



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at Dungavel House Immigration Removal Centre**

**For reporting year  
1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024**

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 requires every immigration removal centre (IRC) to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the IRC is situated.

Under the Detention Centre Rules, the Board is required to:

- ☐ monitor the state of the premises, its administration, the food and the treatment of detainees
- ☐ inform the Secretary of State of any abuse that comes to their knowledge
- ☐ report on any aspect of the consideration of the immigration status of any detainee that causes them concern as it affects that person's continued detention
- ☐ visit detainees who are removed from association, in temporary confinement or subject to special control or restraint
- ☐ report on any aspect of a detainee's mental or physical health that is likely to be injuriously affected by any condition of detention
- ☐ inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom authority has been delegated, as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- ☐ report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the IRC has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those 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 IRC and all of its records, including those of all contractors and sub contractors engaged in the operation of the IRC.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT) is 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 detainees and to make recommendations for the prevention of ill-treatment. The IMBs are part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

## 1. Description of the establishment

2.1. Dungavel House IRC is located in South Lanarkshire, 35 miles south of Glasgow and 10 miles west of the M74, the only motorway link from Scotland to England. Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre is unique in being the only UK immigration removal centre located in Scotland. It is a former 19<sup>th</sup>-century hunting lodge of the Duke of Hamilton and it was used as an open prison until it became an IRC in 2001, housing both men and women.

2.2. Mitie Care and Custody Ltd (Mitie) has been the centre contractor since September 2021. Healthcare is subcontracted to Med-Co Secure Healthcare Ltd (Med-Co).

2.3 As of 1 January 2024 there were 136 staff employed at the centre. 100 were recruited during the year and 66 left, so that there were 170 staff as of 31 December 2024.

There are two resident Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) teams in place. One is for detention services (DS), and the other is a detention engagement team (DET).

2.4. The escorting contract was also held by Mitie who has an office and a vehicle base in the car park of the centre.

2.5. The centre consists of:

i) The main, listed, 19th-century building which houses offices, a multifaith centre, a shop, the visits area, residential dormitories, the kitchen and dining facilities and the health centre.

ii) Hamilton House. This is a newer, residential building which houses both men and women on separate floors, each having its own entrance. Each room contains one or two beds, and all are ensuite. There is an intercom system in each room connected to the control room and detained people have access to kitchen and laundry facilities at all times. The women's accommodation at Hamilton house is somewhat restricted, as are the women's access to general facilities. There is also a 'cultural kitchen' where detained people can prepare meals across a variety of cuisines.

iii) A central building, encompassing:

- Loudoun House, which has all ensuite rooms with a maximum of, typically, four beds. Each has a telephone connected to the control room and there is access to a prayer room, Wudu, the multicultural kitchen and laundry facilities at all times.
- Duke House, which is intended for a resident's first and last night at the centre. All rooms are ensuite with four beds or fewer and access to a prayer room, kitchen and laundry facilities at all times.

this central building also houses the supported living accommodation unit (SLU). and the reception area and the information and learning centre (ILC)

iv) The care and separation unit (CSU, for segregation) which can be accessed from reception. This includes four rooms for this purpose.

v) A well-equipped gymnasium, games hall and outside games area.

vi) The centre is secured by a fence and gates with a Tracka system. This is used for the issuing of keys to, authorised, key holders and monitors the return of the keys to a secure cabinet. There is a barrier on the access road to the car park to provide controlled access and a rear gate to the centre.

2.6. Occupancy at the centre remained steady throughout 2024. On 1 January the occupancy was 88 and on the 31 December 114. During the course of the year there were 1603 arrivals and 1577 departures.

2.7. The facilities within Dungavel include:

- ☐ library, with books and newspapers
- ☐ an arts and crafts room, which is well stocked. Artefacts made by detained people are on display throughout the centre.
- ☐ sports hall and gymnasium in a standalone building.
- ☐ chapel/multifaith centre
- ☐ mosque
- ☐ healthcare
- ☐ welfare office
- ☐ shop
- ☐ dining room
- ☐ cultural kitchen
- ☐ barbers
- ☐ outdoor sports facilities, including an all-weather surface five-a-side football pitch, which is well used.
- ☐ gardens and polytunnel
- ☐ classroom/education

2.8.

