



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

BROOK HOUSE IRC

for reporting Year 2018

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE OF THE IMB

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

The Board for an IRC is specifically charged to:

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

IMB members have right of access to every detainee and every part of the centre and also to the centre's records.

IMB Diversity Statement

Brook House IMB is committed to an inclusive approach to diversity which encompasses and promotes greater interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds, including: race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. We also recognise that this fully inclusive approach to diversity must respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories.

The Board respects this approach to diversity within its own recruitment and board development practices. All members of Brook House IMB endeavour to undertake their duties in a manner that is acceptable to everyone in the Centre regardless of their background or situation.

All figures quoted throughout this report are based on the IMB's analysis of statistics supplied by the Contractor, G4S, and the Board's own records. These do not always match exactly so where necessary we have opted for averages.

Main judgements

Are detainees treated fairly?

Overall, detainees are treated fairly in Brook House. However, the Board does not consider it fair that some detainees who are granted bail are then not released due to a lack of suitable accommodation (section 11.2).

Are detainees treated humanely?

From our own observations on weekly visits and the number of applications and requests we get from detainees on immigration related matters, the Board sees the impact of open-ended detention on the mental health and emotional well-being of detainees. The Board considers that the indeterminate nature of detention can lead to inhumane treatment.

While each move is risk-assessed, the high incidence of handcuffing of detainees on escorted moves for hospital visits raises questions of whether its use is reasonable, necessary and proportionate in so many cases (section 4.9).

In 2018, only 16.6% of detainees who received rule 35 assessments were released. This raises concerns about the efficacy of the rule 35 process (section 8.10).

The Board considers that the operation of “short notice charter flights” can lead to inhumane treatment with their lack of adequate notice before a removal to allow a detainee a decent time to make his farewells here and arrangements in the new country (section 11.3).

Are detainees prepared well for their release?

In recent years, there have been limited opportunities for detainees to acquire vocational skills which might assist them on release or return. The Board welcomes the new focus on this, although it is too soon to tell what might come from it (Section 10).

Main Areas for Improvement

TO THE MINISTER

- Introduce a time limit for immigration detention.

TO THE HOME OFFICE

- Ensure that staffing levels in the next contract continue the increased presence of operational staff on detainee wings and support a full range of purposeful activities for detainees (sections 7.7 and 9).
- Bail: review arrangements for the provision of suitable accommodation to see if there can be better outcomes for affected detainees (section 11.2)
- Further consideration should be given to “short notice charters” to prevent inhumane treatment of affected detainees (section 11.3) (repeated from 2017).

TO THE DIRECTOR

The Board is aware that G4S already has plans to cover some of the recommendations below, but we reiterate the concerns.

- Staff recruitment and retention to be kept as a priority (section 7.7) (repeated from 2017)
- Introduce and consistently deliver a wider program of organised and purposeful activities (sections 9 and 10)
- Provide for some opening of the Education and Art Rooms and Cultural Kitchen on weekends (section 9.3)
- Reconsider assessments for escorted visits to see if the use of handcuffs can be reduced (section 4.9)
- Ensure adherence to the Induction process (section 4.2)
- Advanced mental health training for staff who interact with vulnerable detainees (section 8.9) (repeated from 2017).

TO G4S HEALTH SERVICES LTD

The Board is aware that G4S Health Services Ltd already has plans to cover the recommendations below, but we reiterate the concerns.

- Staff recruitment and retention to be kept as a priority (section 8.5)
- Consider use of a mobile dental unit to reduce wait times (section 8.2).

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTRE

Brook House opened in 2009 as a purpose-built Immigration Removal Centre for adult males. It is located about 200 metres from the main runway at Gatwick Airport and was built to Prison Category B standard.

The maximum capacity was increased from 448 to 508 in May 2017, with the addition of 60 extra beds in existing rooms. The use of those extra beds was reversed in July 2018.

Detainee numbers were lower than usual through most of 2018. There were a variety of reasons for this: a flu quarantine early in the year, rotating wing closures for putting water inundation points into detainee room doors for fire safety and generally reflecting the lower numbers across the wider immigration detention estate.

Accommodation at the Centre is in five wings with connecting communal corridors. There are four small outside courtyards, one of which has been made into a garden with artificial turf and the others are tarmac covered and used mainly for sports.

The main contractor, G4S, provides the service for Home Office Immigration and Enforcement. In 2018, the Home Office extended G4S's contract for two years, to allow for the re-tendering process for the Gatwick IRCs to take into account the findings of investigations arising from the BBC Panorama programme screened in September 2017.

