



Annual Report of the North West and Midlands STHF Independent Monitoring Board

**For reporting period
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Introductory sections 1–3

1. Statutory role of the IMB

The North West and Midlands Independent Monitoring Board is appointed by the Home Secretary to monitor and report on the welfare of people in a short-term holding facility (STHF) through observation of their treatment and of the premises in which they are held.

The Board conducts its work in line with the Short-Term Holding Facility (STHF) Rules, which place the day-to-day operations of STHFs on a statutory footing. Part 7 of the Rules sets out the responsibilities of the Independent Monitoring Board (referred to in the Rules as the Visiting Committee). The Board has unrestricted access to every detained individual and all immigration detention facilities and to most records. IMB members have access, at all times, to all parts of the facility and can speak to detained people outside of the hearing of officers. They must consider any complaint or request that a detained person wishes to make to them and make enquiries into the case of any detained individual whose mental or physical health is likely to be injuriously affected by any conditions of detention. The IMB must inform the STHF manager about any matter that they consider requires their attention, and report to the Secretary of State on any matter about which they consider the Home Office needs to be aware.

The Board's duties also include the production of an annual report covering the treatment of detained people, the state and administration of the facility, as well as providing any advice or suggestions it considers appropriate. This report has been produced to fulfil that obligation.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is an international human rights treaty designed to strengthen protection for people deprived of their liberty. The protocol recognises that such people are particularly vulnerable and aims to prevent their ill-treatment through establishing a system of visits or inspections to all places of detention. OPCAT requires that states designate a National Preventive Mechanism to carry out visits to places of detention, to monitor the treatment of and conditions for detained individuals and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMBs are part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

2. Description of the holding rooms

2.1 Types of STHF monitored

The North West and Midlands Board monitors three different types of STHF, each with its own requirements and challenges:

- Residential facilities
 - Manchester Residential STHF (RSTHF; known locally as MAN 302)
- Port holding rooms
 - Birmingham Airport
 - East Midlands Airport
 - Holyhead Port
 - Manchester Airport
- Reporting centre holding rooms
 - Liverpool (Capital Building)
 - Loughborough
 - Salford (Dallas Court)
 - Solihull (Sandford House)

A map of the above sites is shown in annex B.

2.2 Residential facility (Manchester Residential STHF)

The North West and Midlands Board monitors one residential facility, at Building 302, on the Manchester Airport site. It is known locally as MAN 302, and it opened in June 2018, replacing Pennine House, which closed in March 2017. Like most sites monitored by the Board, MAN 302 is managed on behalf of Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) by Care & Custody, a subsidiary company of Mitie plc.

The facility is a purpose-built unit, located on the perimeter of Manchester International Airport, with a capacity of 32 people detained individuals.

There are two floors. The ground floor contains the vehicle dock (which can accommodate two vans), a toilet and a lift to the first floor. Visitor access is gained through a single door at the back of the building. Access to the first floor is then gained by either two flights of stairs or via the lift.

On the first floor, access is gained through a security-controlled door, which leads into a short corridor, with the control room visible straight ahead through a security glass window. To the left, there is another security door, leading to the main reception area; to the right, there is a toilet and another security door, which leads to the visitor area.

The visitor area has three rooms off a small reception corridor. Visitor Room 1 is the smaller of the rooms, measuring 10.5m², and contains a table and four chairs, used mainly for interviews with detained people. Visitor Room 2 is larger measuring 14m², and is set up for family visits, with chairs, a settee, and children's toys.

The main reception area measures 22.5m² and contains a searching area and a segregation room. There is an open desk area, which accesses the control room,

from where all areas of the facility are monitored on a continuous basis. Off the reception area is the medical reception/consultation area, which measures 18m² and contains an office and a searching area.

Once a detained person has been processed in the reception area for admittance into the facility, they pass through two security doors, which lead into an L-shaped corridor. Straight ahead are the showers and toilets for men, the kitchen and dining room and the majority of the bedrooms usually used for detained men. Bedroom number 7, with four beds, has been designated as a room for women, if the bedrooms in the women's area are occupied. To the right, a corridor leads to the office of the detainee custody officer manager (DCOM), female area, main association area, multifaith room, laundry and storerooms, plus two single-occupancy bedrooms.

The main association room measures 59m² and contains four large three-seater settees, a table and four chairs, a wall-mounted television and a games console connected to another television screen. There is also a stock of portable DVD players, which those being detained can borrow, if required. There are also two computer consoles, which allow detained individuals to access to the internet, plus a good selection of reading material. There are three standalone electronic games units.

A short corridor leading off the main association room gives access to the 'outside' area. This measures 59m² and gives detained individuals access to fresh air. It is a large area containing numerous heavy-duty tables and chairs, where part of the roof has been left open to the atmosphere. The walls have been decorated with a landscape painting of the Pennines.

The multifaith room, with an area of 12m², is located at the end of the main corridor. It contains numerous prayer mats and soft cushions. The laundry, which can be used by detailed people, has two washing machines and two dryer machines.

There are also two single-occupancy bedrooms at the end of this corridor for any gender. Each contains a bed with two drawers beneath it and a safe, where detained individuals can lock up their valuables. These rooms can be used for detained people who are considered to be vulnerable and they contain an intercom that allows direct communication with staff on reception.

The separate female area is 71m² and contains three bedrooms, one of single occupancy and two of double occupancy. There is a separate association room, with a settee, bean bags, a table and four chairs, and a television, which is fixed to the wall. A computer terminal is also available. There is a shower and toilet cubicle, plus a separate toilet facility.

The DCOM office is located at the juncture of the two corridors and contains a duplicate of the closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring screens within the control room. Windows are positioned on each side of the office to provide a view of each of the corridors.

