were grateful for the patience shown by all those involved. At the time of reporting, we are running at full capacity and look forward to contributions new Board members will make to our deliberations.

4.10 Dual Boarding

4.10.1 We have two members who now dual board with the Dungavel IRC, IMB. The arrangement has posed no problems for this Board.

4.11 Consultations:

4.11.1 As with all Boards, we have engaged in a number of consultations over the year. An earlier consultation addressing governance arrangements of IMBs was concluded and the outcome for change is now being pursued. This sees a fundamental shift in the organisational arrangements governing IMBs.

4.12 Change in terminology - immigration 'bail'

4.12.1 Whilst perhaps not directly our concern, the Board is uneasy about the changes contained in the Immigration Bail Provisions, Schedule 10 to the Immigration Act, 2016. Reasoning for the changes is stated as being simplifying, 'the current complex legal framework contained in Schedules 2 and 3 to the Immigration Act, 1971'. The changes essentially replace three previous conditions, those of Bail, Temporary Admission and release on Restriction Provisions in the 1971 Act, with single use of the term Bail to cover all. We disagree with the rationale being put forward in justification for the change. It is quite clear that the term, 'bail' raises a number of connotations more associated with criminal justice, than those involved in immigration cases where no offences are involved. We have found no dictionary definition that describes the word other than in relation to criminal proceedings and, as such, believe this a highly negative amendment to the system.

5. GLASGOW AIRPORT HOLDING ROOMS

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 The holding rooms are situated airside adjacent to the immigration control desks at international arrivals, directly below the offices occupied by Border Force. The area used by holding room staff consists of a very small office, was staffed by two Tascor Detainee Custody Officers (DCOs), the main holding room and a shared male/female toilet with washroom facilities. The holding room was operated by Tascor under contract to Border Force/Home Office. This contract has since come to an end, with Mitie taking over from Tascor from May 2018. As with previous changes in contractors, staff will be subject of TUPE arrangements. The arrangement will be the same for each of the other facilities monitored by the Board.

5.1.2 There are two DCOs on duty daily between the hours of 0900 and 2100 hrs. This was changed from 0800 to 2000 hours during the course of the reporting period to take account of an additional Emirates flight which operates during the evening.

5.1.3 Detainees are not kept in the holding room overnight. If they are not landed they will normally be transferred to the Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), to a police custody suite, or they may be removed on a return flight the same day. During the reporting year there has been a constant flow of detainees being held from the Wizz (Polish) and Blue (Romanian) flights and, since it is not usually possible to process those detained in time for return the same day, it has meant detainees spending a few days at Dungavel before returning to the airport and a flight to their home country. On one occasion some 15 detainees were being kept in the small holding area which caused discomfort and stress for detainees and staff.

5.1.4 There is a drinks dispenser for detainee use which provides both hot and cold beverages. There is also a microwave oven which allows DCOs to heat food packs supplied. A landline telephone can be used by detainees. They may also use their own mobile 'phones provided no camera is linked to the device. Where cameras form part of the 'phone (which is usually the case) DCOs can provide a "house" mobile which can be used with the detainee's own sim card.

5.1.5 By nature of its position within the airport there is no natural light in the holding area and no access to fresh air. Smoking is not permitted within the airport which causes problems at times for some detainees, particularly those smokers who have been subject of a long, intercontinental flight. Special lozenges can be provided to detainees, but none suggest these are particularly effective in diminishing cravings. The problem is a difficult one and not just at Glasgow airport. DCOs believe their job could be made easier if designated smoking areas could be provided, but this is an issue the Home Office and airport authorities are not willing to consider.

5.1.6 The holding room at the airport was never designed to accommodate detainees overnight, but pillows and blankets are available on request and the upholstered bench can be used by anyone who would like to try and sleep. In last year's report we were

hopeful that work would start on the provision of a shower in the toilet area, but despite our understanding that there is a major redesign plan agreed we remain unaware just when the shower will become available.

5.1.7 For some time now there has been an ongoing problem with heating in the holding room. Detainees have frequently complained about the low temperatures. Tascor managers have monitored the temperature over a number of months and were satisfied that the legal requirement was being met. When required secondary heating is used, but this does not remedy the underlying problem. Work has now started on a refurbishment programme which includes the Border Force offices situated above the holding area. It is hoped that on completion of the programme the heating issue will be resolved. The Board will continue to monitor the situation.

5.1.8 Seating in the holding room is upholstered bench-type which is reasonably comfortable and, as indicated above, allows detainees to lie down if desired. A large 'bean bag' which was recently placed in the holding room has proved quite popular with some detainees. A variety of reading material, in different languages, is available. A Bible and Koran are accessible and a prayer mat is available. Basic information and advice on immigration/asylum matters are provided in leaflet and poster form, again in various languages.