In November 2018, Kate Lampard and Ed Marsden published a report from their investigation into concerns about Brook House arising from the Panorama programme (the "Verita Report").

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman commenced an independent investigation in early 2019.

The process for re-tendering the main contract has recommenced, with a decision due in January 2020.

NHS England commissions G4S Health Services Ltd (formerly G4S Medical Services Ltd), a separate company, to provide medical services. A small Healthcare centre provides 24-hour cover, but not in-patient treatment. In April 2018, Elysium Healthcare took over the contract to provide mental health services. Forward (formerly RAPt - Rehabilitation for Addiction Prisoners' Trust) provides psycho-social substance misuse services.

The contract to provide catering, cleaning and a shop for detainees is held by Aramark.

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

The Home Office has two teams on site covering the monitoring of contract compliance and liaising between detainees and their caseworkers on their immigration status.

4 SAFETY

4.1 Arrival/Departure

New arrivals at Brook House are processed through Reception. Depending on time of arrival, eg at times of regular clinics for nurses, the overall wait to complete the process can be up to two hours. Detainees will be offered a hot meal and drink. The waiting area has been further improved this year with redecoration, the fitting of drinking and hot water dispensers and the addition of art work done by detainees.

The IMB has been pleased to note a considerable reduction over recent months of detainee transfers at very unsocial hours. Lower numbers across the detention estate generally and the closure of other IRCs may have contributed to this improvement.

However, there are some concerns with the performance of the new escort provider Mitie Care & Custody. There have been failures to show to take men to court appointments or for transfers to other IRCs. The Board has been told of occasions when detainees have been unable to catch flights home, sometimes after paying for the flights themselves, and other occasions when men have been roused in the early hours for a transfer which does not go ahead. This is both very disruptive and unsettling to the detainees concerned. The IMB has raised these issues with the Home Office.

4.2 Induction

B Wing is the designated induction wing where new arrivals are to be given an introduction to the Centre.

However, for the whole year, there were again disruptions to this function. This time, due to B Wing being used for flu quarantine early in the year and then as a result of rotating Wing closures for installation of fire safety points, followed by redecoration work. The Board observed that there were inconsistencies in the content and quality of inductions. As well, attendance at inductions is not mandatory and in 2018 sessions were held in the mornings or during free association time. This led to some detainees opting not to attend, either because they didn't like the start time or preferred to be on free association.

There were also delays in introducing a long-awaited new induction process. The new induction process was introduced in January 2019. The Board welcomes the introduction of the revised induction process but it is too soon to say how it is working in practice.

4.3 Safer Community

Safety of detainees in its care while in detention is seen as the paramount aim for the Centre and much effort is directed to achieving this. In its own monitoring, the Board observes many examples of managers and staff doing their best to protect the individual and provide a safe environment.

An average of 24 ACDT (Assessment, Care in Detention, and Teamwork) documents were used each month in 2018, down from 42 in 2017. There were 129 reported instances of self-harming in 2018 (161 in 2017), of which six were recorded as requiring hospital attention (18 in 2017).

In extreme cases while the risk is considered particularly high men are kept on constant observation, day and night: there were 103 instances in 2018, involving 85 detainees.

A Raised Awareness book may be kept when there are concerns about a detainee's well-being, but not of a level to open an ACDT. For example, after service of removal directions or a death in his family.

A further safeguard, where a detainee is perceived to be in need of support, is the use of a Supported Living Plan (SLP) document and 39 were opened last year.

Finally, a separate document can be created where bullying is reported or suspected. Both victim and alleged bully are monitored, and action taken to transfer men to other wings or IRCs as becomes appropriate. In 2018, 55 of these were opened – some for victims and some for perpetrators. This is a significant increase over the 13 in 2017, although the Board believed that this process had been under-utilised in previous years.

All of these documents can be reviewed by the IMB member on rota visits and the quality of staff comments and reviews noted. From our monitoring, Board members generally found that requirements were met for observation and review of affected detainees.

4.4 Adults at Risk

Once again, there have been cases this year of extremely vulnerable detainees classified as Level 3 Adults at Risk and who have either been transferred to secure mental health units (five men) or eventually released.