The bedrooms designated for detained individuals are configured to house either four, three or two occupants. The four-person bedrooms occupy an area of 20m². Each room contains beds, drawers, plus safes for personal effects. Every bedroom

has windows, which provide natural light, and are covered with an opaque film to ensure privacy.

The toilets designated for men contain three shower stalls, three toilets and three urinals and washbasins, plus two electric hand dryers.

The dining room, with an area of 59m², has four tables for four people, two tables for two people and one table for eight people. There is a large, glass-fronted refrigerator, a hot drinks machine and a television fixed to the wall. The serving hatch leads to the kitchen area and storerooms. The equipment in the kitchen includes an electric oven, a microwave oven and a dishwasher. Leading off the kitchen is a room that contains five upright and two chest refrigerators.

Translation devices are available to allow detainee custody officers (DCOs) and detained individuals to communicate, irrespective of the detained person's language. It is anticipated that these devices will also be available for Board members to be able to better communicate directly with detained people, although most communication is undertaken by members using 'ice-breaker' cards written in a variety of languages.

2.3 Port holding rooms

Birmingham Airport

Overview

The airside holding rooms are situated near the United Kingdom Border Force (UKBF) offices. Holding rooms

The holding suite comprises three separate holding rooms:

- A family/television room, with an opaque glass frontage measuring approximately 6.7m x 2.4m, containing benched seating, bean bags, a complaints box and a large, wall-mounted television, with a 2.7m x 1.5m alcove fitted with a fixed picnic-style table and chairs. This room is typically used when families are detained, and there is a variety of children's items available, including play matting.
- An internal room (with no natural daylight), measuring approximately 3.7m x 2.4m and containing benched seating, a fixed recliner, a payphone and a complaints box.
- An internal room (with no natural daylight), measuring approximately 2.7m x 2.4m and containing benched seating and a complaints box. This room has been decommissioned and turned into a storeroom.

None of these rooms contains any beds, but detained individuals can lie across the benched seating or on thin, soft, foldable mattresses, and they can be provided with washable pillows and blankets. Bean bags are available for detained individuals' use.

There are also two interview rooms, plus separate toilets/washrooms for men and women, with shower facilities. Detained individuals are generally free to move between any of these rooms. The small office area has basic furnishings, with flight and CCTV monitoring displays. An additional desk and chair have been provided for induction purposes, as well as a refrigerator. There is a microwave for heating up meals; other food can be obtained from the airport shops and cafés.

There is a large, wall-mounted television in the family room, but there are no televisions in the two internal rooms, as no TV aerial signal is available. However, there are portable DVD players, with a selection of DVDs, and a radio for live news stations and radio shows, which is available for use by detained individuals.

A payphone is situated in one of the internal rooms, so that detained people can make and receive phone calls with some privacy. Mobile phones are available for use by detained individuals, using their own SIM cards, and detained people are sometimes allowed to make calls using the office phone, although this obviously restricts the detainee custody officers (DCOs) in carrying out their usual duties.

Holding room staff

The holding rooms are usually staffed by 2-3 DCOs, with a gender mix. When detained individuals need to be taken to, or collected from, escort vehicles landside, or taken to removal flights, an officer from the adjacent UKBF offices will normally assist and monitor any remaining detained individuals while the DCOs are away from the holding rooms.

East Midlands Airport

Overview

Holding room

The holding room measures approximately 3m x 3m. There is a toilet cubicle in one corner of the room, a metal sink with hot and cold taps and a wall-mounted soap dispenser in the other corner, plus a table with four metal seats fixed to the floor against the right-hand wall. There is a fold-out camp-bed available for a detained person to lie on, with disposable bed sheets, pillowcases and blankets available.

The walls of the room are painted white, with a number of notices and posters displayed on the walls. There is also a complaints box attached to the wall. There is a TV box in the near top corner of the room, but no TV service was available throughout 2024. Religious books are available on request and are kept in the monitoring area, but there are no other reading materials available. There is no CCTV in the holding room. There is heating control in the monitoring area.

Bottled water is available for detained people; hot drinks can be fetched from the adjacent BF office on request. Only ambient food (i.e. items that can be stored at room temperature and do not require refrigeration or heating) is available for those who have been detained. Chilled food can be purchased locally, but there is no option to serve hot food.

Holding room staff

The holding room is managed by UKBF officers. There is no Home Office contract for the running of the facility, so there are no dedicated DCOs to maintain the welfare of any people who have been detained. It is the role of UKBF officers on duty to monitor and look after all the detained individuals.

Controlled waiting area

The controlled waiting area (CWA) is situated in the immigration hall. It consists of eight bucket seats adjacent to where arriving passengers queue for passport checks.

The seating has no screening, so people who are detained in the CWA sit in full view of, and close by, other arriving passengers.

Holyhead Port

Overview

Holding room

The holding room is located within the secure port area, close to the ferry passenger terminal and main access vehicular security gate.

The holding room is a 'portacabin' converted for the purpose and is manned on a 24/7 basis by Mitie Care & Custody staff. UKBF personnel are housed in their own offices a short distance away.

The entrance to the holding room is through a gateway, which is locked using a keypad device. There is security fencing from the gate to the entrance door of the facility. There is no inner secure area (within the secure port area) for the vans, which are used to transport detained people to and from the facility. The area is clearly visible to the public and passing vehicle traffic.

Entry through the main door leads to a corridor that runs the full length of the facility on the left-hand side.

The first door on the right leads to a store cupboard measuring approximately 1.5m x 1.5m. The second door on the right leads to the first of the two holding rooms. It measures approximately 4.8m x 2.1m. It contains a table and four fixed chairs, plus a three-seater bench seat, also securely affixed to the floor. Amongst the equipment contained therein is a drink dispensing machine, a water fountain and a television. The interior of this holding room can be seen from the corridor through glass windows. Leading from this holding room is a large shower and toilet area, measuring approximately 2.4m x 2.8m.

