



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

BROOK HOUSE IRC

for reporting Year 2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prison Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and immigration removal centre (IRC) to be monitored by an independent Board (IMB), appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the establishment or IRC is situated. Board members are unpaid volunteers. This IMB monitored Brook House IRC, near Gatwick Airport.

The Board for an IRC is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in detention in the centre and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom s/he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- (3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the IRC has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those held in the centre.

This report has been produced to fulfil our obligation under (3) above.

IMB diversity statement

Brook House IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds, including: race, religion or belief, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. All members of Brook House IMB endeavour to undertake their duties in a manner that is acceptable to everyone in the centre, regardless of their background or situation.

Sources of information

Board members have a right of access to every detainee and every part of Brook House, and also to the centre's records. Evidence for this report has been collated from observations during monitoring visits to the centre, conversations with detainees, formal and informal meetings with staff, applications submitted by detainees, and review and analysis of reports and information supplied by G4S, the Home Office and the Board's own records.

MAIN JUDGEMENTS

Are detainees treated fairly?

Overall, the Board believes that detainees are treated fairly when at Brook House. However, the Board believes that it is not fair that many detainees do not have timely access to affordable legal advice (see section 5.6).

Are detainees treated humanely?

The Board repeats its position from last year, that it considers that the indeterminate nature of detention can amount to inhumane treatment, with a harmful impact on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of detainees. We continue to see this regularly on monitoring visits and in applications and requests from detainees.

An average of 44% of all detainees leaving Brook House in 2019 were released into the community. The relatively high release rate raises the question of whether so many men should have been in detention at all (see section 11.1).

In 2019, only 25% of detainees who received Detention Centre Rule 35 assessments were released. While an improvement on 16.6% last year, there are still concerns about the efficacy of the Rule 35 process (see section 4.5).

Some victims of torture continue to be held in detention for significant periods of time after acceptance of their Rule 35 claims (see section 4.7).

The Board welcomes the reduction from 89% to 66% in uses of handcuffs on detainees during escorted moves for hospital visits, and we hope to see a further reduction in 2020 (see section 4.12).

Are detainees prepared well for their release?

While the Board recognises the issues raised by the indeterminate length of stay for detainees at Brook House, we are not aware of any formal opportunities for detainees to acquire vocational skills which might assist them on release or return (see section 10).

MAIN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

TO THE MINISTER

- Introduce a time limit for immigration detention (repeated from 2018).

TO THE HOME OFFICE

- Ensure that the new contract to run the centre requires a greater presence of staff on detainee wings and for welfare, and supports a full range of purposeful activities for detainees (see sections 7.10 and 9) (repeated from 2017 and 2018).
- Review the 'adults at risk' (AAR); assessment, care in detention and teamwork (ACDT); and Rule 35 policies and processes, for consistency and to ensure that they provide a holistic approach to assessing vulnerability and supporting detainees (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).

- Ensure that the AAR framework is better adapted to the needs of detainees (it is currently based on levels of evidence rather than need, and there seems to be little movement between designated levels) (see section 4.4).
- There should be a requirement for systematic and ongoing review of AAR and other vulnerable detainees, to monitor the effect of continued detention on their wellbeing (see sections 4.3 and 4.4).
- Review the Rule 35 process, in order to:
 - 1) reduce the number of victims of torture who continue to be detained (see section 4.5)
 - 2) provide greater transparency on Rule 35 decisions by showing the number of victims of torture who continue to be detained at each IRC (see section 4.5)
 - 3) provide transparency on Rule 35 decisions to continue detention of victims of torture, to show both timescales for removal and immigration control factors supporting the decision (see section 4.7).

TO THE DIRECTORS

The Board is aware that both G4S (the outgoing contract provider) and Serco Ltd (the incoming provider, from 21 May 2020) may have plans covering some of the recommendations below, but we reiterate the following concerns:

- Continue assessments for escorted visits, to see if the use of handcuffs can be reduced further (see section 4.12).
- Fix defects in rooms for detainees with disabilities, as a matter of urgency (see section 5.1).
- Fix problems with the IT system used by detainees (see section 7.7).
- Keep staff recruitment and retention as a priority (see section 7.10) (repeated from 2017 and 2018).
- Offer and consistently deliver a wider programme of organised and purposeful activities (see sections 9 and 10) (repeated from 2018).
- Provide for some opening of the education rooms on weekends (see section 9) (repeated from 2018).

TO G4S HEALTH SERVICES LTD

The Board is aware that G4S Health Services Ltd already has plans to cover the recommendation below, but we reiterate the following concern:

- Keep staff recruitment and retention as a priority (see section 8.5) (repeated from 2018).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTRE

Brook House opened in 2009 as a purpose-built IRC for adult males. It is located about 200 metres from the main runway at Gatwick Airport and was built to prison category B standard. The maximum capacity is 448, but operational capacity is generally capped at 358 (80%).

In 2019, detainee numbers were, again, lower than in previous years, generally reflecting the lower numbers across the wider immigration detention estate as well as some particular reasons, such as some wing closures for works recommended by Stephen Shaw's follow-up report in 2018 and a chickenpox quarantine in the centre. Based on population figures provided by the Home Office and G4S, the average month-end detainee population was 242 in 2019, with a low of 161 in August due to the quarantine, and a high of 290 in September. By comparison, the average month-end population in 2018 was 292.

G4S has run the centre since its opening, but its contract with the Home Office expires in May 2020. On 20 February 2020, the Home Office announced that Serco Ltd ('Serco') was the successful bidder in a retendering process for the Gatwick IRCs, and will take over from G4S from 21 May.

The contract to provide catering, cleaning and a shop for detainees has been held by Aramark, as subcontractor under the G4S contract. This will also be taken over by Serco.

NHS England commissions G4S Health Services Ltd ('G4S Health') to provide medical services. This contract was not part of the retender process and remains in place. A small healthcare centre provides 24-hour cover, but not inpatient treatment. G4S Health provides primary mental healthcare and seconds Elysium Healthcare to provide secondary mental health services. The Forward Trust provides psychosocial substance misuse services.

Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group, the Samaritans, the Red Cross, Migrant Welfare, BID (the Bail for Immigration Detainees charity) and Music in Detention visit the centre to support detainees.

Home Office immigration and enforcement has two teams on site. One covers contract compliance while the other, the detainee engagement team, liaises between detainees and their Home Office case workers.

In November 2018, Kate Lampard QC and Ed Marsden/Verita published a report from their investigation into concerns about Brook House arising from the BBC Panorama programme screened in September 2017.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman started an independent investigation in early 2019. After a judicial review challenge, the Home Office converted this to a public inquiry in November 2019. At the time of writing, there has been no announcement of dates for hearings.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) visited the centre for an unannounced inspection between 20 May and 7 June 2019, and published its report on 24 September.