In 2024 the percentage of detained people who were time served foreign national offenders (TSFNOs) varied considerably from month to month. It was 53% in January, 55% in February, 67% in March, 72% in April, 63% in May, 63% in June, 67% in July, 54% in August, 54% in September, 60% in October, 56% in November and 57% in December.

### **3. Key points**

#### **3.1 Background to the report**

In 2024 the task of rebuilding the Board commenced with the Chair and three members from the Scotland and Northern Ireland short term holding facility (STHF) IMB becoming the Board, and the rebuilding task commenced.

During the year, five new members were recruited and undertook training in order to carry out IMB tasks. The incoming Chair is grateful to the outgoing chair for his dedication in keeping the Board operational. Recruitment for additional Board members is ongoing, with a view to reaching a complement of eight members.

During the year there were 49 rota visits to the centre by the IMB. Monthly Board meetings were carried out, on site.

#### **3.2 Main findings**

##### **Safety**

The Board is satisfied that the centre is a generally safe environment for detained persons. There is a sufficient number of men and women staff for the number of detained people.

##### **Fair and humane treatment**

The Board is satisfied that during its observations, detained persons residing at the centre in 2024 were treated fairly, with respect, dignity and that their human rights were being respected. The detained people's main concerns continue to be related to the uncertainty of their futures. This is however outside the scope of work of the IMB.

During 2024, Scottish Detainee Visitors (a charitable organisation) continued to visit to the centre, meeting with and supporting the detained people.

In 2024 detained people were observed to be generally treated humanely in Dungavel, and to have a good relationship with the staff of Mitie. This is characterised by showing mutual respect. This has been observed numerous times during IMB visits. The Board is pleased to note that the use of restraints is only carried out following a risk assessment that deems it necessary to do so. Equally, when a resident has an appointment outside the centre, handcuffs are only used after a full risk assessment is made.

The safe, open and relaxed regime is appreciated. The residential units are open from 6.45am to 9.45pm daily, during which time the detained people have free association throughout the centre. Each residential unit has a small kitchen area and laundry facilities accessible at all times. The bedrooms do not have locks on the doors, but they do have privacy locks. Detained people are rarely removed from association.

During the reporting year the longest stay was 735 days with the average length of stay being under 30 days

##### **Health and wellbeing**

Healthcare provision has been observed to be good, and a GP attends the centre daily. An NHS psychiatrist deals with mental health issues. Detained people have access to dental and optical care and several specialist clinics are regularly held. There was an average of 13 Rule 35 (a mechanism meant to ensure that particularly vulnerable people in detention are brought to the attention of staff) appointments per month during the year.

### **Preparation for return or release**

In 2024, there were 1603 arrivals and 1577 departures. Where possible, those who were removed were given 48 hours' notice. If they were leaving on bail, they had an interview with Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) advising them of their bail conditions and were given all necessary information, travel tickets and paperwork. The Board has observed a welfare officer there to help if necessary.

Admissions arrive at any time, day or night. During the year there were 676 arrivals and 126 removals during the night, which represents a 50% increase in night state arrivals and 250% increase in night state departures. While this is something that the IRC has no influence over, it is a continuing concern for the Board.

### **3.3 Recommendations**

#### ***TO THE DIRECTOR/CENTRE MANAGER***

- As has been mentioned in previous reports, accessibility to roofs is an ongoing issue and the installation of preventative measures to ensure that roofs are not accessible to detained persons was commenced during the year.
- Planning permission for the extension to the car park was obtained in May 2024 and work on this project should be put in hand during the year ahead.

### **3.4 Progress since the last report**

The first, above recommendation was made in the IMB 2022 report and again in the 2023 report and progress has been made in respect reducing accessibility of roofs and escape stairs.

Points worthy of noting are:

- 1) The manner in which the centre and its staff dealt with maintaining the provision of meals during a period where the restaurant required to be closed due to a structural issue in the roof.
- 2) There is evidence of an ongoing maintenance and an upgrading strategy for improving the built fabric of the facilities.
- 3) There remains an imbalance of temperatures within the buildings at the centre.
- 4) Mechanical ventilation at the centre is required to be upgraded.

