



INDEPENDENT MONITORING BOARD

for

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

ANNUAL REPORT

1 FEBRUARY 2019 to 31 JANUARY 2020

Published July 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A: INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS	Pages 1-13
1 STATUTORY ROLE	
2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
3 DESCRIPTION OF ESTABLISHMENT	
B: EVIDENCE SECTIONS	Pages 14-17
4 SAFETY	
5 EQUALITY	
6 REMOVAL FROM ASSOCIATION AND TEMPORARY CONFINEMENT	
7 ACCOMMODATION	
8 HEALTHCARE	
9 EDUCATION, WORK AND OTHER PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY	
10 PREPARATION FOR REMOVAL OR RELEASE	
11 GOOD PRACTICE	
C: THE WORK OF THE EDINBURGH, GLASGOW AND LARNE HOUSE IMB	Page 18
ANNEXE.	Page 19

SECTION A.

1. STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

The Prisons Act 1952 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 require every prison and IRC to be monitored by an independent Board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the establishment or centre is situated.

The Glasgow Edinburgh and Larne House (**GEL**) Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) Satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within holding rooms: at Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports, Festival Court and Drumkeen House Reporting Centres and the Short Term Holding Facility (STHF) at Larne House and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release.
- (2) Inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom she has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has.
- (3) Report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the establishment has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every detainee and every part of the establishment and also to the establishment's records.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Independent Monitoring Board at GEL for the period 01/02/2019 – 31/01/2020. We have considered the evidence, from our observations during regular visits to each establishment, scrutiny of records and of data. Informal contacts, with detainees and staff, have also shaped our opinions.

Main judgements

We have framed our main overall judgements around whether detainees are:

- a) Treated fairly,
- b) Treated humanely and
- c) Prepared well for removal or release.

We have observed, during our many visits to the establishments, that detainees are treated in a respectful and caring manner by the detainee custody officers (**DCOs**). In the main, DCOs' work empathetically to maintain a caring culture within the holding rooms (**HRs**) and the Short Term Holding Facility (**STHF**). We would note however, that we

have been unable to comment on the overall treatment of detainees as they are moved across the estate.

We have, however, some comments and suggestions about how the dignity and respect afforded to detainees, within the establishments, could be further improved.

Our main concerns are:

- a) Some detainees are being held in the Holding Rooms, at Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports for periods of eight hours and more, and we have concerns about the impact on their wellbeing, given the location, size and limited capacity of the holding rooms. In particular there is a lack of fresh air and natural light. The meals provided are very basic with varieties to include for vegetarian and cultural needs. There is no access to showering facilities, which we feel are a basic personal hygiene requirement. Moreover, detainees are not afforded the opportunity to undertake basic physical exercise.
- b) The location of the Holding Room, at Terminal one in Edinburgh Airport has now become, with the greater utilisation of terminal two, remote. Traffic is now increasingly being focused on Terminal two (**T2**) and this has impacted on the efficiency of the detention process with detainees having to be sometimes walked 20-25 minutes through public areas to the HR. This has implications for both public security and the dignity of the detained person. While, in the majority of cases, detainees are transported by van, there is a limited number of United Kingdom Border Force (**UKBF**) Officers authorised as airside drivers and, in any case, the process impacts negatively on the efficient use of staff.
- c) The long outstanding building work at the Glasgow Airport, where a much needed additional HR is being created, has not yet been completed. This work has considerably overrun, exacerbated by having more than one commissioning agent with responsibility for completion of the work, and also funding, from several sources, with responsibility being similarly shared. This has had an impact on the overall capacity of the facility to provide a safe and efficient detention provision.
- d) We previously requested that, for privacy reasons, the toilet doors, in the holding room at Festival Court, be extended to the floor and ceiling. While this work was carried out, we now feel, on reflection, that the extension to the ceiling may limit the custody officers' ability to monitor the safety of an individual detainee.
- e) The accommodation assigned to female detainees, at Larne House STHF, is inadequately separated from the male accommodation. We understand, however, that the female area is going to be partitioned with a locked entry door which will be utilised at night.
- f) We continue to be concerned about the lack of ready available interpreting facilities within HRs and the STHF. We understand that electronic translators are to be provided in each establishment.
- g) Detainees can be held, sometimes for up to seven days in the Larne House STHF. We feel that there is insufficient opportunity for them to take physical exercise, e.g. walking, in the daylight with fresh air, because the existing outside quadran-

gle, in the centre of the building, does not meet the requirement, in terms of area, to support this. In our opinion this area, while brightly decorated and furnished, is somewhat limited. It does act as a relaxation area for smokers and non-smokers alike, but it is unlikely that both could use it simultaneously.