The DCO office is situated between the two holding rooms with glass windows, through which the occupants of each room can be observed when needed. Two fixed desks are fitted below each wall and face into each holding room. A microwave oven is situated on the back wall within a small kitchen unit area. The CCTV control panel and monitors are also located within the office. The cameras cover the entrance, each holding room and the outside space.

The fourth door in the corridor opens into the second holding room, which measures approximately 5.2m x 3.6m. It contains a fixed table and four chairs, plus a fixed three-bench seat. There is a drinks machine and a television. The toilet and shower room leads off from the holding room and measures approximately 2.4m x 2.7m.

Within each of the holding rooms, there is a supply of snacks, and hot microwave meals can be provided by the DCOs if required.

Further along the corridor there is one more door, leading into the staff toilet.

At the end of the corridor is the final door, which leads into a small outside area. This space is surrounded by security fencing, with an outlook over the port area and the rear of the passenger terminal. It is not used by detained individuals.

There is no natural light within the holding rooms.

Holding room staff

The holding room is usually staffed by two DCOs working day and night shifts, and normally of a gender mix. The facility is open all year round, on a 24/7 basis.

Manchester Airport

Overview

Holding room

The holding room facility is in Terminal 2 and is in an airside secure area adjacent to the arrival immigration hall and desks. It accepts those being detained from Terminals 1, 2 and 3.

Entry into the office is from a secure corridor running at right angles to the main immigration arrivals hall. Entry is via a door and keypad lock. The main office area measures approximately 15m x 6m. It contains three desks, the main CCTV monitors, a television, a flight arrivals and departures monitor, a sink and a microwave oven, which is used to prepare hot food for those in detention. There are windows on each side of the office that overlook into each of the holding rooms. There is an area that can be curtained off to conduct body searches in private. There are various cupboards that contain copies of Care & Custody paperwork and stocks of microwave meals, which the DCO prepare for those being detained. There are two baggage lockers for the luggage of those being held within the holding rooms. Each contains a window, which allows those in either of the holding rooms to always observe their luggage.

There are two holding rooms: the main holding room located to the right of the office and, to the left, the family holding room. Each room can only be accessed by an electronic keypad lock.

The holding room measures approximately 9m x 8m and contains fixed bench seating for eight people and two fixed tables with bench seating for six to nine people. There is a small refrigerator, a hot drinks dispenser and a water fountain. There is a television set and a BT phone. There is a separate prayer room, measuring approximately 5m x 3.5m. The toilets and shower are accessed via a vestibule measuring approximately 5m x 3m. The shower space measures approximately 7m x 1.5m and contains a shower head, a separate sink and a hot air electric dryer. The male toilet is approximately 3m x 1.5m and the female toilet is approximately 3m x 2m.

The family holding room is approximately 9m x 9m and contains fixed bench seating for eight, plus two tables with bench seating for up to 12 people. One corner area has been decorated specifically for children and contains a selection of toys and games. There is also a television, a separate games console and screen and a BT phone. There is a separate prayer room, which measures approximately 4m x 1.5m. The shower and toilets are accessed from a vestibule measuring approximately 4.5m x 3m. The baby changing room measures approximately 3m x 2.5m and contains fittings that allow for the care of small children and infants. The male and female toilets measure approximately 3m x 1.5m. The shower is contained within the area measuring approximately 3m².

Folding mattresses and bedding are available for those being detained, if required.

All lighting in the facility is motion-sensor activated. The lighting for the holding rooms and office are controlled by dimmer switches. There is no natural lighting within the facility.

Holding room staff

There are usually at least four officers on duty day and night. This is normally a balanced gender mix. The duties of DCOs include escorting from other terminals within the airport and to removal flights.

2.4 Reporting centre holding rooms

Liverpool (Capital Building)

Overview

The facility in the Capital Building is located on floor –2, surrounded by other offices and corridors, and can only be accessed through secure corridors or a lift system, all of which preclude the provision of any natural light.

It is open from 9am to 5pm, three days per week, between Monday and Friday – the days may vary to suit the operational requirements of HOIE. Arrangements are in place with Care & Custody to staff it at other times, if necessary. It is sometimes used by HOIE to hold people under an immigration officer's power of detention when Care & Custody staff are not present.

There is an office area, measuring approximately 6.1m x 4.6m, with a CCTV monitor, lockers for officers' personal effects, and a water dispenser. There is also a sink, a microwave oven and seating for staff. All microwave food available for detained individuals is stored in a cupboard within this area.

The office area has windows that overlook the two holding rooms, plus hatches linked to each holding room. Detained individuals brought in by van are shielded from public view by opaque glass windows covering the offices that are passed.

Holding rooms

The larger room measures approximately 6.1m x 6.1m and is furnished with four metal bench seats for 16 people, and a table with three chairs. All furniture is secured to the floor.

There are two toilets, marked 'Male' and 'Female', leading from the room.

The smaller, child-friendly room measures approximately 6.1m x 4.6m. It has two tables, each with three chairs, and a single toilet with baby-changing facilities. Blankets, pillows and a prayer mat are available. The walls are decorated with colourful posters, and one wall has been decorated with a hand-painted mural depicting a colourful forest scene. A box of toys and colouring books are provided in the room, and a carrycot is available if needed. HOIE states that the intention is not to hold children in this room, and the facilities are provided on a contingency basis. Records indicate that no child has yet been held there.

Each room has a television and a BT phone. There is a bookcase containing a variety of reading material in each room. Bean bags are also provided for detained individuals' comfort.

Both holding rooms contain a suggestion/complaints box.

Holding room staff

The room is staffed by Care & Custody during the opening hours and, at other times, when requested, by HOIE. There are usually two members of staff on duty, with a gender mix.