After concerns in last year's report about the need for smoother working between Healthcare, the Home Office and G4S in connection with some vulnerable adults, the IMB welcomes the establishment of weekly meetings of a multi-disciplinary team to look at Adults at Risk. There were teething problems, but in meetings attended by IMB members in the last months of the year each new arrival assessed as at risk was considered by the team, and updates made to the log for those already in the Centre. However, there still appears to be some inconsistency in attendance and, while the Home Office Detainee Engagement Team members attend and act as conduits for the caseworkers, caseworkers do not dial in, so there is not direct involvement of these key decision-makers.

The IMB is concerned by the low number of detainees released after consideration of their rule 35 assessments by the Home Office (see section 8.10). One consequence is that vulnerable detainees who have had their assessments accepted remain in detention if the Home Office considers that immigration factors outweigh the risks to the individual. These men are managed as Level 2 Adults at Risk.

For detainees being monitored for food and fluid refusal – a daily meeting has been introduced between the Centre Director, the Home Office, Healthcare and staff from across G4S departments to plan and co-ordinate care.

4.5 Detainee Safety and Violence

In the most recent G4S Safer Community survey of detainees, 62% of those who answered the question said they felt safe or very safe in the Centre, with 38% evenly split between feeling unsafe or very unsafe. 31.7% said they had been a victim of violence and 60% said they had witnessed other detainees being threatened with violence. This survey was done in March 2018 and is the latest available. 200 questionnaires were distributed and 60 returned.

4.6 Time-Served Foreign National Offenders (TSFNOS)

Through 2018, TSFNOS made up 44% on average of the total population at Brook House. Analysis done by Security has shown that TSFNOS were disproportionately represented in incident and security reports. The IMB is told that the risk assessment done at Reception covers the TSFNO element among other factors in determining if it is safe for two men to share a room.

4.7 Drugs and Alcohol

Drugs and alcohol continued to be found in the Centre. To prevent psychoactive substances coming in, G4S has introduced opening of nearly all incoming mail, making a copy for the detainee and putting the original in his property. While the detainee must be present, this can invade privacy and has led to complaints. The IMB welcomes news that a Rapiscan machine will be brought in to do detection.

4.8 Use of Force

The Verita Report commented on the lack of regular use of force review meetings. The IMB welcomes the revised governance framework introduced at Brook House in the second half of 2018, which includes, inter alia,

- multi-disciplinary monthly meetings of senior staff,
- more detailed analysis of where and when force had been used and why, and
- review by the Duty Director of the day of any use of force within 24 hours of an incident. This includes the review of footage from body worn cameras used by G4S staff – the cameras were introduced in early 2018.

The IMB has a standing invitation to attend the monthly meetings and has access to all use of force reports. We have still experienced occasions when the monthly meetings have been postponed. However, from those we have attended, the Board considers that issues are dealt with in a professional manner and any lessons that can be learnt are regarded as a priority and cascaded down to G4S staff.

As can be seen from the table below the number of incidents involving use of force decreased compared with 2017, but is still higher than in previous years by a significant margin.

Year	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Use of Force	257	334	161	128	134

The reasons for use of force vary, and are difficult to compare from year to year because the way in which use of force is “classified”, but for 2018 the reasons given were as follows:

Maintain good order	Protect 3 rd party	Prevent self-harm	Other
164	38	36	19

Whilst self-harming remains a serious issue at the Centre, it is pleasing to note that the incidents of use of force in relation to self-harming have reduced over the last three years as follows:

2018	2017	2016
36	48	55

There has also been a reduction in the use of force by G4S in facilitating transfers out of the Centre: 48 occasions in 2018, down from 70 occasions in 2017 and 33 in 2016.

4.9 Use of Handcuffs

The IMB is concerned by the high level of use of handcuffs when detainees are escorted from Brook House.

Detainees can be escorted for a whole range of reasons, but usually for hospital visits or dental appointments. In 2018 handcuffs were used on 89.2% of such occasions. We are told that a risk assessment is done before each escort and that there will be ongoing dynamic re-

assessment during the visit. We are also told that G4S officers are instructed to request a side room at a hospital to give the cuffed detainee some privacy, but this is rarely possible. We are also aware that some detainees have refused to attend appointments, once they are told they will be handcuffed.

It is not possible for us to know how much weight might be given to security over matters such as the health and welfare of the detainee in particular cases and the Board recognizes the importance of preventing escape and protecting the public and G4S staff. However, given the relevant DSO's stated policy of a presumption against the use of restraints on these visits, the number of detainees affected in already trying circumstances is high (405 occasions for escorts in 2018) and a cause for concern.