- h) Detainees often arrive in the HRs' with their personal prescription medication, or alternatively require access to additional supplies of that medication. UKBF Officers and Care & Custody DCOs routinely remove the medicines from the individual detainees and are also forbidden, for health and safety reasons, to administer this medicine. We are concerned that this practice could adversely impact on detainees health

Recommendations

Our main recommendations:

- a) That DEPMU undertake a review of the adequacy of the HRs, at Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports, to meet the basic requirements of detainees (see (a), above). A possible reference would be article 3 of the European Court of Human Rights detention conditions guidance.
- b) That DEPMU undertake to provide a new Holding Room within terminal two at Edinburgh Airport (see (b) above).
- c) That in future projects, funding for refurbishment be allocated from a single budget, with one agent having overall responsibility for successful completion of the work. This would avoid unacceptably long delays occurring, such as that experienced in the completion of the refurbishment of the HRs at Glasgow Airport (see (c) above).
- d) That a gap be created at the top of the toilet doors, at Festival Court HR, to allow DCOs to monitor the safety of detainees.
- e) That the proposed partitioning at Larne House STHF does not prevent detainees from the opportunity to socialise, during the day. We have not, however, been informed about the timescale for this work. We ask that the work be appropriately planned with clear, transparent and realistic timelines and that this information is shared with the Board.
- f) That we are informed about the timetable for the provision of electronic translators.
- g) That the provision of an alternative, adequate, outside exercise area, at Larne House STHF, be sourced.
- h) That the administration of detainees' personal prescribed medication, in airport HRs be resolved forthwith.

Major issues from previous reports

The Board is pleased to report that a number of issues, brought to the attention of the relevant agencies, have been successfully resolved during the reporting year.

There are, however, some issues which have either been partially resolved or remain to be actioned.

These are:

- a) The proper completion of the risk assessment sections 3 and 4 of the IS 91 document. There has, however, been considerable progress, with only a handful of IS 91s' having incomplete risk assessment.
- b) The toilet facilities at Festival Court still remain a source of concern to us. We stated, in previous reports, that the location of toilets, in the corner of the small holding room, provides no real privacy, and the stainless steel bowls, without seats, are undignified. This is still outstanding.
- c) We voiced our concerns about the lack of showering facilities, at Edinburgh and Glasgow Airports, to facilitate overnight use of both HRs. We suggested, in last year's report, that alternative showering facilities could be sourced elsewhere within the Airports' secure areas. We appreciate that this may cause some logistical challenges. Our further concerns, about the adequacy of the Airport HRs, are given above.
- d) We previously raised the issue of provision of secure areas, at the Airports, where detainees could smoke or get access to fresh air. We are disappointed that this has not been resolved, despite the potential for detainees to be held for longer periods within the HRs.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENTS

The Establishments Monitored by the GEL IMB Board are:

- a) Glasgow Airport (**GLA**) Holding Rooms,
- b) Edinburgh Airport (**EDI**) Holding Rooms.
- c) Festival Court Reporting Centre in Glasgow,
- d) Drumkeen House Reporting Centre in Belfast and
- e) The Larne House Short Term Holding Facility (**STHF**).

The description of each Establishment is given below.

Glasgow Airport Holding Rooms

The HRs are situated airside adjacent to the immigration control desks at International arrivals, directly below the offices occupied by UKBF. The area, also houses interview rooms, used by UKBF. It has been in the process of reconfiguration over recent months to make better use of existing space, and create separate male and female HRs. Completion of this work is now long overdue.

The HRs' are staffed by three Care and Custody (**C&C**) Duty Care Officers (DCOs) who operate between 08:00 and 01:00 each day.

Detainees have, on a few occasions, been held overnight in the holding room. We have also noticed that detainees have sometimes been held, in the HRs, for periods of up to 8 hours. They are then normally transferred to the Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre (**IRC**), or removed on a return flight the same day.

Refreshments and light foods are available for detainee. A landline telephone can be used by detainees and they may also use their own mobile phones, provided no camera is linked to the device. DCOs can issue a "house" mobile where the detainee uses his/her own sim card.

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. Nicotine replacement lozenges are available, but often, however, do not meet the needs of the smokers.

Lounge type portable beds, with pillows and blankets, are available and an upholstered seating bench can also be used for sleeping on. Showering facilities are, however, not available to Detainees.