Loughborough

Overview

The HOIE's Loughborough reporting centre is based in the town centre. Officers from the East Midlands local immigration team are based in the building and conduct operations in the community, which lead to detentions. Others are identified for detention and/or removal on reporting.

Holding room

The holding room typically opens four or more days per week (the actual days vary each week), from 9am to 5pm, according to the demands forecasted by local immigration officers (such as, for example, for known enforcement visits or individuals scheduled to report).

The holding room measures approximately 5.2m x 5.5m and is monitored and recorded by CCTV.

There is only one toilet cubicle, in the corner of the holding room, which is shared by men and women, and contains a very small basin with hot and cold running water. There are baby-changing facilities.

The room can accommodate 10 detained people. To facilitate this, there is one table with four fixed seats, and the remaining fixed seating is placed against two walls.

There is a BT phone available, which accepts incoming calls, and a number of mobile phones are available for use by detained people using their own SIM card.

There are notices on the wall relating to 'brochures of information', which are available in 15 different languages.

There is a limited supply of books and magazines, in various languages, for adults. In addition, there are activity packs, books and board games for children. A television is mounted high in one corner of the room, and a selection of DVDs are available.

A supply of croissants, biscuits and crisps is usually provided inside the holding room, to which detained individuals can help themselves; they are also regularly offered hot and cold drinks, and other food.

The holding room has two fans for air circulation.

There is a complaints box in the holding room. Complaint forms are available in several different languages. The box is opened by a chief immigration officer on a daily basis.

Holding room staff

There are two DCOs based at Loughborough, one male and one female. Their working environment is very restrictive, with an office space measuring

approximately 5.5m x 1.8m and containing filing cabinets and a desk, leaving little free space for searches and so forth.

Salford (Dallas Court)

Overview

Dallas Court is the HOIE's reporting centre based in Salford. Officers from the local immigration team are based in the building and conduct operations in the community, which lead to detentions. Others are identified for detention on reporting at the centre.

Holding rooms

The main holding area consists of two identical holding rooms. Each room has a toilet and hand-washing facilities, and there is also a baby-changing facility. There is a table with single seats for four, and a small, flat-screen television is positioned on one wall. There is a BT phone available, and also a mobile phone, which can be used by detained individuals using their own SIM card.

There are notices on the wall relating to 'brochures of information', which are available in 11 different languages. There are adequate supplies of books and magazines in various languages. In addition, there are jigsaw puzzles, puzzle books and children's toys.

CCTV covers both holding rooms and the area outside and is monitored by the staff.

There is a complaints box in each room, which is regularly checked and emptied by the chief immigration officer.

Holding room staff

There are usually two DCOs on duty in the holding rooms, one male and one female.

Solihull (Sandford House)

Overview

Sandford House is the main reporting centre for the West Midlands and is based at HOIE offices in Solihull town centre. People report at given intervals, pending resolution of their immigration cases, some of whom are identified for detention and/or removal on reporting at the centre. Officers of the Midlands Enforcement Unit are based in the building and conduct operations in the community, which also lead to detentions. The holding rooms are open from Monday to Friday, staffed by DCOs from 8.30am to 5.30pm, and are also used by IE officers to hold detained persons under their own jurisdiction outside these hours (i.e. early mornings, late evenings and weekends).

Holding room

The facility has one holding room, which is used for men, women and, very occasionally, for families. It measures approximately 4.3m x 5.8m and is covered by CCTV.

There are six seats, set around a fixed table in the middle of the room, with additional bench seating for five people. There are also two bean bags for detained individuals' use.

There are separate toilet cubicles for men and women within the holding room, and baby-changing facilities are available.

The food provided comprises a range of filled croissants, biscuits and crisps, with the option of hot meals and hot and cold drinks on request.

There is a complaints box, with complaint forms available in 16 different languages. The box is regularly opened by a chief immigration officer (CIO).

There is a BT phone available, which takes incoming calls, and there are a number of mobile phones, which can be used by detained individuals using their own SIM card.

Magazines, some in foreign languages, are provided. Additional items include reading books, the Qur'an, the Bible, children's toys and activity packs.

The ventilation in the office area of the holding room is centrally controlled; the holding room ventilation is controlled by an air conditioning system that is adjustable by the DCO staff.

Holding room staff

There are three DCOs based at Sandford House, usually with at least one male and one female on duty. Their working environment is restrictive, with office space measuring approximately 5.8m x 1.8m and containing a desk and filing cabinets, leaving limited space for searches.

3. Key points

3.1 Background to the report

The number of Board members has not increased since our previous report. This has caused difficulties for existing Board members in completing our monitoring obligations (see the work of the IMB section).

The number of face-to-face monitoring visits has been maintained by the remaining Board members, which may be beneficial to those being held in detention (see the work of the IMB section). This also clearly demonstrates the Board members' commitment to their role.

The only facility the Board monitors that is controlled by Border Force directly is the East Midlands Airport. The Board remains concerned that those being detained there have no access to hot food. Also, the facility is not provided with a television for the relaxation of those being held. A greater security risk for both those being detained and members of staff is the lack of fitted and operational CCTV system. These issues have been ongoing, with no resolution.

When people are detained in the Port of Holyhead facility, there is no secure vehicle bay within the secure port area for their transfer to and from the holding rooms. This could compromise the safety and dignity of those being detained, as well as staff.

There has been a marked increase in charter flight departures from Manchester Residential STHF. This process involves bringing more foreign national prisoners (FNPs) from the prison estate to the facility before flights depart. The result of these two factors is that more women from the Immigration Detention Estate are housed together with FNPs in Manchester RSTHF. This appears to have been risk managed and closely monitored by Care & Custody staff.

During the year, the Board concentrated on a number of themes, taking these as the focus of conversations and observations during visits to all locations, alongside regular checks of the facilities, during a particular month.