4 SAFETY

From our monitoring, the Board considers that those working at Brook House prioritise the safety and welfare of detainees. However, while we recognise the efforts made by staff, the Board feels that the existing system still does not ensure a sufficiently high standard of safeguarding for the most vulnerable, and that further measures are needed to protect vulnerable detainees, as advocated in section 4.4.

4.1 Arrivals/departures

New arrivals at Brook House go through an assessment process at reception. This includes being given clothing, refreshments and necessities if required, and assessment for risk factors that may have an impact on room sharing or healthcare.

Departure can be an extremely difficult time for detainees, and the larger of the two departure rooms has remained bleak, although some improvement was made late in the reporting year.

As highlighted in last year's annual report, the Board has again noted instances of the escort provider, Mitie Care & Custody, failing to turn up. It is stressful for detainees to prepare themselves for a move, in some cases making arrangements with family members in another country, only for it not to take place. This is unfair to the detainees concerned, and the Board has continued to raise it with the Home Office.

4.2 Induction

B wing continues to serve as the induction wing, where new arrivals briefly reside to receive an introduction to the centre.

A new induction process was introduced in 2019 and it now takes place at lunchtime, when there is no free movement off the wings, so that it is easier for detainees to attend. The induction talk covers a wide range of topics, and presenting staff have detailed guidance to ensure consistency. The same information is available in induction packs, in a variety of languages, so detainees can refer to them afterwards.

The induction process aims to be inclusive, and detainee orderlies have been involved in leading induction tours of the centre. Detainee attendance at induction is not mandatory but is encouraged, and members of the Board have also been encouraged to take part by G4S.

Adjusting to being in detention can be challenging and the Board welcomes these improvements, but feels that more can be done to ensure a good process. Sometimes, the induction talk is given in a noisy environment and is delivered rapidly, making it difficult for new arrivals to follow. These issues may be resolved by further changes that G4S made in early 2020, including an earlier lunchtime for new arrivals, to give more time for their induction talk.

Language is also an issue, and the Board believes that some form of real-time interpreting should be available.

4.3 Safeguarding vulnerable detainees

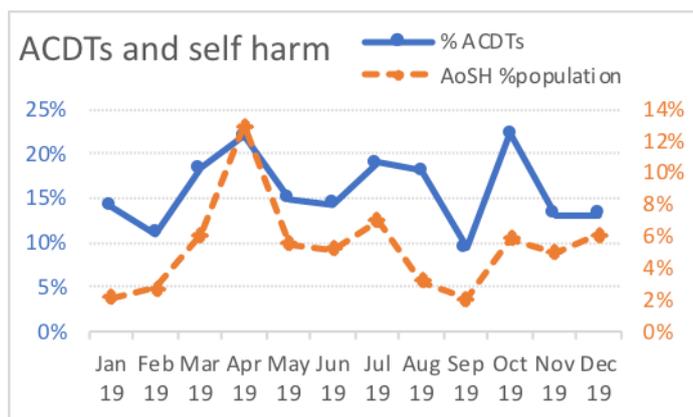
The Board recognises that being detained can cause significant stress; Board members' rota reports often document acts of violence and self-harm associated with bad news about immigration cases or frustrations with detention or separation from family and work, among other issues. Detainees may also have mental health or other medical issues.

ACDT books may be opened for any detainee about whom staff or Board members are concerned. During this reporting year, there were an average of 37 ACDTs per month (as compared with 24 in 2018 and 42 in 2017). The number of ACDTs in 2019 seems high, given the relatively low number of detainees – 15% of the average monthly population of 242, by comparison with 8% of the average population in 2018. Also, around 5% of the detainee

population has self-harmed in each month in 2019. The Board takes these numbers as indicators of high levels of vulnerability of many detainees.

This chart shows the percentage (left-hand scale) of the centre’s total population on open ACDTs for each month of 2019.

It also shows acts of self-harm (AoSH) as a percentage of the total population (right-hand scale).



ACDT reviews were recently moved from the busy wing offices to locations more conducive to a calm, private interview, and more suitable for a range of people to attend and to monitor. While the change is still too recent to assess its impact, the Board welcomes the effort to improve these reviews and increase multidisciplinary attendance. Board members can attend ACDT reviews, and we find that they generally demonstrate a good level of care for detainee welfare.

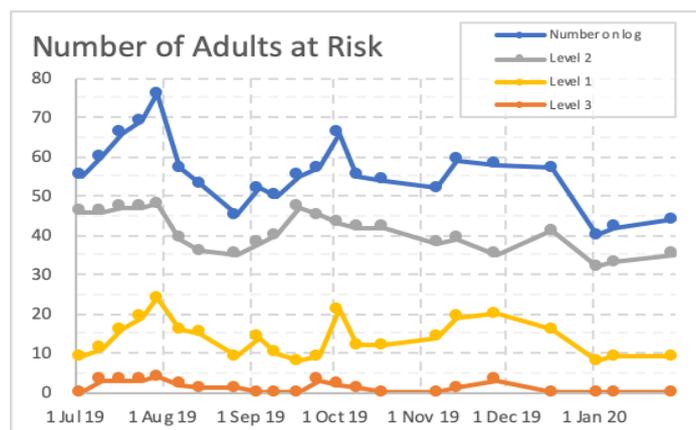
A supported living plan (SLP) or care plan is required for anyone decided during assessment to require additional support to carry out day-to-day activities or have access to all parts of the centre. Staff may open a monitor, challenge, support (MCS) book in relation to allegations of bullying. Over the course of the reporting year, there were 54 SLPs and 49 MCS books opened.

The Board monitors the quality of ACDT, MCS and SLP books, and finds that, while they tend to be updated on schedule, sometimes observations are short on detail, and do not always demonstrate meaningful engagement with detainees. Towards the end of the reporting year, a new log was introduced for G4S duty directors to check the quality of information and care plans in these books. It is hoped that this will result in improvement on these issues.

Safer community meetings are held monthly and include a number of the centre’s teams (although in 2019, only seven of 12 meetings included detainee representation). The Board has observed that meetings can lapse into simply reviewing data rather than taking a proactive approach to reducing risk to detainees and enhancing staff safety.

4.4 AAR

In accordance with Detention Services Order (DSO) 08/2016 and the ‘Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention’ guidance of 6 March 2019 for Home Office staff, men at Brook House are logged as level 1, 2 or 3.



This chart shows the number of men designated as AAR, and the number at each level (1, 2 or 3) in the six months ending 31 January 2020.

At the end of January, more than a third of the centre’s total population was on the AAR log.

The general downward trend in total numbers on the log is reflective of an overall reduction in the centre’s population.

Not all vulnerable men are designated as AAR, and this chart should not be viewed as inclusive of all vulnerable men at Brook House.

The AAR designation and the level at which a man is assessed are important because, according to DSO 08/2016 and the Home Office's 6 March 2019 guidance, it should have an impact on the decision about whether to detain, on treatment while in detention, and on a detainee's prospect of release.