4.10 Length of Time in Detention

Detention at Brook House is intended to be short-term. A snapshot on average length of stay in the Centre follows from monthly reports provided to the Board by G4S:

	Jan 2018	July 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2017	July 2017	Dec 2017
Less than 1 week	112	58	18	95	108	24
1 week -1 month	159	98	96	138	181	119
1 – 2 months	52	40	58	68	74	64
2 – 6 months	68	43	58	70	83	70
6 – 12 months	6	10	6	21	12	9
1 – 2 years	0	0	0	7	5	2
Over 2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0

It is positive to note the general decline in the number of detainees being held in the Centre for more than six months compared with previous years, and that none were held for over a year in this snapshot. In fact, there was only one month in 2018 (April) where any detainee had been in the Centre for more than a year. However, while lower than numbers for 2017, the IMB remains concerned by the significant number of men still held beyond two months and continues to monitor this.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

Despite a decline in detainee throughput at Brook House in 2018, resident demographics remained highly diversified, with over 60 different nationalities represented, across different age groups and religions.

Management continues to demonstrate interest in and respect for the widely diverse cultures and religions in the Centre. Some revisions were made to the new incoming staff training course in late 2018 aimed at equipping new staff with better knowledge and understanding of the different social and cultural backgrounds they would encounter.

The impact of staffing shortages is referred to in section 7.7. Until its reopening in June, the closure of the Cultural Kitchen was one of the most noticeable effects.

5.1 Disability

The two disabilities most often self-declared by residents at Brook House are mental illness and reduced mobility. Detainees with wheelchairs are generally not brought to the Centre and the Board has not observed a repeat of the two incidents in 2017 when decisions to provide wheelchairs were put on hold due to delays in obtaining medical records. However, there was feedback from one detainee on issues in obtaining a walking aid.

The Board continues to believe that the Centre is not suitable for detainees with limited mobility. There is generally no lift access for individuals using either a crutch or wheelchair

and facilities and activities may be located on different levels, giving access problems and having an impact on association with other detainees.

There is a disabled room with an en-suite shower on the ground floor of each residential Wing, other than the induction wing/B Wing. However, there have been two recent applications from detainees to the IMB stating that water leaks out over the room when the shower is in use. This is under review.

5.2 Nationalities, Cultures and Languages

Despite staff shortages, a range of programmes for national, cultural and religious celebrations were run throughout the year. For example, Black History Month was very active with quiz competitions, multiple activities and documentary films and All Nations Week had a range of well-received events.

The Aramark-run kitchen supports major festivals, such as Ramadan and Christmas, by producing special menus for these occasions. Both kitchen and server operations for Ramadan have been smooth as in previous years, providing insulated boxes each evening for those fasting. However, there were numerous complaints this year on both quality and quantity of meals offered, as well as on lack of variety. While some of these complaints turned on issues of personal taste and preference, the IMB has observed occasions where out of date bread and dates were served, and curries appeared to be on the menu almost on a daily basis for Ramadan observers.

There are on average 30 different languages spoken in the Centre and the use of the Big Word telephone interpretation service remains popular, particularly with Healthcare, Reception and Welfare. Overall, staff feedback on the service is positive, but there have been some concerns this year with delays in connecting to interpreters.

For non-English speaking new arrivals, the Board has been informed that handheld devices have been ordered for use by them in inductions, offering audio translated descriptions of different areas as they are being walked around and introduced to the Centre.

5.3 Religious Affairs

Muslims remain the largest single faith group, with the number fluctuating around 40-50% of the Centre's population. The IMB acknowledges the important role the Chaplaincy team plays in the Centre, offering detainees emotional and spiritual support at a very difficult time in their lives. However, the Board feels that it could be to the advantage of the Centre to encourage leaders of the smaller religious groups both to visit and attend religious meetings more often.

5.4 Complaints System

The IMB is given access to all complaints (other than medical ones) and receives copies of the formal replies from those involving G4S and the PSU (Home Office Professional Standards Unit), but not those involving immigration.

A total of 207 complaints involving G4S were received in 2018. Complaints related to the specific areas of accommodation and detainee property and healthcare are mentioned in more detail in Sections 7 and 8, respectively. Eight complaints were dealt with by the PSU, but none was upheld.

In the early part of the year, monitoring by the Board showed required response times were not being met in answering some complaints. This was quickly addressed when raised with the Home Office and G4S.

