

## South and West STHF IMB - Annual Report 2024 – Action Plan

Ref	Recommendation / Issue / Concern	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted	Comments	Progress Ongoing or completed
<b>TO THE MINISTER</b>				
1.	Ensure that the capacity of detention facilities keeps pace with the expansion in passenger numbers at Bristol Airport.	Not Accepted	<p>Border Force has not accepted this recommendation as there are no current definitive plans in place for Bristol's expansion. However, Border Force will engage with the port operator during any significant port expansion projects to discuss any operational needs and requirements based on these standards.</p> <p>Border Force has a comprehensive set of infrastructure standards to define the capabilities, features and legal requirements that are necessary to uphold the UK border. These standards have been developed in collaboration with stakeholders across the government and set out the standards and requirements for border infrastructure and facilities at ports. This includes the standards for STHFs.</p>	
2.	Ensure that the IMB has full access to detentions records so we can monitor effectively.		<p>Border Force partially accepts this recommendation, as the IMB has been granted access to <u>relevant</u> detention records only, rather than the full access that was requested.</p> <p><b>Action taken:</b> All interactions and observations made whilst a person is detained in an STHF should be noted on their detention record. Currently, all detention paperwork at BF led facilities is held in paper format. With the introduction of electronic case files, IMB members will continue to have access to relevant detention records, in accordance with Rule 52(3) from the Short-Term Holding Facility Rules (2018) rather than full details of each case.</p> <p><b>Planned:</b> Border Force has incorporated previous feedback from the IMB and is designing a new suite of detention record documents to better align with contractor managed facilities. Once the final draft is ready, constructive feedback from IMB Board Chairs will be welcomed before piloting the new process at a few BF managed facilities.</p>	Ongoing

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3.	Rota reports are they responded to promptly and concerns raised by the IMB are addressed.	Accepted	<p><b>Action taken:</b> Border Force have dedicated additional resource centrally to co-ordinate responses to rota reports.</p> <p><b>Planned:</b> A standard operating process for responding to rota reports has been drafted for agreement, to ensure fully rounded responses are provided by the right person / team in a timely manner.</p>	Ongoing
4.	Ensure that the recording of children's detention fully reflects the individual child's treatment.	Accepted	<p>Detention records are completed on all detained persons, including children, with observations recorded.</p> <p><b>Action taken:</b> Border Force captures vulnerabilities and protected characteristics within the induction process. Children's wellbeing and case progression is reviewed every 2 hours. Addressing vulnerability is business as usual, with specialist safeguarding expertise available. The published Home Office detention policy is clear that any detention involving children must be for as short a period as possible, with the child's best interests being the overriding consideration. These best interests are frequently driven by the complexity of safeguarding checks.</p> <p><b>Planned:</b> Border Force has incorporated previous feedback from the IMB and is designing a new suite of detention record documents to more accurately capture and address the needs of individual children. Once the final draft is ready, constructive feedback from IMB Board Chairs will be welcomed before piloting the new process at a few BF managed facilities.</p>	Ongoing

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5.	Provide use of force statistics as part of the monthly data return to the Board.	Not Accepted	<p>There is no requirement under the current IMB/BF Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) to share use of force (UoF) data monthly, as the emphasis remains on immediate, incident-based reporting to preserve the integrity and timeliness of oversight. As agreed in the MoU, Border Force will continue to make arrangements to ensure the Chair, or another designated member of the relevant Board, is notified <b>without delay</b> of any UoF that has resulted in injury and/or use of force beyond compliant handcuffing in accordance with Rule 36 of the Short-term Holding Facility Rules 2018.</p> <p>Ports have been reminded when to inform IMB of any relevant incidents (including Use of Force).</p> <p>Border Force are looking to have discussions with IMB to understand their interpretation of what UoF records they should have access to (above what is in the MoU), and how we can work together to achieve an acceptable agreement for both parties on what is shared and when.</p>	
6.	Will Border Force at Portsmouth confirm that hot food can now be served?	Not Accepted	<p>The Short-Term Holding Facility Rules (2018) require that light refreshments and snack foods are provided in holding rooms. Border Force adheres to this statutory obligation under the STHF rules but continues to review and improve detention facilities in order to provide additional (non-statutory) requirements such as hot meals (not just snacks).</p> <p>Whilst we do not accept this recommendation, Border Force will continue to explore options for hot food provisions at Portsmouth STHF with the port operator to establish if a suitable location can be found, as there is no space within the existing STHF to enable hot food to be served.</p>	