The Board is not privy to most of the details of individual cases, but our review of the documentation provided, our attendance at meetings and reviews, and our discussions with detainees and staff raise a number of questions and concerns about how vulnerability and risk are assessed, and whether this assessment is sufficiently responsive to changes in the situation of the detainee.

Conflation of evidence with level of vulnerability: Home Office procedures for assessing AAR levels are based on the quality, extent and source of evidence. However, systems and processes treat the levels as indicators of vulnerability, with consequences for detainees' prospects of release or support. The Board is concerned that this disadvantages men who are unable to obtain external support for their self-declaration, and that their actual level of vulnerability is not captured by the existing systems. For example, in at least two cases reviewed recently by the Board, men identified as AAR level 1 self-harmed and were placed on an ACDT and constant watch, without this affecting their designation on the AAR log.

The Board has also seen from the records that there are men who are classed as AAR level 2, having had a Rule 35 torture claim accepted, but who then do not appear to be receiving particular attention to see if there is any subsequent deterioration in their condition arising from their continued detention.

Consistency of staff training and engagement: Although all staff members on the wings seem aware of detainees on an open ACDT, it is not clear to the Board how much information they have about those designated AAR on their wings, and what training they have received with regard to this caseload.

Conversely, the views of on-the-ground staff may be given insufficient weight when vulnerable detainees are being reviewed. The Board is aware of instances where case workers have not accepted or have overridden the decisions of medical professionals. Members of other departments have also privately expressed frustration that their views do not always carry weight with case workers. The Board welcomes information recently received from the Home Office of plans to have case workers visit the centre and meet at least some of the men for whose cases they are responsible.

Conclusions: The Board is therefore concerned that, notwithstanding the multiple means of capturing vulnerability set out above, the existing system does not adequately capture an individual's level of vulnerability or any deterioration in his condition. From our observations, the application of the Home Office AAR framework does not seem to strike the right balance between immigration considerations and the wellbeing of vulnerable detainees, and may fail adequately to safeguard vulnerable men at Brook House.

It is particularly worrisome that the current system does not capture deterioration in a detainee's condition, since, as Stephen Shaw's report of 2016 highlighted, vulnerability is often exacerbated by detention. The Board believes that, as a minimum, there should be mandatory ongoing review of all AAR, as well as other vulnerable adults, to assess the impact of continued detention on their wellbeing.

There should also be a review of the AAR, ACDT and Rule 35 policies and processes, for consistency and to ensure that they provide a holistic approach to assessing vulnerability and supporting detainees.

In last year's report, the Board welcomed the establishment of weekly meetings of a multidisciplinary team to discuss AAR. Further improvements have been made, notably that Home Office case workers now reportedly join these meetings, albeit remotely, and only when level 3 cases are being discussed (which is infrequent).

The Board remains concerned that the involvement of the case workers with decision-making power over detainees' cases is insufficient. For example, the Board would advocate more participation by case workers in the weekly meetings for any detainees on the AAR log who local staff feel require particular attention – those who have attempted self-harm or are on an open ACDT, for example. Another important group would be detainees who have had Rule 35 torture claims accepted but are nevertheless continued in detention.

4.5 Rule 35 victims of torture and AAR

Reports to the Board show that the Home Office received an average of 17 Rule 35 reports per month in the first nine months of 2019. Only 25% of those assessed were released, an improvement on the 16.6% of claimants released in 2018. We understand that only three of the reports in 2019 were for health concerns under Rule 35(1), with the balance for Rule 35(3) torture claims. There were no reports made under Rule 35 (2) for suicide risk.

The Board notes that, since September 2019, it has no longer received data from the Home Office on the number of Rule 35 torture claims made by detainees at Brook House, or the number which are successful in leading to release. While there is some public data on Rule 35 published for each quarter by Home Office immigration enforcement, it is not always timely and is more limited than information previously provided to the Board as it does not show release figures for individual IRCs.

The lack of transparency in the Rule 35 process described in section 8.10 and the low percentage of releases during this reporting year continue to leave the Board with considerable concerns about how the Rule 35 process is working to protect this group of vulnerable detainees.

Men who have had their Rule 35 torture claims accepted but who are continued in detention are regarded as AAR level 2. These detainees usually represent a significant percentage of all AAR level 2 men at Brook House. For example, 45% of men shown as AAR level 2 at the end of January 2020 had had torture claims accepted.

4.6 Length of time in detention generally

Detention at Brook House is intended to be short term. Below is a snapshot on length of stay in the centre in 2019 from monthly reports provided to the Board:

	Jan 2018	July 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	July 2019	Dec 2019
Total number of detainees	397	249	236	284	258	229
Less than 1 week	112	58	18	108	82	48
1 week – 1 month	159	98	96	94	106	96
1 – 2 months	52	40	58	28	38	49
2 – 6 months	68	43	58	48	24	34
6 – 12 months	6	10	6	6	7	0
1 – 2 years	0	0	0	0	1	2
Over 2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0

The continued decline in the number of detainees being held in the centre for more than six months is welcomed, but two men had been held for over a year by the end of 2019. The number of men held beyond two months also continues to decline but is still significant.

4.7 Length of time in detention: victims of torture

Sections 4.4 and 4.5 highlight concerns that the Board has about the ongoing detention of men even after their Rule 35 claims of torture have been accepted by the Home Office. The Board has further concerns about the length of time that some of these men continue to be detained.

As with any AAR, there is a presumption that these men should not be detained. Further, under the guidance for Home Office staff, dated 9 March 2019, the Home Office decision maker on detention should assess whether there is a realistic prospect of removal within a reasonable timescale, and only then are immigration control factors to be considered, to see if they outweigh the presumption.

The Board does not have access to information which might show what period of time is identified for removal in individual cases. Nor do we have access to information which might show what immigration control factors were considered relevant.

From our analysis of the limited data available, the Board believes that at least 19 acknowledged victims of torture have been continued in detention for over 12 weeks after acceptance of their Rule 35 claim in the period from July 2019 to February 2020, and five of them for over 24 weeks. In late January 2020, one man was released 24 weeks after having his Rule 35 claim accepted, as was another man after 18 weeks.

At a minimum, this raises questions on the reasonableness of the timescales being set for removal and whether there was a realistic prospect of removal in that time.

4.8 Detainee safety and violence

In a G4S survey in November 2019, more than 90% of detainees responding reported feeling safe or very safe at Brook House, a welcome increase from last year's 62%. This may be due to lower population numbers overall, which, anecdotally, have contributed to an improved environment and greater capacity of staff to engage with the men. The survey is only a snapshot, however, and is a much smaller sample than in 2018 (only 37 of around 200 men). By contrast, it should be noted that, in a survey of 158 detainees undertaken as part of the inspection of Brook House by HMIP earlier in 2019, a third of respondents said that they had felt unsafe at the centre.