Seating consists of fixed chairs and the above mentioned bench. A large 'bean bag', which has proved quite popular with some detainees, is also available.

A variety of reading material, in different languages, is available. Basic information and advice on immigration/asylum matters are provided in leaflet and poster form, again in a variety of languages.

The number of detainees held in the Holding Facility in the period covered by this Report is shown in the Statistics (Annexe).

Edinburgh Airport Holding Rooms

Edinburgh Airport is the busiest Scottish airport.

The HR is located airside at the south end of the International arrivals hall 1. As with Glasgow Airport, the hours of cover are 8am- 1am the next morning.

Two DCOs, one male and one female, cover the daily working hours. Outside of these times UKBF staff look after detainees. This requirement has, however, been reduced since the DCO's hours have been extended.

The holding room is situated on the ground floor of Terminal 1, with UKBF offices on the first floor, in an extension to the main airport building. A new arrivals hall Terminal 2 (T2) was built at the north end of the airport last year due to the increase in passenger numbers. There is not, however, a holding room within T2.

The holding area at Edinburgh is a purpose built facility with a waiting area, two interview rooms, a fingerprint room as well as two HRs and a DCO office area. C&C staff can observe detainees through a large window. One of the HRs 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. There are a number of newspapers available, although it remains the case that most of the foreign papers are changed infrequently. A number of notices and relevant information are available in different languages. The seating, two benches, are fairly narrow and not ideal for sleeping on. However lounge type folding beds, with pillows and blankets, are available and have been used. The smaller holding room has no such suitable facility. The rooms do not have windows or access to natural light. They are, however, spacious and have good ventilation, although there is no access to fresh air. Smoking is not allowed and nicotine replacement lozenges are available, but detainees are not impressed by the efficacy of these. While a water fountain is available, detainees are required to request a cup from the DCOs. Hot drinks and light snacks, such as crisps and croissants, can also be provided by the DCO's. The meals supplied for detainees are of a long life variety and are fairly basic and limited in choice. DCOs are, however, authorised to provide additional food, such as sandwiches, which are bought with petty cash from airport vendors.

There are two toilets in the holding area which are spacious and accessed from the main holding room.

As with Glasgow Airport's HR there are no showering facilities available for detainees. Detainees at Edinburgh are not allowed to use mobile phones with camera attachments. DCOs can, however, provide access to a landline or a house mobile where detainees can contact legal representatives, family or friends.

All detainees' property including cash/valuables is held securely by the DCOs. Clothing items such as scarves, belts and ties are routinely taken from detainees for health and safety reasons.

As with other holding facilities, there is a complaints box which is checked every day by UKBF staff. No complaints have been received during the reporting period.

CCTV is used by DCOs, both inside and outside of the HRs, to monitor the safety and security of all detainees.

The number of detainees held in the Holding Facility in the period covered by this Report is shown in the Statistics (Annexe).

Festival Court Reporting Centre

The Holding Room is located in Building No 2 of a complex of three buildings occupied by the Home Office/UKBF at Festival Court, Brand Street, Ibrox, Glasgow. Persons who have been temporarily admitted to the UK, and are resident in Scotland, are required to report periodically at this 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). It is also used, when family removal operations are being carried out, as an assembly point before Detainees are transported to an embarkation port. IMB members, from the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Larne House Board, have authorised entry passes, which have been issued by the Home Office.

The Holding facility consists of an office area and the Holding Room (**HR**). There is also the use of an additional interview room when separate detention accommodation is required. There is an observation window between the Control Room and the Holding Room; however there is no such provision for the use of the interview room, so one DCO is deployed to ensure the safe detention of the detainee while in the interview room. The Holding Facility is currently staffed, by two Care and Custody DCOs, from 09.00 until 17.00 Monday to Friday. It is a non-residential Facility.

Cold water and hot drinks can be provided, for detainees and snacks and light meals are also available.

The HR contains individual, fixed, plastic seats and a table. The room has two toilets which are cubicles in each corner of the back of the Room, one male and one female. A portable "lounge type" folding bed, with bedding is available, making it possible for one detainee to lie down, in the unlikely event of detainees being accommodated for a long period. However, detainees are usually promptly moved to other suitable accommodation within a short time.

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

As with the two other non-residential HRs (Airports), there is no access to fresh air or natural light. An authorised smoking area is also not available at these locations.