The themes covered were:

Provision for babies and children.

- On investigation, we found a good level of provision for babies and children, including suitable types of food and drink, sleeping and changing provision, toys, books and nappies. In some cases, this was provision that we were unaware of, as it is kept stored until it is needed (e.g. travel cots for sleeping).

Emergency evacuations

- In all facilities, there is a clear process in place in the event of an emergency evacuation. Where required, additional support is provided to ensure the safety of all.

Reading materials

- Reading materials were found to be variable across facilities, with different local arrangements in place. This may include delivery of daily English and foreign language newspapers and magazines, or daily purchase by officers of a small number of publications, including newspapers. The relevance of the

newspaper and magazine selection was discussed and reviewed by Board members and some changes made. These included more relevant reading material and ensuring there was no duplication of publications.

Clothing provision

- In the majority of facilities there is a good selection of clothing provided for detained people who may not have their own spare clothing (e.g. if they have been arrested on reporting). This includes provision of basic footwear, underwear, tracksuits, etc. The Board did find that, in some cases, clothing left behind was disposed of, as it could not be laundered. But action was being taken by managers to address this where possible.

Complaints

- The frequency of checking complaint boxes in each facility is monitored routinely during IMB monitoring visits. From time to time, Board members leave notes in the boxes to monitor the speed of response and frequency of checking. In most cases, we found that complaints would be seen during, or shortly after, detentions, enabling a timely investigation.

Health and safety

- Although the health and safety of those being detained is a focus of each monitoring visit, in these themed visits particular attention was paid to wider health and safety issues such as handling risks, legionella, risk of trips and falls and self-harm risks. No major issues were found by the Board.

3.2 Main judgements

Safety

The Board does not conduct health and safety audits during visits but, as evidenced in our monitoring reports, we report on any safety issues noted in order to support the provision of a 'safe' environment for people being detained in the majority of facilities.

At East Midlands Airport, the Board is of the opinion that the facility would benefit from being upgraded to include the current safety and security standards used in new facilities.

Holyhead does not have a secure area for vehicles to park within the secure port area, for the transfer of detained people to and from the facility. The main gate to the facility is a few metres away from the edge of the dock and is only protected by a low rail, which could easily be scaled, with possible fatal consequences (see section 4/Safety).

On limited occasions, Board members have observed the induction of individuals being detained: each time, it was carried out with humanity and dignity and in a professional manner.

Fair and humane treatment

Whilst our monitoring visits only provide a 'snapshot' of the treatment of detained individuals, our visit reports give no indication of any mistreatment. Objective evidence of this is recorded in visit reports, which record members' discussions with

those being detained, and we have not received any negative comments regarding staff or conditions.

The Board remains concerned that, since July 2023, individuals being detained at East Midlands Airport have no access to hot food and may be held in the CWA, where dignity and privacy is compromised when staffing levels do not permit admission to the holding room.

There was an incident at Loughborough in 2024, during which a detained person tried to damage the room, using a large piece of wood with protruding nails as a weapon. The DCOs rang for re-enforcements and a crew arrived from Yarling Wood IRC, who are trained in control and restraint. However, this is not compatible with DCOs, who are trained according to the Home Office manual for escorting safely (HOMES). In the Board's view, a consistent approach to training needs rolling out to all staff, so there is uniformity across the estate.

During its visits, the Board has observed detained individuals being treated in a dignified manner, with consideration and courtesy being demonstrated by Care & Custody officers.

The Board is concerned about the time it takes to rectify deficiencies to the structure and equipment within all the facilities the Board monitors. An example concerns the temperatures in the family room at Birmingham Airport, which can be as low as 13 degrees centigrade. Another holding room has been decommissioned, leaving detained people in a small room that has no natural light or TV. The decommissioned room is warmer than the room currently in use. (The family room can get cold and draughty.)

The Board discusses all outstanding issues raised during monitoring visits with all the stakeholders during monthly Board meetings to ensure matters are expedited quickly wherever possible.

Health and wellbeing

The Board remains concerned that, generally, detained individuals are still being denied access to their own medication while in the holding rooms and, again, urges the Home Office to reconsider their current position.

Of the facilities covered by this Board, the only one that has a medical professional on duty full time is the Manchester RSTHF. At all other facilities, staff have to rely on local procedures, which include NHS services in the form of calls to 111, 999 and the local mental health crisis teams or by arranging a transfer to hospital A&E, which the Board considers is far from satisfactory.

Preparation for removal, transfer or release

Monitoring visit reports indicate that when detained people arrive or are being transferred to other facilities, their treatment has always been with dignity, consideration and professionalism.

The Board has concerns that whenever detained people arrive or depart from the Holyhead facility, it is undertaken in full public view of foot ferry passengers awaiting to board or disembarking from coaches transferring them from ferries. They are also in full view of any vehicle traffic in the port area.

3.3 Recommendations

TO THE MINISTER

The Board seeks a response from the Minister with respect to the following issue raised in this report:

- For the seventh year in succession, the Board repeats its concern at the lack of proper procedures that would allow the Home Office or its contractors to routinely provide detained individuals with access to their own medication. The Board considers the welfare of some of those who have been detained may have been adversely affected by this situation, depending on individual medical conditions.

TO THE UK BORDER FORCE/HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

- Hot food is not available for those detained at East Midlands Airport (see section 5). The Board would recommend that this decision is reconsidered.
- Whilst the detaining officers have a direct view to constantly watch and monitor detained individuals within the holding room at East Midlands Airport, the Board recommends that the facility be upgraded to include the current safety and security standards used in new facilities.
- A television is not available for persons detained in East Midlands airport (see section 5). Television can have a calming effect and be a distraction for those being detained. The Board recommends that a television is fitted.
- The Board is concerned at the practice of leaving detained people in the CWA, and recommends that they should always be afforded the dignity, privacy and relative comfort of being moved into the holding room where there are toilets and other facilities to help them rest while being detained (see section 5/Fair and humane treatment).
- The Board is concerned that a holding room at Birmingham Airport has been decommissioned and turned into a storeroom. When the Family Room is cold and draughty, detained individuals have been moved into a small room, which compromises their comfort and wellbeing.