5.5 Access to Legal Support

Publicly funded Legal Aid Agency surgeries are provided by 25 law firms (up from two). The wait time for a non-urgent appointment fluctuates, but typically was between six and nine days, no real improvement on the typical seven to ten days wait reported for 2017. Although, there were occasions in 2018 when the wait dropped to one to three days.

If not eligible for legal aid, detainees need to source and pay for their own lawyers. The latest BID survey for Autumn 2018 showed that only 51% of detainees held in the wider immigration detention estate had a lawyer – and only 54% of those had legal aid. The Board has no reason to doubt that this reflects the situation for detainees at Brook House.

BID runs fortnightly workshops with legal advice and focus on self-help bail applications. The Board believes that these provide a valuable service for detainees and the sessions continue to be popular.

5.6 Welfare

In the Board's view, the Welfare team are diligent and professional in their approach to a wide range of queries raised by detainees and are a valued resource for detainees.

However, at times during the year there were queues waiting for some time for appointments, raising questions about whether there was sufficient resource. Even short queues sometimes include men waiting for access to the scanner or for printing if the main IT printer is down. The Board has asked whether these simple tasks could be given to a detainee orderly, easing the frustrations in the queueing and taking some pressure off the Welfare staff.

6 REMOVAL FROM ASSOCIATION AND TEMPORARY CONFINEMENT

6.1 Care and Separation Unit (CSU)

CSU is a small separate unit of six rooms at the end of E Wing.

E Wing is generally used for two purposes: a) where there are significant healthcare concerns (for example, drug usage, mental health, self-harming constant watch, possible tuberculosis and advanced food and fluid refusals) and b) for reasons of centre safety where detainees await return to HMP or flights. E Wing can also be used for men on rule 40 (section 6.2).

While the IMB has had concerns about these multiple uses of E Wing and the possible impact on vulnerable detainees there, we are not aware of problems arising from it in 2018.

CSU is mainly for detainees who have been disruptive and who have been placed on Rule 40 or Rule 42. In this connection, 2018 saw a change and, in our view, an improvement in the paperwork used for recording Rules 40 and 42, which allowed specific comments from the IMB when we attended Rule 40/42 reviews. For G4S staff in particular this has meant additional training (from the Home Office compliance team) but the result has been better transparency of the system, which we believe is beneficial. The IMB have also had training in relation to the new paperwork.

6.2 Use of Rules 40 and 42

The following table shows the number of occasions when detainees were placed on Rule 40/42 in 2018 and previous years:

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Rule 40	259	503	358	293	281
Rule 42	12	2	14	37	25
Average time on Rule	59.25 hrs	32 hrs	34.8 hrs	36 hrs	

40					
Average time spent on Rule 42	16.8 hrs				

The use of Rule 42 is lower than in most previous years shown - 2017 being the exception - and the length of time detainees spent on Rule 42 in 2018 is relatively short (as it should be).

The number of occasions that Rule 40 was used in 2018 is also lower. While, the number of detainees placed on Rule 40 (or Rule 42) needs to be considered in the context of the total number of detainees in Brook House during any particular year, we welcome the fact that the number of detainees placed on Rule 40 in 2018 is lower than in previous years.

Through 2018 the Board observed more use of E Wing for some on Rule 40, often as part of a phased re-integration back into full association in the Centre. This would mean that a detainee could have a more open regime but on E Wing only and not be behind a locked door for all of his Rule 40. In the early part of the year, the Board saw inconsistencies in this in a few cases, with some men being restricted to E Wing without full free association to the rest of the Centre, yet not being treated as on Rule 40 – as they should have been. These inconsistencies were raised with the Home Office and G4S and the IMB has not observed any recurrence of the problem.

6.3 Increase in Length of time on Rule 40

The IMB has some concern in relation to the significant increase in the average time that a detainee remained on Rule 40 in 2018. One possible reason for this is that there were a number of men who had extended stays on Rule 40.

From our own monitoring generally and from when attending Rule 40/42 reviews, the Board sees that there is awareness of the need to hold detainees on restricted association for the shortest time possible, but we will continue to monitor this aspect of removal from association.

Finally, we would comment that whilst the use of Rule 42 is relatively limited, in practical terms the differences between Rule 40 and Rule 42 is small. Generally, a detainee on Rule 42 would normally have been involved in more sustained and disruptive behaviour.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

7.1 The Accommodation

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

7.2 Shared Rooms

Following publication of the latest report from Stephen Shaw in July, the Home Secretary announced that the practice of three detainees sharing rooms originally designed for two would stop immediately. Plans are being made to remove the third bed from 60 rooms at Brook House.