Both C&C DCOs (male and female) are experienced, empathetic and highly professional. It is our opinion that this level of staff stability and competence contributes significantly to the care provided at this centre.

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

Drumkeen House Reporting Centre

The Drumkeen House complex, in Belfast, is occupied by Home Office/UKBF and C&C Service Delivery Manager. Persons who have been temporarily admitted to the UK, and are resident in Northern Ireland, are required to report periodically at this Reporting Centre. Some are asylum seekers awaiting decisions about their status. People, detained while reporting or detained during UKBF enforcement operations, are held in the Holding Room (**HR**). IMB members, from the Glasgow, Edinburgh and Larne House Board, have authorised entry passes, issued by the Home Office, to the complex.

The Holding facility consists of an office area and two small Holding rooms, to facilitate male and female detainees separately. There is an observation window, between the office area and both holding rooms, to ensure the safe detention of the detainees. The Holding Facility is currently staffed, by two Care and Custody DCOs, on three days per week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.00 until 17.00. It is a non-residential Facility with detainees usually transferred to Larne House if detention is necessary.

Hot and cold drinks can be provided for detainees, if required. Light snacks and hot meals are also available.

The HRs seating comprises individual plastic seats and a table which are fixed to the floor. There are toilets in each HR.

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

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

The Board's monitoring experience at Drumkeen House is limited due its low use. No significant issues were recorded during this period.

The number of detainees held in the HR in the full year period, covered by this Report, is shown in the Statistics (Annexe).

Larne House STHF.

This facility 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. Thereafter the detainees must be released (unconditionally or temporarily), or removed from Northern Ireland, or transferred to an IRC on the UK mainland, as there is no appropriate resource available in the Province. 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 House towards the end of 2012.

Board members normally visit once fortnightly. A recommendation in the Shaw Review ⁽¹⁾ was that more frequent visits should be made by the Board and that a number of these visits should be carried out during the evening and night. The frequency of visits is largely governed by a budget set by the IMB Secretariat. However the Board has a member who resides in the Province and thus has some flexibility in covering monitoring responsibilities at Larne House and Drumkeen House.

The provision is managed by Care and Custody (**C&C**) staff, usually a team of six Duty Care Officers (**DCOs**) working under a detainee custody operational manager (**DCOM**). There is a mix of male and female officers. A total of 24 DCOs work 4 days on and 4 days off in 4 shifts on a 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year basis.

There is no Home Office Immigration Enforcement presence at Larne House. 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.

Families with young children are not detained at Larne House. They are given temporary admission (bail) to Northern Ireland with direction to report to Drumkeen House Reporting Centre as and when required.

Larne House 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 each mattress making it quite uncomfortable to sit on. 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 DCOs and the Home Office staff since the bedrooms are small and any seating would need to be secured to the floor for safety reasons. The Board 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 time for detainees remains limited.

The Centre is compact, clean, 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 intensity level.

The small recreation room offers a TV with Freesat providing in excess of 100 channels, a selection of DVDs, books, newspapers and magazines, all in various languages. English language newspapers are provided on a daily basis, and those in other languages tend to be changed infrequently. We have questioned, in previous reports, the usefulness of having these. There are 2 computers, with headphones, with however, limited access to the internet. 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.

Other areas at the complex include –

- Reception, offices and staff room (adjacent to, but out with the residential part of the Facility)
- Interview Rooms
- A ‘management’ room
- A custody office for use by a C&C manager, containing a small “shop” selling basic items such as soap, cigarettes, etc.
- A small, outside area where detainees may smoke and have access to fresh air. This was recently decorated and a number of bright attractive prints of Northern Irish scenes have been hung on the walls
- 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
- A medical room.

When a detainee is admitted to Larne House, he or she is assessed for detention suitability. The duty nurse undertakes a review of any medications brought in with the individual and makes 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. There has, however, been occasions when detainees, transferred directly from Prison, have appeared in the centre without health referral information from the Prison. The Board is monitoring this very carefully.

Detainees have freedom of movement and association across all areas except for the custody office. Those (detainees) who have been admitted without adequate clothing are given a pack containing basic underwear and tracksuit-type outer garments

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 they leave.

This is the only residential facility monitored by this IMB. People held at the non-residential holding areas at airports and the 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 House.

Larne House STHF has a continuously changing detainee population and our findings and observations show that a relaxed professional atmosphere fashioned by staff is evident and also contributes to the positive atmosphere consistently found during monitoring.

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.

The number of detainees held at Larne House during the period covered by this report is shown in the statistics (Annexe).