## Evidence sections 4 – 7

### 4. Safety

4.1 The Board has observed staff in Dungavel providing a safe, relaxed environment for detained people where they are treated humanely and with respect. This caring attitude should be commended. Where possible, staff respond quickly to issues raised by the Board. Most detained people that the Board has spoken to say they feel safe in the centre. Their main concerns are the uncertainty of their futures which is outside the control of the Board and in the hands of HOIE and the solicitors engaged by detained people. If the Board has any serious issues or problems with HOIE it will escalate these to a more senior level, but to date this has not been necessary.

4.2 Each detained person observed by the Board was seen by a nurse within two hours of arrival and was offered an appointment with a doctor. There was always a welfare officer in reception and detained people could request an appointment at any time to discuss any welfare issues.

4.4. Daily inductions took place for all new arrivals. Induction includes information about the following:

- ☐ a map and tour of the establishment
- ☐ fire evacuation
- ☐ healthcare support
- ☐ welfare, supporting staff and agencies (including the IMB)
- ☐ bullying and how to report it
- ☐ legal advice/legal aid
- ☐ complaints system
- ☐ education
- ☐ employment opportunities
- ☐ facilities throughout the establishment
- ☐ preparation for release
- ☐ health and safety
- ☐ food hygiene

4.5 Non English-speaking detained people were offered a detainee translator, or the use of the translation service Big Word. A buddy system also operates.

4.6. HOIE staff provide an induction to people who are detained within 48 hours of their arrival at the centre but aim to do so within 24 hours. During the inductions observed by the IMB, people who were detained were given the reasons for their detention, advised of their bail rights, the name of their detention engagement officer, the name of their case owner and asked if they have any concerns that need to be addressed.

4.7. On arrival people who were detained were provided with a basic mobile phone without a camera, to allow contact with their family and solicitors.

4.8. Detained people who were thought to need additional support were encouraged to speak to healthcare and could be placed on an ACDT, VACP or PEEP.

4.9. The safety of the female population was taken seriously. Their residential unit was always secured but they had free association. They could request an escort to gain access to their social rights e.g. the multifaith room. Safety surveys were carried out monthly to ensure they did not feel threatened.

4.10. The fire alarm and smoke detectors were tested on a weekly basis and fire evacuation procedures are tested monthly.

4.11. Before arrival detainees were assessed for suitability at Dungavel. Those who were unsuitable are housed either in the CSU or the main house with a view to a prompt transfer to a different centre more suitable for their needs.

4.12. The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) pass on prison records for TSFNOs who could pose a risk to detainees and staff.

4.13. There were no serious incidents reported in 2024.

4.18. Incidents of detained people climbing on to the roof remains an occurrence. The Board continues to recommend that preventative measures be put in place to stop this, due to the associated risk

4.14. At the start of 2024, there were 88 detained people in the centre, and at the end of the year there were 114. During 2023, there were 973 arrivals and 955 departures in 2024 there were 1603 arrivals and 1577 departures representing an increase of 65% in population turnover.

## **5. Fair and humane treatment**

Staff try to encourage resident involvement in improving the service provided. There are weekly resident consultation meetings, monthly activities meetings, and regime surveys and all suggestions are considered. The minutes of the resident consultation committee meeting and the safer detention meetings are displayed in the ILC. The Board considers this to be best practice.

### **5.1 Escort, transfer and transport**

If detained people have to leave the centre an assessment is made as to whether it is necessary to use handcuffs and the reason for the use of these is explained to the person.

### **5.2 Accommodation, clothing, food**

5.2.1. All residential units are now staffed at all times.

5.2.2. The ground floor of Hamilton House which has one- or two-bed ensuite rooms is used for female accommodation. These rooms are of a liveable standard.

5.2.3. Each residential unit has a kitchen area and laundry facilities. The bedrooms do not have locks on the doors, but they do have privacy locks which can be unlocked from the other side by staff. There are lockable wardrobes in each room and the rooms in Hamilton House have safes fitted.