A judicial review challenge by two detainees in 2018 raised decency and equality issues from there being only a curtain screen across the in-room toilet. This was also highlighted in the Shaw report in July. The Board is told that alternatives are being looked at, with the main concerns being not to introduce potential ligature points or material that could be used as a weapon.

7.3 Cleanliness and State of the Accommodation

A positive change has been a sustained improvement in the cleanliness of the Centre throughout the year. Other improvements have been the addition of water inundation points in detainee room doors for use in the event of a fire, redecoration of all the Wings and public areas and a start to installing drinking water fountains on the Wings.

7.4 Smoking

The Home Office banned smoking in rooms in April, with plans to go no smoking in all areas from September. This full no smoking ban plan was reversed in August, and it remains that smoking and vaping are permitted in the yards and vaping in rooms only. At the request of detainees, one of the four yards was designated as no smoking in October 2018. Enforcement of the no smoking ban on the Wings requires ongoing work by G4S staff, but it does appear to the Board that smoking inside has been reduced although not eradicated.

7.5 Communication

On arrival, each man is supplied with a basic mobile telephone with no internet access or camera. Credit can be bought from the shop. The Board welcomed the trials for controlled use of Skype at other IRCs in 2018 but we understand that uptake by detainees has been poor. The preferred technology seems to have moved on to apps such as Facetime and What's App and some detainees prefer using a handheld device (which does not show that they are in a detention centre). We continue to advocate the introduction of one of these means or similar if it can be provided in a controlled manner.

Faxes still seem to be the main way of corresponding with case workers and legal representatives and each detainee has access to a fax machine on his Wing. Although less often than in 2017, there are still occasions where one or more fax machines are out of use, which causes frustrations to detainees.

Scanning is increasingly used. The only scanning facilities for detainees are those operated by G4S staff in the Library and the Welfare office. Queues outside Welfare often include a detainee waiting to do a scan and being frustrated by the wait for such a simple task.

A positive this year has been a decrease in the number of complaints from detainees relating to IT and a reduction in incidents of damage to machines. The process for getting access to some blocked websites can still be slow.

7.6 Access to Wings

Detainees are locked in their rooms from 21.00 until 08.00 and for two short periods during the day for a roll count. There are approximately nine hours per day for free movement for detainees to access regime activities, Healthcare and other facilities off their wings.

Detainees at Brook are not permitted access to residential Wings other than their own. As there is no automated gate or entry system, a G4S officer has to check and allow each detainee coming and going through a Wing's single access door. This can be a source of frustration for waiting detainees, with shouting and loud banging on doors not being unusual. The Board understands that the introduction of some form of automated entry system has been under consideration all year between the Home Office and G4S, but there are still no firm plans announced.

7.7 Staffing and Shortages

Staffing levels remained an issue throughout 2018. Staff shortages resulted in a failure to provide a full range of purposeful activities for detainees (section 9) and, in some cases,

missed hospital appointments (section 8.4). From the Board's own observations, more staff generally means more meaningful interaction with detainees, more time to assist with their issues and a general improvement of atmosphere in the Centre. It also means less stress on staff.

The Home Office agreed to increased staffing levels under G4S's interim contract extension - allowing for one DCM and three DCOs on each Wing, plus enough other staff to allow all yards to be open and a range of activities for detainees. The Wing DCOs are to be deployed on landings to encourage more engagement with detainees.

As in the past two years, recruiting and training programmes ran throughout 2018. As well, changes were made to address the ongoing retention problem, with reduced hours and a new shift pattern being agreed with the relevant union.

The Board welcomes the agreement to have a higher number of staff and acknowledges efforts made by G4S to recruit more staff and improve retention.

However, at the time of writing, the recruiting target had not been met and the new deployment levels on Wings in effect from January 2019 were being made up through a short-term overtime and incentive scheme for existing staff.

It will be some time before it can be seen if the changes have fixed the staff shortage and retention problems of recent years and the Board continues to monitor the impact of staffing levels on detainees.

Early in 2019, the Home Office informed us that, as a general rule, IRCs would operate at no more than 80% capacity (358 men for Brook House). The Board welcomes this recognition of the benefits of a higher staff to detainee ratio.

7.8 Detainee Voice

Detainee Wing Forums are advertised regularly and there is a Centre-wide Detainee Forum held monthly where detainees can raise issues with the Home Office and G4S senior management. Detainees can also attend part of the monthly Diversity and Safer Community meetings. We understand that many of these forums are not well attended by detainees.