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

SECTION B.

4. SAFETY

The Board has generally found the Reception and Induction process of detainees has been carried out in a thorough and caring manner all within a reasonable time of their arrival within the establishments. Equally, we have found that detainees are properly assessed, on arrival, and that they are allocated suitable accommodation. DCOs do take cognisance of the individual personal risk to or from detainees, when that information is available to them (DCOs).

Larne House STHF

A number of key incidents have been reported to the Board by the Care and Custody C&C service delivery manager throughout the reporting year, and the reports below outline those incidents, the outcomes and whether there was a requirement for the Board to carry out further enquiries.

On 20th May 2019, a detainee attempted to self-harm. DCO's and medical staff responded immediately and the detainee recovered fully. The Board was informed immediately and was satisfied that the C&C Staff worked diligently and acted appropriately. No further actions were deemed necessary.

On 19th August 2019, a detainee, being transferred to an IRC in England absconded while being escorted through Belfast International Airport. The Escorting Officers detained the absconder immediately, with the help of PSNI Police Officers, and he was subsequently escorted back to Larne House STHF, and was subsequently transferred by ferry. There were no reported injuries and other passengers/travellers were not involved or affected. The Board was satisfied that no further monitoring actions were required.

On 25th November 2019, a detainee had to be placed into the secure room because he assaulted a DCO. The detainee had to be restrained by two DCOs, whom he spat on while being transferred to the secure room. The Police were called and they issued the detainee with a Police Caution. He calmed down and was subsequently returned to normal association. He was transferred, the next day, the 26th November, to Dungavel IRC. The Board was satisfied that no further monitoring actions were deemed necessary.

Finally, the Board has not come across any instances of bullying, violence or coercion during this period. Overall, we have found the custody officers (DCOs') carry out their tasks in a caring and professional manner.

5. EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

The Board, through its many monitoring visits, is generally satisfied that detainees are treated, within the HRs and STHF, in an equal and fair manner. We have not, however been given access to the Home Office Complaints System so we are unable to give our

opinion about whether detainee complaints are robustly and fairly answered within a reasonable time-frame.

There appears to be adequate and appropriate provision to meet the religious needs of detainees. These include:

- a) provision of a room specifically dedicated for prayer (Larne House)
- b) a listing of multi-faith Chaplains
- c) provision of appropriate foods (Halal etc.)
- d) provision of Bibles and Qur'ans.

We have also witnessed DCOs assisting detainees' in accessing appropriate legal advice where they have requested it. Detainees are, however, unable to independently seek legal advice because they do not have access to the internet. It is unfortunate that they must rely on the assistance of family, friends or the DCOs to obtain this basic right.

6. REMOVAL FROM ASSOCIATION/TEMPORARY CONFINEMENT (rule 35)

The Board is not aware that any detainee, held at Larne House STHF, came under rule 35, of the Detention Centre rules, where their health is likely to be injuriously affected by continued detention.

7. RESIDENTIAL SERVICES/HOLDING ROOM CONDITIONS

We have commented above (see section 3) about the inadequate provision of natural light, fresh air, smoking and exercise areas within the two Airport Holding Facilities. We have also noted that there is generally adequate access for detainees to phones and mobile phones within the HRs.

Board members pay particular attention to the standard of food served to detainees during all monitoring visits. While meals tend to be very basic, they have been found to be culturally appropriate and nutritionally balanced. All ready meals, sandwiches/baguettes and other packaged foods have been found to be in-date.

We continue to be impressed with the high standard of staff-detainee relationships across the establishments. DCOs appear to be well informed and to maintain a culture where all detainees are treated with respect and addressed in a polite manner. Equally DCOs have been found to be sensitive to individual detainee's vulnerabilities.

Staff- detainee communications are generally clear, accurate and timely. Good use is made of telephone interpreting services and there is a number of information cards, in a variety of appropriate languages, available in each HR. We are, however, firmly of the opinion that the provision of portable electronic language interpreters (see recommendation f, above) would greatly enhance communications between DCOs and Detainees.

8. HEALTHCARE

There is 24 hour healthcare cover at Larne House and we are pleased to report that the Duty Nurses have, informal, back up support from the NHS Service, including the local GP practice and the Hospital. Medical staffs have good and effective relationships with local health providers and NHS commissioners.

All detainees are assessed as part of the induction to the STHF. There is a dedicated medical room which is fully equipped to give immediate assistance to detainees, should they require it.