TO THE FACILITY MANAGER/DETENTION CONTRACTOR

- We recommend that the bed capacity for women is increased. Bedroom 7 in Manchester RSTHF, which has been designated for their use, is on a corridor where all the male bedrooms and male showers and toilets are located. The risk of possible physical harm to, and abuse of, women in this location has, therefore increased, in the Board's view. We would recommend that the designation of bedroom 7 is rescinded.

3.4 Progress since the last report

- All ports (that is, Birmingham and Manchester airports and Holyhead seaport) have shown an increase in detentions of 181.6% (1,683 people) to 2,610, which includes 270 minors.

Evidence sections 4 – 7

4. Safety

The Board does not conduct safety audits on the facilities that are monitored. During our visits, members generally note the overall safety aspect, such as, for example, that portable fire extinguishers are in place, there are no obvious trip hazards and the general cleanliness and tidiness. Visit reports have not highlighted any specific safety concerns relating to violence within the facility.

On a limited number of occasions, Board members have observed the induction of individuals being detained. Each time, it was carried out with humanity and dignity and in a professional manner.

Serious and reportable incidents

Across the reporting period, there were a number of incidents at the facilities monitored, including self-harm, use of force and medical emergencies. The Board found that the staff dealt with these issues with expertise and great sensitivity maintaining the dignity and well being of the detained persons at all times.

Manchester residential-short term holiday facility (RSTHF)

The capacity at Manchester RSTHF means that, on occasion and when numbers in the establishment exceed seven, women are held in a room on the male accommodation corridor. The Board is very concerned about the risk to the safety of the women in these circumstances and that being accommodated alongside men may leave women distressed or uncomfortable. Board members have spoken to women who have been housed in bedroom 7 and they have reported feeling 'uncomfortable'. To use the bathroom facilities, they need to walk approximately 25m to the 'women's section'. The Board has made a recommendation to the Home Office to ensure that arrivals are planned in a way that ensures women are not required to be accommodated alongside men at the facility.

East Midlands Airport holding room STHF

Whilst the detaining officers have a direct view to constantly watch and monitor detained individuals within the holding room at East Midlands Airport, the Board is of the opinion that the facility would benefit from being upgraded to include the current safety and security standards used in new facilities.

Holyhead Port STHF

There is no secure vehicle bay in the secure port area for the transfer to and from the holding rooms for those being detained in the Port of Holyhead facility. The main gate to the facility is only a few metres from the edge of the dock and is only protected by a low rail, which could easily be scaled. This could compromise the safety and dignity of detained people.

5. Fair and humane treatment

The Board provides the following evidence in terms of its work monitoring the fair and humane treatment of those who are detained. In consideration of this, the Board regularly monitors a number of factors, including:

- Occupancy: the number of people detained in each facility.
- Length of detention: whether individuals are being detained in line with the guidance for each type of STHF, and that people are not being detained for an unnecessarily long period.
- Lateness of detention: when people are detained in holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, so may arrive at an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) at a late hour, when kitchens and other facilities may no longer be in operation.

Manchester Residential STHF (Building 302, Manchester Airport)

Occupancy

During 2024, 3379 people were detained at Manchester RSTHF, an increase of 1130 (50%), compared with 2249 in 2023. There were no minors detained in MAN 302 during 2024. The 3379 people detained came from 92 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Albania.

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 1 day, 9 hours and 1 minute, compared with 1 day, 12 hours and 36 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 10 minutes to 24 days and 30 minutes.

Ports

All ports

Occupancy

During 2024, 2746 people were detained at all North West and Midlands Ports (i.e. Birmingham Airport, East Midlands Airport, Holyhead Sea Port and Manchester Airport), a decrease of 247 (8%) compared with 2,993 in 2023.

There were 309 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024, an increase of 31 (11%) compared with the figure of 278 in 2023. The 2746 people detained came from 110 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania (270/ 9.8%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 7 hours and 56 minutes, compared with 9 hours and 37 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 17 minutes to 57 hours and 55 minutes.

Birmingham Airport

Occupancy

During 2024, 848 people were detained at Birmingham Airport, a decrease of 60 (6.6%) compared with 908 in 2023. There were 59 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024, an increase of three (5.1%) compared with 56 in 2023. The 848 people detained came from 60 different countries, with the largest proportion coming from Romania (274/32.3%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 7 hours and 46 minutes, compared with 9 hours and 58 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 20 minutes to 25 hours and 15 minutes. There were 164 (19.3%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2024, compared with 269 (29.6%) in 2023. The number of detentions exceeding 24 hours during 2024 was eight (1%), compared with 46 (5.1%) in 2023.

East Midlands Airport

Occupancy

During 2024, 50 people were detained at East Midlands Airport. There were eight minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024. The 50 people detained came from 18 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Poland (17/34%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 4 hours and 51 minutes. The lengths of detention ranged from 25 minutes to 39 hours and 14 minutes. There were four (8%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2024. There was one detention exceeding 24 hours during 2024.

On a number of occasions, detained individual were left in the CWA for the full duration of their detention, rather than being afforded the dignity, privacy and relative comfort of being moved into the holding room, where there are toilets and other facilities to help them rest.

Since July 2023, in order to meet food safety requirements, the provision of hot food was permanently withdrawn. Snacks and chilled food remain available for those who are detained at the port. Other food is still available at the facility and can be purchased if required.