5.1.9 For safety and security purposes, the holding area is covered by CCTV cameras. These are monitored by DCOs in the control room.

5.1.10 For some time now the Board has been asking that a flight information screen be placed in the holding room. This would give DCOs necessary information in carrying out their tasks without a need for leaving the holding area and, therefore, temporarily reducing staff capacity. The monitor, we understand, will be included in the refurbishment programme which has recently begun.

5.2 Operational Experience and Detainee Numbers

5.2.1 We are pleased to report that, for the most part, detainees are fairly treated by UKBF and Tascor staff. There have been rare occasions where staff of each agency have been severely pressurised by the numbers of detainees being held at any one time, but this has been through circumstance rather than design. From observations, DCOs make every effort to reduce the understandable anxieties of detainees and their friendly, yet professional approach helps alleviate any tensions felt by them.

5.2.2 Issues raised by members of the Board, either during visits, or in their formal reporting on visits, have generally been dealt with, whether by Tascor, Border Force or the Home Office, promptly. There have been a number of occasions where we have, and indeed remain, in disagreement with answers/explanations given, for example, lavatory provision at Festival Court and Edinburgh airport. Where this be the case we continue to press for change.

5.2.3 Another year forward and it remains the case that no complaint against any member of UKBF, or Tascor staff has been brought to our attention.

5.2.4 Whenever possible and appropriate, members, when coming into contact with detainees, will seek their opinions on how they view their treatment by DCO staff. There has yet to be occasion when a negative response has been forthcoming. This comes as little surprise to members as we have always found DCOs being straightforward and polite in undertaking their duties with those being held. We remain, however, vigilant in our own monitoring duty for those detained.

5.2.5 The number of detainees held the at the holding room during the period covered by this report is shown in the appendix.

6 EDINBURGH AIRPORT HOLDING ROOMS

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Edinburgh Airport, the busiest Scottish airport, reported increased passenger numbers for 2017. 13.4 million travelled through the airport during 2017. International passengers increased by 14% largely due to the opening of 32 new routes.

6.1.2 The Short Term Holding Facility (STHF) is located airside at the south end of the International arrivals hall and is staffed by Tascor from midday to midnight. These hours of cover has led to questions being asked by the Board as we do not believe these are compatible with detainee needs. Our concerns are provided in the issues section of this report. Despite our worries, the Home Office and Border Force are of the view these hours better suit their requirements. We, of course, have less interest in the organizational arrangements of those agencies with detainee welfare uppermost in our thinking (p.3.3.2).

6.1.3 Tascor, which provides a service under the contractual requirements presented to it, deploys two members of staff, one male and one female, to cover the daily working hours. Outside of these times it is Border Force staff that look after detainees. It is issues and consequences surrounding this arrangement which concerns the Board.

6.1.4 The STHF is situated on the ground floor with Border Force offices on the first floor in an extension to the main airport building. A new arrivals hall was built at the north end of the airport last year due to the increase in passenger numbers. There has been some concern how anyone being detained in this area might be moved to the STHF at the opposite end of the airport. In practice, detainees are moved via airside vehicles by Border Force which appears to be working satisfactorily. The Board will continue to monitor the position if it becomes necessary to transfer detainees through public area of the airport.

6.1.5 The holding area at Edinburgh is a purpose built facility with a waiting area, two interview rooms, a fingerprint room as well as two holding rooms and a control room. Tascor staff can observe detainees through a large window. One of the holding rooms is set up as a family room with a baby changing facility, beanbags for children, toys and books. When a mix of non-related males and females are detained, the latter will normally be held in the family room and males in the main holding room. There is a glass paneled partition between the two holding rooms with a door which is not lockable. Both rooms have a number of fixed chairs, a table and a television. A prayer mat is available in the main room and a compass is available to indicate the direction of Mecca. There are a number of newspapers available, although most of the foreign papers are usually more than three months old. We are unsure of the usefulness of such outdated newspapers. A number of notices and relevant information is available in different languages and staff give guidance as to where particular information is posted. At times, detainees may choose to lie down on the seating provided in the main holding room in an attempt to sleep. They will be provided with pillows and blankets if required or requested. The smaller holding room has no such suitable facility. No rooms have

windows or access to natural light. The rooms are, however, spacious and have good ventilation. Smoking is not allowed and nicotine replacement lozenges are available, but detainees are not impressed by the efficacy of these. There is no secure area in which detainees may be able to get fresh air, or in which to smoke.