Over the reporting year, there have been 82 assaults on staff (assaults reported here include less serious acts such as touching or pushing), 20 assaults on another detainee, 260 threats, 156 incidents of verbal abuse, 24 fights and 54 incidents that involved damage to centre property. Incidents are reported to the Board, along with the actions taken.

Although the Board monitors MCS books, these provide only limited insight into the extent and nature of bullying in the centre, as not all cases are documented, and it is likely that some bullying is not reported at all.

Brook House has a high level of diversity, but on occasion there are significant numbers of people from a single nationality. Irrespective of which nationality, this has been anecdotally linked with higher levels of tension generally, and bullying in particular, and some instances of tension between different ethnic groups.

4.9 Time-served foreign national offenders (TSFNOs)

The proportion of TSFNO residents has stayed generally stable, varying between just below 40% and around 50% over the reporting year.

The Board recognises that TSFNO detainees have served their time but is also aware that some detainees who have not come from a prison environment are concerned about being housed with people who have. There is insufficient disaggregated data to indicate whether these concerns are justified. Whether justifiable or not, it is important that all detainees' concerns about safety are acknowledged and addressed. The Board is informed that the initial risk assessment process considers previous offending history along with a number of other

variables when allocating rooms. Offending history is also considered when assessing staffing and safety requirements (for example, in the case of detainees who may pose a risk to female staff).

4.10 Drugs and alcohol

In 2019, security staff found home-brewed alcohol in Brook House 11 times, as compared with 63 the previous year, and found drugs 45 times, as compared with 42 the previous year. The security team has been more proactive in its searches for signs of alcohol being brewed, particularly at times such as Christmas and New Year. New screening technology for new psychoactive substances was also introduced during this reporting year, allowing post to be searched for drugs without opening residents' mail, which the Board welcomes.

4.11 Use of force

The Board commented last year that we had experienced occasions when the monthly use of force meetings had been postponed or cancelled by G4S. This has not been our experience in 2019. From our observations, the meetings seem to be well attended by a multidisciplinary team and are run in an open and transparent manner. Both good and bad examples of where force has been used against detainees are shown to the meeting, and the lessons discussed. We are told that feedback is given to staff involved in such uses of force, and where necessary additional training is given.

Set out below are the number of occasions when force was used in 2019, compared with previous years:

2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
223	257	334	161	128

The number of occasions was lower in 2019 compared with the previous two years but still significantly higher than in both 2016 and 2015.

Moreover, given the fluctuations in total detainee population in recent years, it is arguable that the use of force in 2019 is actually comparable or even slightly higher than in 2018. This is based on calculations of an average number of incidents of use of force per detainee, based on population figures provided by Home Office and G4S (population average of 292 detainees per month in 2018 and 242 in 2019). While imprecise, the calculation suggests that an average of 7.7% of detainees had force used on them in each month in 2019, whereas in 2018 it was the slightly lower figure of 7.3%.

The following is a summary of the reasons given by G4S for use of force in 2018 and 2019:

	Maintain good order	Protect third party	Prevent self-harm	Other
2018	164	38	36	19
2019	132	46	20	25

The category 'Other' has increased. It includes use of force for self-protection and to prevent damage to property or escape.

As shown in section 4.3, self-harming is still a serious issue at the centre, but the number of occasions of use of force to prevent self-harm continues to fall. The 2019 figure of 20 occasions is down on 2018 (36), 2017 (48) and 2016 (55 occasions).

Within the category of 'Maintain good order', there has been a reduction in the number of occasions of use of force in facilitating the removal of detainees:

2019	2018	2017	2016
41	48	70	33

4.12 Use of handcuffs

One of the Board's major concerns in 2018 was the high percentage of detainees who were handcuffed when escorted from Brook House for appointments such as at the hospital and dentist. While we were informed that a risk assessment was the basis for the application of handcuffs, the Board was concerned that it still resulted in 89% of detainees being handcuffed.

Since our last report, G4S has reviewed its practice, and risk assessments are now signed off by one of two senior managers. In our view, this has led to greater consistency, and in 2019 handcuffs were used in escorting detainees 66% of the time, although we noticed an upward trend in the final months of the reporting year.

This reduction is encouraging, and while we recognise the inherent risks associated with escorting some detainees from the centre, the Board hopes to see a further reduction in 2020.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Once again, the population of Brook House was very diverse in 2019. In December alone, people from 62 and 63 different nationalities were represented in arrivals and departures, respectively, including a range of age groups, and religions and beliefs.

G4S has made changes to its initial training course, to put more emphasis on diversity, with the aim of equipping new staff with better knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural backgrounds of detainees. The Board welcomes this.

Detailed monthly statistics are produced by G4S and there are monthly equality and diversity meetings which are generally held in conjunction with safer community meetings. The Board feels that it would be more beneficial if these meetings were to be run separately, allowing more focus on equality and fairness issues and safer community issues as two distinct areas of importance for the centre.

5.1 Disability

The disabilities most often self-declared by residents at Brook House are mental illness, reduced mobility and visual impairment.

The Board believes that the centre is not suitable for detainees with limited mobility. Lift access is restricted to staff, limiting access to facilities and activities for those using crutches and wheelchairs. The Board is aware of one case in 2019 of a detainee in a wheelchair who also had mental health issues. The Board is also aware of an incident when a detainee with visual impairment fell on the stairs.

Disabled rooms on some of the wings have been affected by flooding, due to poorly designed showers with no curb to prevent water from running into the room. This was first reported and discussed with G4S and the Home Office in January 2019. At the time of writing, this issue was still unresolved and has been deferred until after the start of the new contract in May 2020. The Board is dismayed at the length of time it has taken both G4S and the Home Office to resolve this issue, and that G4S does not plan to complete the works before contract handover.

5.2 Nationalities, cultures and languages

A range of programmes for national, cultural and religious celebrations was run throughout the reporting year by the education, art, cultural kitchen and chaplaincy teams, and the cultural kitchen is now open seven days a week and usually fully booked.

The Aramark-run kitchen supported major festivals, such as Ramadan, Eid, Diwali and Christmas, producing special menus. Despite a couple of false starts, collaboration between catering staff and the centre's imam resulted in generally well-received Ramadan food boxes. The Board notes the effort and attention given to this by the centre director and senior staff.

There are, on average, 30 languages spoken in the centre. thebigword remains the main interpreting service. It seems to be well used and effective on those occasions we have seen it in operation, but we have had mixed feedback from staff. Occasional delays in connecting to interpreters have been an ongoing issue, with waiting times of up to 30–40 minutes, and the Board also noted that some languages are unavailable on weekends. There have been concerns during this reporting year that interpreters from thebigword did not always provide full interpreting. For example, in one case it was reported that an interpreter provided a one-word interpretation following a conversation with a detainee.

Deficiencies in official interpreting services are often supplemented by over 30 staff members with additional language skills, and who are generally willing to interpret for detainees.