5.2.4. The kitchen provides three meals a day. Lunch and dinner consist of three courses. Menus are on a four-weekly cycle and the quality and quantity of food is excellent. All religious and medical dietary needs are catered for, and staff try, where possible, to cater for the preferences of different nationalities.

5.2.5. A food safety management system was in place to ensure all appropriate standards are adhered to. Paperwork is collated noting stock in/out dates and food temperatures both hot and cold at the server. The Food Standards Agency has not assessed Dungavel House as this responsibility lies with the Local Authority. A Lanarkshire environmental health food officer visits annually and the catering department is audited quarterly by an auditor from the National Offender Management Service appointed by the Home Office. All staff certification is up to date and displayed.

5.2.6 Room sharing was allowed for those housed on the same unit, who wished to share.

### **5.3 Segregation**

During 2024, the number of relocations to the CSU were:

- ☐ 6 in January
- ☐ 8 in February
- ☐ 3 in March
- ☐ 6 in April

- 3 in May
- 6 in June
- 4 in July
- 5 in August
- 2 in September
- 5 in October
- 6 in November
- 4 in December

There was a total of 57 Rule 40 detentions (removal from association of a detained person in the interests of security or safety), which is up from 38 in the previous year.

Time spent in the CSU were not excessive and the detainees were well treated

#### **5.4 Equality and diversity**

All protected characteristics are observed in the establishment. There is an appointed officer to support detained people from the LGBTQ+ community, and a confidential helpline is available.

#### **5.5 Faith and religious affairs**

5.5.1. Where possible, all religious needs are catered for, and the female residential area and Loudoun House have prayer rooms which can be accessed day and night. Signage indicating the direction of Qibla was installed in all prayer rooms and in the CSU.

5.5.2. Prayer rooms are freely accessible during association times.

5.5.3. Detained people can book religious visits via the religious affairs manager (RAM).

5.5.4. Excellent provision was made during the month of Ramadan and where possible, all Muslims observing Ramadan lived in Loudoun House.

#### **5.6 Complaints**

Complaint forms in several languages were openly available. All HOIE complaint boxes were checked every 24 hours and passed to the appropriate agency to be dealt with. All complaints were made during the reporting period. These were dealt with in accordance with the Detention Services Order 03/2015.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

6.1. Med-Co had the healthcare subcontract during 2024. Their nursing team of qualified staff provided 24-hour cover. Med-Co, at first, appeared not to be familiar with the role of the IMB. This relationship is something that the IMB will want to build upon.

6.2. A GP attended the centre daily. An NHS psychiatrist dealt with mental health issues. Detained people had access to dental and optical care, and several specialist clinics were regularly held.

6.3. The team works closely with Mitie staff to ensure a high standard of holistic care delivery.

6.5. Each resident is assessed by a nurse regarding their physical and mental health within two hours of arriving at the centre and must be seen by a doctor within 24 hours, unless declined by the individual. The health centre has open access. It operates a triage clinic, which is patient led and is held every afternoon. Medications are dispensed three times a day with a detention centre officer present.

6.6. Psychiatry and substance misuse services continued. Psychiatry input was provided by a consultant from Wishaw hospital.

6.7. At the time of writing this report, there was no waiting list for Rule 35 assessments.

6.8 There were 168 Rule 35 applications in 2024.

6.9. In 2024, there were four instances of detained people self-harming.

## **7. Preparation for return or release**

### **7.1 Activities including education and training**

7.1.1. The Information and Learning Centre (ILC) is open 365 days per year from 9am–12pm, 1pm-5pm and 6pm-9pm.

7.1.2. The department manager is qualified in educational management and is a qualified teacher. She is assisted by one full-time tutor and two part-time tutors. Detained people spend a great deal of time in the ILC and staff have built up a good relationship with them, which helps promote harmony.

7.1.3. Detained people in regular association can book a 45-minute slot to attend the gym and/or the ILC daily. This is done by the resident completing and signing a booking sheet, which is brought either by him/her or the unit officer to the library. Unit detention custody officers (DCOs) can also book an appointment by telephone.

7.1.4. The library stocks books in 41 different languages. There are also multilingual books available on 17 Kindles which detained people can borrow. ESOL classes are offered. All detained people must complete a food hygiene course at induction, which is carried out in the department on a daily basis.