Overnight detentions

Of the 50 people detained during 2024, 3 (7%) were held in the holding rooms overnight (i.e. detained before midnight and held until 5am).

Holyhead Port

Occupancy

During 2024, 285 people were detained at Holyhead Port, a decrease of 56 (16.4%) compared with 341 in 2023. There were 19 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024, an increase of 1 (5%) compared with the figure of 20 in 2023. The 285

people detained came from 51 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Romania (98/34.3%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 10 hours and 27 minutes, compared with 10 hours and 6 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 21 minutes to 37 hours and 55 minutes.

There were 92 (32.2%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2024, compared with 101 (29.6%) in 2023. The number of detentions exceeding 24 hours during 2024 was 15 (7.2%), compared with 25 (7.3%) in 2023.

Overnight detentions

Of the 285 people detained during 2024, 25 (8.7%) were held in the holding rooms overnight (i.e. detained before midnight and held until 5am), compared with 70 (20.5%) during 2023.

All holding rooms are non-smoking, including the facilities at Holyhead. Whilst the opportunity for smokers to have cigarettes may, very occasionally, be permitted, each individual request is risk assessed, due to potential safety and security implications, e.g. non-compliance and disruptive behaviour, which may compromise the safety of both the detained person and the officer.

Whilst not directly within the remit of the IMB, the Board notes a use of force incident occurring outside the STHF, which was handled well by BF on all accounts, in the Board's view, and the passenger complied.

Manchester Airport

Occupancy

During 2024, 1563 people were detained at Manchester Airport, a decrease of 138 (8.1%), compared with 1701 in 2024. There were 223 minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024, an increase of 20 (9.8%) compared with the figure of 203 in 2023. The 1563 people detained came from 103 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Jordan (146/9.34%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 8 hours and 10 minutes, compared with 9 hours and 33 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 17 minutes to 2 days and 16 hours. The longest period of detention related to a particularly complex and sensitive case, where both the police and social services were involved. There were 302 (19.3%) detentions in excess of 12 hours during 2024, compared with 356 (20.9%) in 2023. The number of detentions exceeding 24 hours during 2024 was 34 (2.1%) compared with 116 (6.8%) in 2023.

Overnight detentions

Of the 1563 people detained during 2024, 228 (14.5%) were held in the holding rooms overnight (i.e. detained before midnight and held until 5am), compared with 355 (20.9%) during 2023.

Reporting centres

All reporting centres

Occupancy

During 2024, 1039 people were detained across all North West and Midlands reporting centres (i.e. Liverpool (Capital Building), Loughborough, Salford (Dallas Court) and Solihull (Sandford House) - an increase of 178 (20.6%) compared with 861 in 2023.

There were two minors detained in any of the holding rooms during 2024, compared to none in 2023 and 2022.

The 1039 people detained came from 40 different countries, with the largest proportion coming from India (269; 25.8. %) and second largest from Albania, 173 people (16.6%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 5 hours 48 minutes, compared to 5 hours 11 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detentions ranged from 15 minutes to 17 hours 20 minutes.

Liverpool reporting centre – Capital Building

Occupancy

During 2024, 65 people were detained at Liverpool Capital Building - an increase of 52 (53.8%) compared with 28 in 2023. There were no minors detained at the Capital Building during 2024, as was the case in 2023. The 65 people detained came from 22 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Albania (8/12.3%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 4 hours and 52 minutes, compared with 4 hours and 38 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 15 minutes to 10 hours and 5 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding 6 hours during 2024 was 12 (18.5%), compared with 5 (17.9%) in 2023.

There were no detentions in excess of 8 hours during 2024, as was the case in 2023.

Of the 65 people detained during 2024, 8 (25.3%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 28 (25%) during 2023.

Loughborough (East Midlands) reporting centre

Occupancy

During 2024, 118 people were detained at Loughborough. There were no minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024, as was the case in 2023. The 118 people detained came from 28 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Albania (38/31.3%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 4 hours and 40 minutes, compared with 4 hours and 26 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 45 minutes to 9 hours and 15 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding 6 hours during 2024 was 25 (21.1%), compared with 16 (17.4%) in 2023. There was one (0.84%) detention in excess of 8 hours during 2024, compared with three (3.3%) in 2023.

Of the 118 people detained during 2024, 13 (11%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 17 (18.5%) during 2023.

Salford reporting centre – Dallas Court

Occupancy

During 2024, 140 people were detained at Dallas Court, an increase of 79 (43.6%) compared with 61 in 2023. There were no minors detained in the holding rooms during 2024, as was the case in 2023. The 140 people detained came from 24 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from Albania (28/20%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 4 hours and 52 minutes, compared with 4 hours and 27 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 45 minutes to 10 hours and 30 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding six hours during 2024 was 30 (21.4%), compared with four (10.3%) in 2023.

There were no detentions in excess of 8 hours during 2024, as was the case in 2023. Of the 140 people detained during 2024, 28 (20%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 12 (10.3%) during 2023.

Incidents

In 2024, a threat of someone with a knife targeting Dallas Court was received. The IMB member was told, in passing, of this threat on his visit, but we were not formally informed about the incident.

In the weeks following this incident, we were informed of a stabbing outside Dallas Court. The individual in question had been acting strangely and claimed he had been stabbed in the neck. A member of staff could see no visible injury or blood; the individual in question had called an ambulance for himself and departed in it.

In early 2025, there was an external peaceful protest outside the reporting centre at Salford Dallas Court.

Solihull (West Midlands) reporting centre – Sandford House

Occupancy

During 2024, 716 people were detained at Sandford House, an increase of 36 (5.3%) compared with 680 in 2023. This figure includes 80 detentions in the holding rooms, which were conducted solely by officers from IE, e.g. during evenings and weekends.