Whether using thebigword, a staff member or another detainee for interpreting, however, we have observed instances in which officers did not adapt their speaking styles to an audience with limited English or when using interpreters.

A trial of using audio devices with recordings of the induction for new arrivals took place during this reporting year but was not rolled out by G4S.

5.3 Religious affairs

The head of chaplaincy position is currently vacant and there is now one full-time staff member, supported by part-time staff and a group of volunteers. Together, they facilitate a large number of weekly services and a monthly religious calendar, as well as visiting all areas of the centre and attending meetings on a daily basis. The Board understands that, during the reporting year, G4S has increased the total number of hours available for part-time staff.

The Board acknowledges the important role the chaplaincy team plays at Brook House, offering detainees emotional and spiritual support at a very difficult time in their lives.

5.4 Other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010

In 2019, a total of 55 men aged over 55 arrived at the centre. The majority of arrivals are under 35. Eleven detainees identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community, including one transgender detainee.

G4S ran a trial LGBTQ+ forum in July 2019, but no detainees attended.

G4S advises that a single monthly forum has been organised since October 2019 for detainees who might be in one of the categories of protected characteristic other than disability, race, or religion or belief. Attendance has been very low so far, and one-to-one conversations are encouraged by staff and remain the main means of managing any issues for these groups of detainees.

5.5 Complaints

The Board is copied in on complaints made against G4S and the Home Office. The Board does not see replies made by the Home Office, but we do see replies made by G4S and the Home Office Professional Standards Unit (PSU) if complaints have been referred to it. We do not see complaints made against either healthcare staff or Mitie Care & Custody, the immigration escort provider for the Home Office.

A total of 156 complaints involving G4S were made in 2019. Twenty were upheld or partially upheld, and four were withdrawn. Over a quarter of these complaints were about the behaviour of staff and another quarter were about detainee property. Ten complaints were dealt with by the PSU, with one being partially upheld.

The low percentage of complaints upheld by G4S (less than 13%) raises questions about the process. As in previous years, the Board's view is that the complaints are generally taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. If still in the centre, detainees are generally interviewed, as are the staff involved, and closed-circuit television footage can also be looked at.

However, some factors in the system can weigh against detainees. For example, G4S investigators tend to want precise facts and details or the complaint is not always fully investigated. Many detainees do not or cannot provide enough facts or sufficient detail for the complaint to be upheld. In most cases involving lost or stolen property, the detainee will lose because of a rule he agrees to during his reception process, that detainees are responsible for the care of their property. In addition, in cases where it is a detainee's word against an officer's, it can be difficult for a detainee to prove his claim. Finally, there are cases where a detainee's complaint is not upheld because of, in the Board's view, a technicality, but its validity seems to have been recognised because G4S has subsequently changed its practice. While we do not see many of these, there is a sense that these decisions are too narrow and really should be upheld.

Complaints related to healthcare are covered in more detail in section 8.7.

5.6 Access to legal support

Publicly funded Legal Aid Agency surgeries are provided by 25 law firms. The wait time for an appointment varies, but has typically been between three and five days, with flexibility to accommodate urgent cases. This is a significant improvement on the six to nine days reported for 2018, but is still not rapid enough for some detainees, given the short duration of their stays.

The latest BID survey of the wider detention estate for autumn 2019 showed that only 34% of detainees were actually taken on as clients with legal aid funding after the initial free interview. If not eligible for legal aid, detainees need to source and pay for their own lawyers. The BID survey showed that only 59% of the detainees surveyed had a lawyer, with 68% of these having legal aid.

From our conversations with detainees at Brook House, the Board has no reason to doubt that these numbers reflect the situation for the centre. The Board believes that it is not fair that so many detainees do not have timely access to affordable legal support.

5.7 Welfare

The Board has found, again, during this reporting year that the welfare team is diligent and professional in its approach to a wide range of queries, and is a valued resource for detainees. The team has positive and effective relationships with both BID and Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, which leads to valuable support for detainees.

At times during the reporting year, there were queues waiting for some time for appointments, raising questions about whether there was sufficient resource. The Board has been told that it is not possible to add a third officer as the number of workstations is dictated by the number of information technology (IT) ports in the welfare office.

In January 2020, 21% of all issues dealt with by the welfare team involved printing, scanning and sending email for detainees. Hopefully, resolution of some of the long-running IT problems referred to in section 7.7 will take some pressure off the welfare office and also ease the frustrations with queueing and wait times.

6 REMOVAL FROM ASSOCIATION AND TEMPORARY CONFINEMENT

6.1 Care and separation unit (CSU)

The CSU is a small, separate unit of six rooms at the end of E wing. It is normally used for detainees who have been disruptive and who have been placed on either Rule 40 or Rule 42 of the Detention Centre Rules.

E wing is used for a range of purposes, including:

- a) for detainees where staff are of the view that significant healthcare concerns exist (for example, drug use, mental ill health, self-harming, suspected tuberculosis, advanced food and fluid refusal)
- b) for reasons of safety where a detainee may be awaiting a flight or a return to prison
- c) for detainees on Rule 40.

6.2 Use of Rule 40 and Rule 42

The table below shows the number of occasions when detainees were placed on Rule 40/42 in 2019 in comparison with previous years.

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Rule 40	187	259	503	358	293
Rule 42	3	12	2	14	37
Average time on Rule 40	46.5 hours	59.3 hours	32 hours	34.8 hours	36 hours
Average time on Rule 42	4.2 hours	16.8 hours			

As can be seen, Rule 42 was used sparingly in 2019, and the amount of time spent on Rule 42 was limited.

In relation to the number of detainees placed on Rule 40, there is a reduction over the five-year period shown. Looking at average monthly detainee populations for 2018 and 2019 (average 292 detainees per month in 2018 and 242 in 2019), the percentage of detainees held on Rule 40 in 2019 was an average of 6.4% each month, lower than the average of 7.3% in 2018.

The reduction in time that detainees spent on Rule 40, compared with 2018, is welcome, although we note that it was still higher than in each of the three years leading up to 2018. The Board understands that the average length of time in both 2018 and 2019 will have been influenced by a number of detainees spending significant periods on Rule 40, rather than the average time of 46.5 hours being the 'norm'.

On the basis of our monitoring of Rule 40 and Rule 42 reviews in 2019, the Board's view is that the managers and staff involved dealt with these in a professional way, which was focused on the behaviour and needs of individual detainees, and that both Rules were used appropriately.

Statistics provided by G4S show that 22 of the occasions when Rule 40 was used in 2019 were to facilitate the removal of detainees. They also show that there were no uses of Rule 40 for a detainee's own protection. However, we note that there were situations where detainees were placed on Rule 40, at least in part, because of their mental health issues.

7 ACCOMMODATION (INCLUDING COMMUNICATION)

7.1 The accommodation

Accommodation at Brook House is in five wings over three floors, with connecting communal corridors where facilities such as healthcare, visits, welfare, and educational and recreation activities are located.