While the other establishments do not have such a comprehensive provision, we are nonetheless confident that the DCOs have been trained and have the necessary skills to provide first aid assistance and that they are fully aware of their local NHS emergency provision.

However, the problems, over access to prescribed medicines (see our concern h, in the executive summary) remain a major concern which must be addressed by the Home Office forthwith.

9. EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Education provision is not provided at the Establishment due to the short/transient stay of detainees. Magazines, newspapers, television and limited access to computer games are provided to relieve boredom.

The Board has, in the past, requested the provision of some Gym/exercise equipment, at Larne House STHF, where detainees can be held for up to seven days. While we acknowledge present space limitations, we do however urge reconfiguration of the STHF to include a small Gym. Provision of an alternative outside exercise area may also address this concern.

10. PREPARATION FOR RELEASE/REMOVAL

Board members have, through monitoring visits, consistently witnessed DCOs assisting detainees with accessing legal advisers, family and supporters especially during induction and stressful times such as when removal directions are served. The DCOs have also been seen to assist detainees to understand ticket arrangements or access money changing facilities especially when detainees require English denomination currencies when leaving detention in Scotland for onward travel through England.

11. GOOD PRACTICE

We have, during our monitoring visits to HRs and the Larne House STHF, witnessed examples of good practice which we wish to highlight, and share, in this report

Festival Court Reporting Centre.

Our monitoring member witnessed two individuals: a Chinese woman who was very upset at being detained and an Ethiopian male who were waiting to be transferred to Dungavel IRC. The female was obviously very distressed and our member avoided adding to her anxiety by standing back and observing the actions of the DCOs'. Both DCOs' patiently and calmly explained what was happening, using humour with empathy as appropriate, and succeeded in calming her anxiety. The transporting DCO also treated the male detainee professionally and the move, to Dungavel IRC, was completed successfully without adding to the distress of both Detainees.

Rota Visit on 5th February 2019.

Information Notices

We are pleased to see that there is Information Leaflets, in 19 Languages, displayed prominently in the Holding Rooms. We would ask that this provision be regularly reviewed to take account of additional language requirements.

Larne House STHF

Care and Custody staffs have developed a PowerPoint presentation which is used, to welcome newly arrived detainees. This very impressive presentation, with the use of appropriate languages, shows images of local (Northern Ireland) scenes and messages of gratitude, for the hospitality extended to them by the DCOs', from previous detainees'. We applaud this initiative and trust that the languages available will include for all future detainees.

Rota Visit on 17th April 2019.

Edinburgh Airport

Our member, during one of her Rota Visits, observed a mother and two very young children waiting to be interviewed by UKBF Officers. Although the family were not in detention, within the HR, and therefore not the responsibility of the DCOs', they (DCOs') nonetheless provided the children with toys and made food and drink available to the them [family].

SECTION C.

THE WORK OF THE EDINBURGH, GLASGOW AND LARNE HOUSE IMB

The Board undertakes its role by carrying out regular, unannounced, monitoring visits to each of the Establishments. Members vary their visits so that they can obtain an accurate insight of the overall operation and culture of each centre. However, it has been necessary, since August 2019; because of reduced membership and work commitment and illness of some existing members, to reduce the frequency of our visits. The frequency of visits to Larne House STHF and the other holding rooms have been reduced by 50%: once per month to Larne House and once per fortnight to the HRs. We will return the previous frequency levels once our new members are available.

We are grateful for the commitment given by partner agencies: UKBF, C&C and the Home Office, to keeping us fully informed as we monitor the safe and humane treatment of detainees within the HRs and the STHF. Senior Officers from each agency regularly attend our monthly Board Meetings and are always prepared to answer our questions. Their participation and willingness to respond to our scrutiny has led to us develop deeper understanding of, sometimes complex, issues and importantly faster resolution.

The Board has successfully recruited five new Members. However the inordinate amount of time for the IMB Secretariat and the Home Office to complete the appointment process, from start to finish, have presented real challenges in maintaining the interest of each applicant.

The Board Statistics are given in the Annexe.

Hugh McGloin

Chair, on behalf of the Board

Annexe.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	7
Members attendance at Board meetings	49%
Total number of monitoring visits to:	
Glasgow Airport	35
Edinburgh Airport	33
Festival Court Reporting Centre	32
Drumkeen Reporting Centre	3
Larne House STHF	16
Detainees at:	
Glasgow Airport	531
Edinburgh Airport	582
Festival Court Reporting Centre	161
Drumkeen Reporting Centre	28
Larne House STHF	1724