6.1.6 There is a water fountain in the main holding room. Detainees will have to ask for hot drinks since the dispenser is located in the control room. Snacks such as crisps and croissants are available in both holding rooms. The meals supplied for detainees are of a long life variety and are stored in a filing cabinet. Although detainees have not complained about the meals, these do not look particularly appetizing. Staff state that detainees who have eaten are not taken with the products. Tascor staff can provide additional food, such as sandwiches, which are bought with petty cash from airport vendors.

6.1.7 There are two toilets in the holding area which are spacious and accessed from the main holding room. These are able to be unlocked from the outside by detainees and staff which is not a particularly safe environment. In our view, only staff should be able to unlock toilet doors. The Board is unhappy about the lack of toilet seats which we believe is archaic and unhygienic. The Glasgow lavatory facilities have seats and we do not understand why this should not be the case for Edinburgh and Festival Court.

6.1.8 Some time ago there was agreement for showers to be installed, but, as with Glasgow, this has yet to happen.

6.1.9 As elsewhere, detainees at Edinburgh are not allowed to use mobile phones with camera attachments. Tascor staff can provide access to a landline or a house mobile where detainees can contact legal representatives, family or friends.

6.1.10 Detainees' cash/valuables will be held for them until release. This normally happens from Dungavel IRC. Following representations by the Board, when detainees were being returned overseas from Scottish airports with Scottish currency which is not legal tender outside the UK, money can now be issued in English or Euro currency. All detainees' property is held securely. Clothing items such as scarves, belts and ties are routinely taken from detainees for health and safety reasons.

6.1.11 AS with other holding facilities, there is a complaints box which is checked every day by Border Force. No complaints have been received during the reporting period.

6.1.12 Both the inside and outside of the STHF is covered by CCTV. Monitors are located in the control room.

6.1.13 IS91 forms, the warrant for Tascor staff to hold detainees, are normally completed fully. Despite much effort over recent years, there remains scope for further improvement particularly in relation to sections dealing with risk factors and reasons for detention.

6.2 Operational experience and detainee numbers

6.2.1 Observations of staff interactions with detainees have been very positive where they are treated with respect and made as comfortable as possible.

6.2.2 The members' general monitoring experience at Edinburgh airport is similar to that as described for other holding areas monitored by the Board (5.2.1) and is not repeated here.

7. THE REPORTING CENTRE, FESTIVAL COURT, GLASGOW

7.1 Overview:

7.1.1 The Holding Room is located in Building No 2 of a complex of three units occupied by Home Office/UKBF at Festival Court, Glasgow. Persons who have been temporarily admitted to the UK, and are resident in Scotland, are required to report periodically at the reporting centre. Some 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).

7.1.2 The holding facility consists of a control room, occupied by two Tascor DCOs, and the relatively small Holding Room. There is an observation window between the two areas. The Holding Room is staffed from 09.00 until 17.00 Monday to Friday. It is a non-residential Facility.

7.1.3 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 long life meals.

7.1.4 The Holding Room contains 6 individual plastic seats, which are fixed to the floor and which surround a table that is also bolted to the floor. The room contains two toilets which are cubicles in each corner at 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 three annual reports, it is too short for anyone who is of even medium height. We continue to ask that a longer bench be provided.

7.1.5 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 and hygiene for people using these toilets. We also understand that the cubicle doors are scheduled to be replaced and we look forward to early completion of this work. It continues to be our opinion, however, that for dignity and privacy reasons the location of the toilets, in the actual holding room, is unsuitable.

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

7.1.7 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 not available at these locations.

7.2 Operational experience & detainee numbers:

7.2.1 The members' general monitoring experience at Festival Court is similar to that at Glasgow Airport (5.2.1).

7.2.2 DCOs are experienced, empathetic and highly professional.

7.2.3 The number of detainees held in the Holding room in the period covered by this Report is shown in the appendix.

8. LARNE HOUSE, LARNE, NORTHERN IRELAND

8.1 Overview:

8.1.1 The RSTHF WAS opened in July 2011 and 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 appropriate resource available in Northern Ireland. Prior to the service being opened, detainees were kept in Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) custody suites where monitoring was carried out by Independent

Custody Visitors. The Home Office Immigration Minister appointed the Glasgow IMB to undertake monitoring at Larne towards the end of 2012.