Use of the wings has been flexed in response to the chickenpox quarantine (see section 8) and to periods when there have been considerably lower numbers of detainees. Wings have been progressively redecorated (including removing third beds from all three-bedded rooms in response to Stephen Shaw's follow-up report in 2018). In the Board's view, there have been no negative impacts, beyond the inevitable individual disruption, which have been apparent on detainees during these periods.

7.2 Shared rooms

There are now no triple-occupancy rooms in the centre.

The general rule is that two men are required to share a room, subject to a risk assessment. The Board has heard officer concerns on a few occasions about the number of men who refuse to share a room. Sometimes, this has meant restricting opportunities for paid work as a penalty for non-compliance with sharing rules, in order to encourage men to share, although this has not been a major concern while occupancy has been low. On one occasion, we also heard a detainee complain of what he felt was inappropriate pressure being applied to persuade him to share.

7.3 Cleanliness and state of the accommodation

During redecoration, cloth curtains across in-room toilets have been replaced with firmer-fabric saloon-style 'doors' attached with magnets. This too was a response to Stephen Shaw's follow-up report. The Board understands that the Home Office organised a review by an external imam to be satisfied that the design of the new doors was adequate for Muslim prayer purposes. We have not heard any complaints from detainees about the new toilet doors.

Virtually all Board rota visits have found that wing facilities (laundry, fax, microwaves) are functional, and that wings are generally kept clean and tidy.

7.4 Access to wings

Detainees are locked in their rooms from 9pm until 8am, and for two short periods during the day for a roll count. There are approximately nine hours per day for free movement for detainees to access activities, healthcare and other facilities off their wings.

The automated entry system, noted in our last annual report as being under consideration, has not progressed and has been left to be overtaken by requirements of the new contract. Men continue to have to bang on the wing door for access, sometimes leading to a bottleneck, resulting in occasional shouting and frustration.

7.5 Exercise areas and smoking

The three main exercise yards have been open on most occasions we have visited. There have been no reports of detainees complaining about lack of access.

The fourth yard is designated for smokers, and this is the most heavily used. Early in the reporting year, G4S was fined in a case brought by Crawley Council for failure to stop smoking in the centre. Protocols were put in place to warn men who continued to smoke. The Board believes that the situation has improved since then, but there has been occasional evidence of men smoking within the building.

7.6 Communication

The Board welcomes the introduction of Skype, so that detainees can see and speak to their families – even though other video services are in more general use outside the centre. One device is provided, fixed to the desk in a visits room. Men can book a half-hour slot, usually for the following day. The facility is available from 9am to 8.30pm, giving 17 half-hour timeslots per day. A review of the booking sheets for a 12-day period indicated that, on average, about 35% of the slots are booked but only about 20% are actually used. Evening timeslots are the most popular. It is clear that only a few men use the facility; some names reappear, usually in the same timeslot, for a number of consecutive days. Officers report that non-attendance for a booked session can cause frustration with men who arrive ad hoc to find the room booked but empty.

7.7 IT

Throughout the reporting year, we have been concerned by a number of IT issues that have a significant impact on detainees: difficulties or inability to print certain types of documents; slowness of the internet connections; websites blocked.

The Board has been following up on difficulties in printing PDF documents since March 2019. It should be noted that many men receive documents from their lawyers in PDF format. Over a period of more than six months, the Board has received confusing and conflicting reports about supposed resolution of this issue, although there is now reported to be a workaround in place.

G4S made it clear that they would not address the issues with internet bandwidth as it is not covered by their contract with the Home Office. At the time of writing, the Board is not aware of Serco's plans for this area.

While the Board understands that there may be legitimate reasons to block detainee access to certain websites, we are concerned that this blocking has been applied unnecessarily broadly. When tested by a Board member, we were not able to access .gov.uk or .nhs sites. The only news site accessible was BBC News. G4S seems to have moved only slowly on this issue – since being raised in March/April 2019, there was little improvement until close to the end of the year. We are told that, following escalation within G4S, websites will now be unblocked (if this is approved) within 48 hours. We have not yet had sufficient time to verify if this is actually being achieved, and, indeed, it may become moot with the appointment of the new contractor.

In the Board's view, the overall provision of IT at the centre for detainees is barely adequate, and we hope that the new supplier will address this as a matter of some urgency.

7.8 Food

There continue to be comments from detainees about the food: its quality, variety and cultural appropriateness. In December 2019, a complaint was received, signed by 52 men in one wing, about the quality and quantity of the food provided. This complaint was not upheld, without, it appears, any contact with the men involved, which we find surprising. While the Board does understand the difficulty of satisfying a range of cultural and personal preferences, we would hope for a more consultative approach than was taken in this instance. Board members who have eaten with the men have reported the food to be adequate.

A survey of detainees by Aramark in November 2019 found very high percentages of responders (86% or higher) saying that both the food and portions were good or very good. Forty-eight percent said that the menu met their cultural needs. It should be noted that only 23 men responded to the survey and that, by contrast, 68% of detainees responding to HMIP's 2019 inspection survey said that the food was quite or very bad.

The Aramark catering management team (a new manager and deputy manager in the latter part of 2019) is trying to engage detainees and to respond to their concerns. For example, menus are being adapted to the tastes of the predominant nationalities, and more dishes are

being added so as to lengthen the period before menus repeat themselves. The Board hopes that this will continue and begin to bear fruit in 2020.

Kitchen staff have been consistent in describing difficulties in relying on detainee workers in the kitchen. Detainees have also described their disappointment with the roles they are asked to carry out in the kitchen. The catering management team reports, however, that there are signs of improvement, with, for example, more consistent detainee worker attendance and better satisfaction with their work. Managers ascribe this to better publicity of the benefits, greater inclusion of detainees in 'the team' and more varied duties.

The cultural kitchen has been active during the reporting year, and has been reaching out to the men with some commendable initiatives: themed cooking competitions, offering food to any takers, and trying to encourage men on food refusal to come to cook their favourite food.

7.9 Detainee voice

In other parts of this report, the Board notes some areas of limited involvement by detainees – for example, attendance at safer community meetings, LGBTQ+ forums and some organised activities. We are also aware that there are occasions when no detainees have shown up for forums held for the residential wings or to raise issues about food.

Some of this could be due to how the particular event is advertised or 'marketed' to detainees, but the Board feels that there should be more consultation with detainees for their views on what is wanted in these and other areas of detainee activities or involvement.

7.10 Staffing and shortages

Staff recruitment and retention have continued to be major priorities for G4S throughout the reporting year. As in past years, G4S has reported difficulties in attracting recruits as the Gatwick area has plenty of employment opportunities and, at the end of 2019, they had not recruited the targeted number of officers and still had some reliance on overtime. Although low detainee numbers have ensured that staff shortages have not resulted in significant incidents, staffing levels on the wings sometimes appeared to be stretched, and the Board has witnessed occasions on which there appeared to be fewer than the desired number of officers available (usually because of the numbers on constant watches or escort duty, for example). In addition, at times throughout the reporting year, the amount of sport and other activities on offer has been reduced owing to staff shortages.