A further 81 of the detentions were initiated by IE officers prior to the scheduled opening time of the holding rooms, at which time the detained individuals were passed into the jurisdiction of the DCOs when they commenced their shift.

Two minors were detained in the holding rooms during 2024, while none were detained in 2022 or 2023. The 716 people detained came from 40 different countries, with the largest proportion arriving from India (313/43.7%).

Lengths of detention

The average length of detention during 2024 was 4 hours and 50 minutes, compared with 5 hours and 23 minutes during 2023. The lengths of detention ranged from 15 minutes to 17 hours and 20 minutes. The number of detentions exceeding 6 hours during 2024 was 153 (21.36%), compared with 245 (36.0%) in 2023.

There were 45 (6.2%) detentions in excess of 8 hours during 2024, compared with 108 (15.9%) in 2023. Of the 716 people detained during 2024, 163 (22.7%) were held in the holding rooms beyond the scheduled closing time, compared with 176 (25.9%) during 2023.

6. Health and wellbeing

The only facility within the remit of the Board that has a medical professional on duty full time is the Manchester RSTHF. At other facilities, staff have to rely on local procedures, which include NHS services in the form of calls to 111, 999 and the local mental teams or by arranging a transfer to hospital A&E, which the Board considers is far from satisfactory.

This was the situation throughout the reporting period. The Board considers that the welfare of some detained individuals could be significantly affected if they do not have access to their own medication, depending on the nature of their medical condition. The Board is concerned about the current procedures, which do not allow the Home Office or its contractors to provide detained individuals with access to their own medication. The Board considers that the welfare of some of those who have been detained may have been adversely affected by this situation, depending on individual medical conditions. This occurs particularly in holding rooms and reporting centres. An incident at Loughborough highlighted a concern about releasing vulnerable people out of hours following issues of self-harm.

7. Removal, transfer or release

Our visit reports indicate that when we have been able to observe detained individuals arriving or being transferred to other facilities, they have been treated with dignity, consideration and professionalism. However, the Board is concerned that when detained people arrive at or depart from Holyhead Port, there is no secure area for vehicles to park, for the transfer of detained people to and from the facility. The main gate to the facility is only a few metres away from the edge of the dock, where there is potential for the public to be able to see the arrival and departure of detained people, and is only protected by a low rail, which could easily be scaled, with possible fatal consequences.

The Board also monitors removals at Manchester and Birmingham Airports on an ad-hoc basis. During 2024, no one was removed while a Board member was present.

The work of the IMB

Activities of the Board

- Three new members were recruited to the Board in 2024. However, delays in getting clearance have caused problems. A member who is dual Boarding received his pass in May 2025, 14 months after requesting to join.
- The number of Board members has not increased, but monitoring visits have been maintained.
- National recruitment campaigns were undertaken for the whole IDE during 2024, and the Board was looking to recruit up to six new members. However, only three have been recruited, while two members have left the Board because of the expiry of tenure and one has transferred from the prison estate. Because of the delays and prolonged security vetting, the members recruited last year have waited over a year for clearance.
- The issue of airside passes is much improved, with a dedicated staff member coordinating this process.
- Outstanding issues on sites have been monitored closely at Board meetings, with response times.

Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	7
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	0
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Number of members on long-term leave of absence	1
Number of active Board members at the end of the reporting period	4

Visits and phone calls made to STHFs

	Monitoring visits	Phone calls
Manchester Residential STHF (MAN 302)	48	0
Manchester Airport SEA	45	1
Birmingham Airport SEA	51	0
East Midlands Airport	28	0
Holyhead Port	18	1
Liverpool reporting centre: Capital Building	22	0
Loughborough (East Midlands) reporting centre	24	1
Salford reporting centre: Dallas Court	16	0
Solihull reporting centre: Sandford House	25	0
Total number of visits to the STHFs (excludes Board and other meetings)	277	3

**On occasion, phone calls are made (under a local agreement) where there has been no visit to the site.*

Other attendances

Number of attendances at Board meetings (12 meetings held)	60
Number of claimable attendances at incidents	0
Number of attendances at meetings other than Board meetings and rota visits (for example, forums, Secretariat, etc)	7
Number of mentored visits	17

Note concerning the management information included in this report:

Data included in this report have been compiled from members' observations of holding room log sheets, maintained separately by both Mitie Care & Custody and HOIE, at those STHFs to which visits have been made. For the other sites, figures have been compiled from copies of holding room log sheets and other sources provided by Mitie Care & Custody.

Also, due to the cut-off dates on which the Mitie Care & Custody sheets are sent away to a central office, where they also undergo a data verification process, it is possible that the Board's collated figures may differ slightly from those supplied by Mitie Care & Custody to HOIE.

In addition, the Board monitors detentions and counts an overnight stay as one detention, whereas Mitie Care & Custody and/or HOIE systems monitor occupancy and may therefore count the same as two (or more) stays.

Annex A

Abbreviations

CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CIO	Chief immigration officer
DCO	Detention custody officer
DCOM	Detention custody officer manager
DEPMU	Detainee escorting and population management unit
ECMT	Escorting contract monitoring team
FNP	Foreign national prisoner
HEO	Higher executive officer
HOIE	Home Office Immigration Enforcement
IDE	Immigration detention estate
IMB	Independent Monitoring Board
IRC	Immigration removal centre
MAN 302	Manchester Residential STHF, Building 302, Manchester Airport
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
RSTHF	Residential short-term holding facility
SEA	Secondary examination area (at airports)
STHF	Short-term holding facility
UKBF	United Kingdom Border Force

Annex B

Locations monitored by the North West and Midlands STHF IMB



1. Manchester RSTHF and Manchester Airport
2. Dallas Court, Salford
3. Capital Building, Liverpool
4. Holyhead Port
5. Loughborough
6. East Midlands Airport
7. Birmingham Airport
8. Sandford House, Solihull



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