7.1.5. There is a large sports hall and a gymnasium, both of which are extremely popular and are supervised by trained staff. All gym equipment was checked by a service engineer.

7.1.6. Any detained people placed in isolation would not have access to the main gymnasium. Fitness DVDs were obtainable through the library and exercise plans are included within detainee distraction packs. A treadmill and free weights have been made available within the isolation unit in Hamilton House. These items can only be used within the designated room and on completion of the equipment induction. This will be facilitated by the gym officer.

7.1.7. Female detained people in isolation could make requests to access the gym and ILC facilities. On request, dedicated isolation sessions could be booked to accommodate regime opportunities for females. The duty manager was required to approve all isolation sessions and give specific guidance. It is not considered that the female facilities are adequate for detention purposes.

7.1.8. There was also an outdoor multi-use sports facility which was used for a variety of sports including football and cricket. This was well used in the summer months.

7.1.10. The shop/internet cafe sells a range of products to meet the diverse needs of the population. Where possible any requests for goods are met.

### **7.2 Family contact**

7.2.1. A family and friends dining facility is available within the visitors' hall at a cost of £2. This allows detained people to eat with their families and is a popular facility.

7.2.2. A free taxi service for visitors from the local bus and train stations in the town of Hamilton 15 miles away can be provided by the centre, if the visitor makes a request for this service the day before the visit.

7.2.3. Skype was available during 2024 to detained people. They could book and use the Skype service located in the visits room. One room was allocated for friends and family calls and the other for legal calls. The former had to be booked through the ILC, 24 hours in advance including providing the Skype ID of the person to be contacted. The latter had to be booked by the solicitor. Such calls, being private and confidential, were conducted on an unmonitored iPad.

### **7.3 Planning for return or release**

7.3.1. Most of the removals from the centre are transfers south to other establishments. These, where possible, take place early in the morning and adequate food and fluid is provided for the long journey.

7.3.2. Admissions arrive at any time day or night. Detainees often arrive very late at night from Edinburgh airport only to be taken back there early in the morning for assessment, which is due to the lack of suitable, overnight, accommodation at the airport. The Board is monitoring the number of late arrivals and departures.

7.3.4. Prior to release, the Board observed that detained people were given all necessary information, travel tickets and paperwork. Mitie provided them with masks, hand sanitiser and food for two days. When the Board has monitored releases, a welfare officer is always there to help if necessary.

7.4.4. If they were being bailed, detained people had an engagement with the HOIE during which they were advised of their bail conditions, and provided with all necessary information, travel tickets and paperwork.

7.4.5. As in 2023, detained people were provided with a list of authorised legal aid firms in the Glasgow area and were encouraged to make their own choice.

7.4.6 Visits by legal advisors were between 9am and 12pm, and between 1.30pm and 8.30pm and took place in private rooms off the visitors' room. A translation service, Big Word, was available. Family visits were from 1.30pm to 8.30pm and visitors could stay for the whole session. Closed visits were held in a room off the visits hall. These closed visits included four Mitie staff and two healthcare staff.

## 8. The work of the IMB

The Board consisted of four members as of January 2024.

Board members were trained and commenced regular visits at weekly intervals. There was a total of 49 visits in 2024.

There are three red boxes in the centre for detainees to place requests, known as 'applications' to the IMB. This is a confidential process. There were no applications during 2024.

Mitie continue to inform the Chair within two hours of any notifiable event.

HOIE provides a clerk to the Board for up to 15 hours per month and this support is greatly appreciated. The clerk was very helpful and efficient.

Given the very remote location of Dungavel, the Board has difficulty in recruiting new members. Towards the end of the previous year interim arrangements were arrived at by the recruitment of the Chair and three members from the Scotland and Northern Ireland Short Term Holding Facilities. IMB Recruitment is ongoing, with a view to arriving at a Dungavel-only Board.

### Board statistics

|                                                              |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Recommended complement of Board members                      | 8-12 |
| Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period | 4    |
| Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period   | 4    |
| Total number of visits to the establishment                  | 49   |



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