7.9 Food

Food continues to be a regular source of detainee comments. Food Forums are held by the Catering Manager on the Wings on a monthly basis to obtain feedback from detainees, but very few detainees take up this opportunity. A satisfaction survey was conducted late in 2018 where responses were received from 100 residents. Of those who answered particular questions, 53% thought that there was not enough menu choice, while 51% thought that the food met their cultural needs. Majorities of those who had been in prisons or other IRCs thought that the food was similar or better at Brook House.

IMB members are not monitoring on a daily basis, but from what we see the Board considers that Aramark does a good job in catering for over 60 nationalities.

From time to time during the year, there were issues with detainee servery workers on the Wings not wearing hygiene hats or gloves and potential cross-contamination concerns with the same ladle being used for different meals. G4S staff are responsible for monitoring this.

The shop is popular and well-stocked. The survey of detainees found 76% thought the choice of products sold in the shop was good or satisfactory. There appear to have been fewer problems with queues for the shop this year, likely due to lower overall numbers of detainees in the Centre.

7.10 Complaints

Care of Detainees' Property: detainee property is a significant cause for complaints. Figures for 2018 show that G4S received 46 complaints about lost, stolen or damaged property, with five of the lost property complaints being upheld. The Board's view remains that the system does not make it easy for a detainee as there is no card system to record items and the onus is on the detainee to prove his loss.

Conditions: G4S received around 23 complaints from detainees pertaining to their living conditions, with eight being about smoking or vaping.

Food: There were 20 complaints about food, usually that it wasn't to people's taste.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

Healthcare across the Gatwick IRCs is supplied by G4S Health Services Ltd, a separate company commissioned by NHS England. It provides 24-hour 7-day a week medical services, though there is no in-patient facility.

Over the course of the year all healthcare treatment areas have been redecorated, with softer lighting, a screen showing related information in the waiting area, and greater attention to the clear dissemination of health-related information on noticeboards and its availability in different languages. Only the more appropriate clinical flooring is still pending. An interesting exercise was a 15 Step Challenge session initiated by G4S Health where staff and detainees were invited to go around healthcare facilities with the critical eye of a detainee. Those involved agreed that the improvements made the areas brighter and more welcoming.

Our monitoring indicates that relations between G4S and Healthcare are now marked by cooperation in implementing new measures. The crux, of course, is how these impinge on the detainees' medical care; the test being if detainees receive equivalent treatment to those in the community. The Board considers that they do.

8.1 Access to Healthcare

The IMB is not aware of any issues with the initial assessment when detainees arrive at Brook House. Waiting times to see a GP have varied between 3/4 days, excluding emergencies, which would be dealt with immediately.

Nurses now take healthcare to the detainees by holding Wellman clinics on the wings, with the intention of capturing those reluctant to attend the centre. It has had successes, for example in detecting raised blood pressure.

After request from medical staff on safety grounds, a G4S officer is now present during all pharmacy dispensing and not just for controlled drugs (methadone).

8.2 Dental Service

The contract only allows for emergency dental care. Nevertheless, a dental clinic is usually held fortnightly offering triage; those needing dental treatment are referred to the local hospital. The waiting list for triage has grown and had increased worryingly to 40 at the end of the year (15 was more normal). While, the Board appreciates that the cost implications for our recommendation in last year's Annual Report for a dedicated dental suite were too great, we recommend that the possibility of the use of a mobile dental unit, such as is used by Medway STC and employed at HMP Cookham Wood, be followed up.

8.3 Other Services

The optician attends monthly but nurses can issue reading glasses without prescription. There is a Hearing Voices group and new weekly Wellman clinics and Coffee & Chat sessions (see section 8.9) and the smoking cessation clinic continues to offer support to detainees trying to give up. We understand that there are no significant waiting list issues in any of these services.

8.4 Off-site Treatment

Care which cannot be provided at the Centre will involve transfer to the local hospital, either for In or Out-patient treatment. This will always involve G4S staff acting as escorts and can be a significant pressure. Certainly earlier in the year while Brook House was still experiencing significant staff shortages detainees were missing hospital appointments owing to no transport/escorts being available or to emergencies taking precedence. March was the worst month with three failed appointments. The Board is pleased to report that according to G4S' own records there has been none since September.

On the other hand, the Board is concerned about the high level of use of cuffing for hospital visits – see section 4.9.