8.1.2 Board members normally visit once fortnightly. A recommendation in the Shaw Review ⁽¹⁾ said that more frequent visits should be made by the Board and that a number of these visits should be during the evening and night. The frequency of visits is to some extent subject to resources, but the Board is pleased to advise that during a recent recruitment exercise we were successful in appointing a new member who resides in Northern Ireland. This should provide more flexibility in covering our monitoring responsibilities at Larne.

8.1.3 Shaw made a number of other recommendations in respect of the facility. In a follow-up visit earlier this year, and later discussion with the Board chair, it is understood that some of these recommendations are being re-considered. Following consultation, the final report is expected to be published shortly.

8.1.4 As with each of the other services monitored by the Board, the provision is managed by Tascor staff, usually a team 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.

8.1.5 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. Police stations can sometimes be used.

8.1.6 Families with young children will not be detained, but will be given temporary admission (now termed, bail) with a direction to report to Drumkeen Reporting Centre in Belfast as and when required.

8.1.7 Larne can accommodate up to 19 detainees in 10 bedrooms, only some of which are for single use. Male and female bedrooms are located in separate parts of the building. The bedrooms are very basic, containing only a bed and wardrobe. There are no wall decorations, or reading lamps. Wooden edge beds are raised above the height of mattresses making it quite uncomfortable to sit on.

8.1.8 The lack of suitable seating in bedrooms has been an issue raised by the Board in previous reports. Normal seating was viewed as unsuitable by staff and the Home Office since the bedrooms are small and any seating would need to be secured to the floor for safety reasons. The IMB has not pursued the matter as new seating arrangements in the recreation room went some way to easing the problem. It remains the case, however, that private space for detainees remains limited.

8.1.9 Larne is compact, clean and well decorated. It is cleaned daily by contractors 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.

8.1.10 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. We question the usefulness of having these. 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 limitations on these opportunities, particularly when the complex is busy.

8.1.11 Other areas at the complex include –

- Reception, offices and staff room (adjacent to, but outwith the residential part of the Facility)
- Interview Rooms
- A 'management' room
- A custody office for use by a Tascor manager, containing a small "shop" selling basic items such as soap, cigarettes, etc.
- A small, outside exercise area where detainees may smoke 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

8.1.12 When a detainee is admitted to Larne, 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 and make a general assessment of the detainee's health situation. A fully qualified nurse is on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the year.

8.1.13 After being admitted detainees have freedom of movement and association across all areas except for the custody office.

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

8.1.15 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 basic mobile 'phone to be returned when he/she leaves Larne.

8.2. Operational experience and detainee numbers:

8.2.1 This is the only residential facility monitored by this IMB.

8.2.2 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.

8.2.3 Our experience is that the DCOs demonstrate a professional, caring and friendly attitude towards detainees and will 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 helpful, friendly and open. From our findings and observations, we are of the opinion that the relaxed atmosphere fashioned by staff, under operational circumstances that see an ever changing detainee population, is a major factor in the positive atmosphere the IMB consistently finds at Larne.

8.2.4 As in previous years, a number of relatively minor issues have been raised by members over the reporting period. As before, these have either been immediately resolved, or a satisfactory reason provided regarding the issue.

8.2.5 During the course of the reporting year, the Board has been formally notified of two serious incidents occurring at Larne. These incidents appear to have involved detainees with some form of mental disorder which has manifested itself in violence toward self and/or others. These episodes lay emphasis to the increasing problem of mental disorder in the immigration estate. From early accounts, the Board feels satisfied that staff had managed these incidents professionally and in a way that minimised injury, real or potential, to those involved. That said, at the time of writing this report, the Board still awaits findings of learning reviews that took place immediately following the incidents. We are particularly interested in receiving information on what arrangements were made for the after care of one detainee who was released to the community very soon after the incident in which he was involved.

8.2.6 The number of detainees held at Larne during the period covered by this report is shown in the appendix.

⁽¹⁾ *Review into the Welfare in Detention of Vulnerable Persons: A report to the Home Office by Stephen Shaw.* January 2016. HMSO

Mike Baxter
Chair, on behalf of the Board.

Appendix**Statistics**

i	Members at the start of the reporting period	8	(9)
ii	Members at the close of the reporting period	12	(8)
iii	Board meetings held	11	(12)
iv	Member attendance at Board Meetings	88	(82)
v	Visits to Glasgow Airport	51	(48)
vi	Visits to Edinburgh Airport	53	(54)
vii	Visits to Festival Court	50	(49)
viii	Visits to Larne House	26	(26)
ix	Detainee movements at Glasgow Airport	925	(460)
x	Detainee movements at Edinburgh Airport	628	(499)
xi	Detainee movements at Festival Court	322	(231)
xii	Detainee movements at Larne House	1888	(2233)