Officers who have voiced an opinion to the Board generally say that they are satisfied with the staffing levels and that morale is reasonably good. The policy of designating detainee custody managers to particular wings – 'their' wings – seems to have worked well.

7.11 Staff-detainee relationships

The Board's view is that staff-detainee relationships are generally positive, and that an improved staff to detainee ratio may have contributed to this in 2019.

We have observed a number of instances of officer-detainee interaction and communication which we have felt were respectful, supportive and effective, including in the face of anger and bad behaviour by detainees. We have been impressed by the particularly sympathetic and supportive approach displayed by some G4S duty directors reviewing ACDTs and Rule 40s.

On the other hand, as noted in section 5.2, we have occasionally seen behaviour at these reviews that, while not disrespectful as such, did not seem adapted to the needs of the situation or of the vulnerable man who was the subject of the review. Examples include lack of eye contact, not adapting talking style and speed, and talking to the telephone rather than the detainee (when using the interpreting service). While these occasions are the exception, they can lead to an impression that the review is more of a procedural necessity rather than a focus on the needs of the particular detainee at the time.

Forty-one out of 156 formal complaints made by detainees in 2019 were about the behaviour of G4S staff. These included complaints about attitude, bullying, disrespect, racism and rudeness. While only four of these were upheld or partially upheld, the number of allegations made is significant. Staff behaviour and attitudes is an area which can be difficult to monitor, but it is one which we continue to look at.

The Board feels that the centre's management team should consider reintroducing the opportunity for officers to eat with the detainees. One officer we spoke with felt that it was 'unfortunate' that this opportunity had been withdrawn (as a result of abuse by some staff members) as doing so 'improves relations with the men'. A number of Board members eat with the men if their rota duties allow it, and feel that it encourages better relationships, gives first-hand knowledge of the food and has an important symbolic role.

8 HEALTHCARE (INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE)

G4S Health is commissioned by NHS England to supply healthcare services. Healthcare staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is no inpatient facility.

Delivering healthcare can be particularly challenging within an IRC because of its vulnerable population. Many men arrive with complex physical and mental health issues; some have been tortured or witnessed atrocities. The act of being detained, separation from friends and family, loss of control over their future, and poor/protracted communication from the Home Office exacerbate the situation. Self-harming and the threat of self-harm are frequent.

The facilities at the centre include two consultation rooms plus a waiting area, a dedicated room for the mental health support team and two rooms in reception for preadmission screening. The flooring in clinical rooms and reception was reported as unsatisfactory in last year's report. It has been replaced but still requires attention. Further work is being scheduled.

The centre was quarantined for five weeks in August and September 2019 owing to a chickenpox outbreak.

Despite the challenges, the Board considers that detainees can access appropriate services, and that the treatment they receive is equivalent to that available in the community.

8.1 Access to healthcare

All detainees see a nurse in reception on arrival for an initial health screen, and we understand that this is usually within the stipulated two hours of arrival. Detainees are then given an appointment to see a GP within the first 24 hours; not all choose to take this up.

Detainees can attend the daily morning triage session to see a nurse, who will refer them on to a doctor if necessary. At year-end, the waiting time for a routine doctor's appointment was approximately three days.

During this reporting year, daily walkabouts have been introduced. These are conducted by a healthcare assistant or nurse, to provide more visibility both to detainees and wing staff, as to the services that the healthcare team provide.

8.2 Dental service

A detainee can discuss dental problems with a nurse in the daily triage sessions. If the problem is considered to be acute, the detainee can usually see an emergency dentist at Crawley Hospital that same day or the next day. If not considered acute, the detainee can see a dentist who attends the centre every three weeks. If the dentist cannot assist, the detainee will need to be escorted to East Surrey Hospital.

In an effort to reduce wait times and some of the need for external escorted visits, NHS England has subcontracted the provision of a mobile dental unit to G4S Health. The service was due to start early in 2020, but has been delayed owing to the coronavirus pandemic. Plans are that the unit will visit Brook House twice a month and be located on one of the courtyards for easy access by detainees. This is welcomed by the Board, and was something that we suggested in our annual report last year.

8.3 Other services

An optician attends monthly, but nurses can issue reading glasses without prescription in the interim. Well-man clinics are held once a week on each wing, where blood pressure and weight can be checked. Boots, the chemist, runs a weekly session for detainees which is focused on those using medication for long-term conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy.

8.4 Off-site treatment

Care which cannot be provided at the centre will involve transfer to a hospital, either for an appointment or inpatient treatment. This may be at a local or other hospital, as existing appointments are maintained for detainees. It will always involve G4S staff acting as escorts and can be a significant pressure on staffing. During 2019, detainees were escorted to 290 individual appointments.

8.5 Staffing

Recruitment and retention remain a priority, but filling nursing post vacancies continues to be a problem. If necessary, agency staff are used to cover triage sessions and arrival assessments. We see no evidence that sessions have been cancelled because of staff shortages.

8.6 Staff attitudes

The Board recognises the difficulties that might be faced by healthcare staff in the detention environment. However, we continue to hear anecdotal comments about the attitude of some healthcare staff members towards detainees. There is a sense from these detainees that they do not feel believed when presenting their issues. This is of concern to the Board, and we continue to monitor it.

We are told that there were eight formal complaints raised in 2019 concerning staff attitudes, and none of them have been upheld.

8.7 Healthcare-related complaints and applications

Detainees quite often raise their medical issues on our visits. The most common of these informal complaints from detainees concern the medicines they are prescribed or delays in getting external appointments. There are also claims that some conditions are being overlooked.

Of the 60 formal complaints received by the healthcare department in 2019, 28 related to medical care. These were mainly in cases where the treatment received from either a nurse or doctor was not the treatment that a detainee expected or requested, or differed from the treatment he had received prior to coming to the centre. None of the 60 complaints was upheld. Complaints are discussed at quarterly quality meetings, attended by a Board member, and we understand that lessons learnt are shared with healthcare staff.

The Board received 19 healthcare-related formal applications from detainees, the same as in 2018. This category includes applications related to social care, as well as physical and mental health. Six of these concerned a dispute over the amount of medication prescribed, three about delays for external appointments, and three about the care given by healthcare staff.

8.8 Mental health

G4S Health provides the primary mental healthcare for the centre, and Elysium Healthcare is seconded by G4S Health to provide secondary mental healthcare. The mental health nurses run weekly coffee and chat sessions, weekly 'hearing voices' sessions and weekly sleep clinics. Attendance at all these sessions varies with the population. On-site senior mental health nurses deal with the vast majority of issues presented by detainees, and we are told that most of these are related to anxiety around immigration status. A psychologist and a psychiatrist visit weekly. Appointments are booked via the mental health team; we are told this is normally within seven days.

During the reporting year, a detainee arrived who was unable to communicate clearly or give his identity. After 20 days in the centre, an application was made for him to be held under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act for his own protection. He was transferred to a specialist hospital until his identity was discovered and he was released into the care of his family.

Four detainees were placed under Section 48 of the Mental Health Act, a further reduction from five in 2018 and 12 in 2017, although some of this could be attributed to generally lower numbers in the centre in 2019.

8.9 Substance misuse services

The substance misuse services are run by The Forward Trust, which provides needs-led care planning through to release planning. During this reporting year, a peer mentor service was introduced, allowing detainees with experience of drugs and alcohol abuse to support others with similar problems. This is considered good practice in the sector and appears to work well in Brook House. The relocation of The Forward Trust's office to an area more accessible to detainees has had a positive impact on detainees being able to access services more readily.

G4S staff receive drug and alcohol awareness training as part of their initial training course, and work with The Forward Trust on cases where detainees require support around drug or alcohol use.

8.10 Rule 35 assessments

At year-end, the wait time for a Rule 35 GP appointment was five days. However, this was with a low population, and at one point during the reporting year the wait was up to 18 days.

Due to medical confidentiality rules, the Board cannot monitor the content or quality of GP reporting or the Home Office responses. Informal complaints to us from detainees tend to be about the outcomes of their claims, rather than the process. We are not aware of any special training on Rule 35 being provided by the Home Office for GPs in 2019, but are told that doctors in Brook House 'audit' each other's Rule 35 work.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

In our report last year, the Board's view was that the range of sport and other organised activities actually held did not meet the needs of detainees, and we recommended that G4S introduce and consistently deliver a wider programme of organised and purposeful activities.

The Board welcomes a significant number of improvements in 2019. These include:

- A marked improvement in the display of notices in the centre for organised activities.
- By year-end, the three main courtyards were generally opened, allowing more opportunities for exercise and fresh air.
- A second courtyard was laid with AstroTurf and is largely used for football.
- The cultural kitchen remains very popular with detainees and is now open every day. It is also an example of how better use of facilities can result from proactive 'marketing' with detainees.
- The art room is now open on weekends.
- The education team has started offering short courses on CV preparation and interview skills.
- The cinema room has been used much more, with the addition of blackout blinds, allowing use in daytime hours.
- A number of G4S officers have qualified as gym instructors, although there is not yet much sign of how this skill is being used.
- There has been some improvement in what is offered in the way of organised events, such as cricket and football competitions.

However, from our observations, there remain areas where the Board believes there could be further improvements:

- It was still the case at year-end that even advertised activities were not always held and, from what we see, events can remain subject to staffing needs and priorities in other areas.
- Some scheduled activities can suffer from either no or low attendance by detainees. It was not unusual on rota week visits to see a lone officer stationed on a courtyard, with no detainees present.
- There should be some opening of the education classrooms on weekends.
- There could be a fresh look at the education classes on offer, to see what could be done to add training for vocational skills and consideration of some online classes.
- The library has been regularly used by groups of card or games players, and there have been both formal and informal complaints about the disruption and noise levels. The Board made repeated requests to G4S throughout 2019 for arrangements to be put in place for regular use of the under-utilised music room as a space for general activities like this. At year-end, it still had not been fully implemented.

The Board recognises that there are challenges in providing a full range of activities at Brook House. Detainees stay for an indeterminate period and there is a shortage of space for activities both in and outside the centre buildings.

There were many improvements in 2019, but this was starting from a low base. The Board's view is that, from our observations, the range of sport and other organised activities offered could be improved and that there could be more active marketing of events and consultation with detainees to increase participation. In addition, there should be sufficient dedicated staffing levels, to ensure that advertised activities are actually run.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Roles available for paid work include various orderlies, kitchen and servery workers, barbers and wing cleaners. These paid jobs are generally well represented across the different resident nationalities. With significantly lower numbers of detainees in the centre than in previous years, there has been generally enough work for those who wanted it. The total number of jobs available for detainees has been kept at 150 in 2019, and the Board is told that roughly 70–100 of those jobs are usually filled.

The Board is not aware of any organised training or opportunities for detainees to acquire vocational skills which might assist them on release or removal.

11 PREPARATION FOR RELEASE OR REMOVAL

Issues relating directly to the immigration status of detainees are outside the Board's remit. However, we do monitor the impact on detainees of Home Office processes and decisions. Further, 45% of the formal applications received by us in 2019 related to immigration matters, and it is a rare rota visit where we do not get a number of informal requests for help on the topic or see its impact on detainees. As has been the case in previous years, the local Home Office teams continue to be helpful in providing us with information.

11.1 Release rate

For 2019, an average of 44% of all detainees leaving Brook House each month were being released into the community (whether by unconditional release or bail), while an average of 37% were removed from the UK, requiring resettlement in their destination country. (The balance of 19% were transfers to other IRCs or men in the centre from prison for a short time for embassy interviews, and then returning to prison.)

The relatively high release rate raises the question of whether so many men should have been in detention at all. The only basis for detention should be to facilitate removal, and yet 44% of men leaving Brook House in 2019 were released rather than removed, and in the interim were exposed to the potentially harmful effects of detention on physical and mental health.

11.2 Bail: lack of suitable accommodation

In our last annual report, the Board expressed concern about the number of detainees who were granted bail but remained in detention owing to want of suitable accommodation. These men are usually TSFNOs and they may have a type of offending history that is deemed to pose a level of risk to the public, hence the release condition for suitable accommodation.

The Home Office accepted the Board's recommendation that the process be reviewed, to see whether there could be an improved outcome for detainees.

While the Board saw less evidence of this problem in 2019, we still encountered detainees affected by it. However, Board members are usually in the centre for only a few days a week, and then it may be only by chance that we see a detainee who raises the problem. The Board has asked if the Home Office can supply data so we can assess the scale of the problem.

The Work of the IMB

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	9
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	3
Number of members leaving within reporting period	1
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	12
Total number of visits to the establishment	220
Date of annual team performance review for 2019	01/02/20

The Board operates a rota system, where one member covers monitoring duties, out of hours' calls, etcetera, each week.

Monthly Board meetings usually begin with training or information sessions. Each year, we hold a team performance review, to examine our performance and identify our monitoring priorities for the year ahead.

In 2019, we had visits from members of the Tinsley IMB and the Yarl's Wood IMB.

Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	8	9
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	3	11
C	Equality	1	4
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of room	5	5
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	10	9
E 2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	2	3
F	Food and kitchens	1	6
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	19	19
H 1	Property within this establishment	2	6
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	4	7
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	N/A	N/A
I	Immigration and probation concerns	53	49
J	Staff/detainee concerns, including bullying	5	11
K	Transfers	1	3
	Total number of IMB applications (* total includes four applications from detainees who did not give details and who had left the centre)	118*	142