8.5 Staffing

Nursing post vacancies continue to be a chronic problem. We are told that services on the floor are not affected because gaps are filled with agency nurses, up to 30% of the team, many of whom have a long working relationship with Brook House. In particular the failure to recruit a Clinical Lead throughout the year has been elevated to a risk factor.

The Board recognises the significant effort made by management on recruitment plus the focus on retention and the introduction of incentives such as further training, including lunchtime teaching sessions to motivate nurses, but the situation is not ideal.

8.6 Staff Attitudes

The Board is sensitive to the claim by some detainees of some nurses having a dismissive attitude to their concerns. We think it true to say that with work by nurse managers and the use of weekly patient and staff engagement forums where individual grievances can be raised this has been less noticeable in 2018. As part of the G4S contract extension Healthcare now has its own orderly, known as HC Champion, who can raise issues on behalf of detainees.

8.7 Substance Misuse Services

The psycho-social side of the Substance Misuse Service is run by Forward. The IMB judges it effective and innovative, working well with the other departments as part of the healthcare detoxification programme. New initiatives this year include sessions of acupuncture. Five-day reviews have been introduced with detainee, doctor and Forward worker present and there are drop-in sessions and workshops. The Board applauds the pro-active methods used by the team to involve men who might be helped.

The use of PS (sometimes known as “Spice”) and other drugs is on-going, despite activity by the Security Department in making finds. It is true to say that apart from a spike in March where seven needed ambulance transfer to hospital, very few in 2018 have required hospitalisation, being successfully treated by trained paramedics on the nursing team.

8.8 Healthcare-related Complaints and Applications

While the IMB cannot see confidential medical records, detainees often raise their medical issues on our visits or submit applications to the Board. Healthcare received 51 formal complaints in 2018, a similar number to 2017. While none of these was upheld on investigation by the Healthcare Manager, the IMB is encouraged to note at meetings a greater willingness to question why this might be.

The IMB itself received 19 applications relating to healthcare issues over the reporting year, about the same as for 2017. The IMB were usually satisfied with Healthcare answers to its queries and were able to relay information to the detainee as to the treatment being given, or raise concerns on their behalf.

8.9 Mental Health

Mental health issues are very common in a population of detainees under threat of imminent removal from the country and their care is a major part of Healthcare's responsibility. Elysium Healthcare took over the contract to provide secondary mental health services at Brook House in April and managers reported the changeover was seamless. On arrival all new detainees are assessed as to whether they need to see one of the on-site mental health nurses (RMNs). The wait time for non-urgent cases has been five to seven days. A psychiatrist visits the centre weekly and sees one new patient and two existing ones per visit, though this is flexible. We understand there is usually no backlog.

One advantage of the new contract is that the Emotional Health Group held weekly for detainees needing help to "manage their response to stress" is now run by a qualified psychologist. A recent initiative is a low-key Coffee & Chat group meeting weekly, introduced by RMN staff as support for low level mental health issues.

Healthcare managers report that there were five detainees placed under Section 48 of the Mental Health Act and a further two who were assessed but revoked when they made a recovery in the Centre. This compares with 12 in 2017. Guidelines state transfers should take place within 14 days: all were transferred under 28 days, and one under 14 days. The close links with the local psychiatric unit at Langley Green Hospital facilitates a speedy transfer where it becomes urgent.

In the past the Board has strongly advocated enhanced mental health training for staff who frequently have to deal with detainees suffering such problems. While appreciating it has always been part of the initial basic training for new officers, the IMB is aware that DCOs often feel under-skilled when dealing with acutely ill men. We are told by G4S that it has not happened due to the need to prioritise training for new recruits in 2017, but we continue to recommend that there be this enhanced training.

8.10 Rule 35 Assessments

Monthly reports to the IMB show that the Home Office received an average of about 19 Rule 35 reports per month in 2018. Only 16.6% of those assessed were released, down significantly from 30% in 2017.

At year end, the wait time for a rule 35 GP appointment was two to three days.

The IMB cannot effectively monitor the application of rule 35 due to medical confidentiality rules. This prevents monitoring on both the content and quality of GP reports and the Home Office responses to them. The lack of transparency and the low percentage of releases raises questions about how well the rule 35 process is working to protect vulnerable detainees.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Brook House is meant to be for short-term accommodation for detainees pending their removal. There is a noticeable shortage of space for activities both in and outside the Centre buildings, but the footprint of the building does not allow expansion. As well, the failure to have all yards open regularly and the lack of a range of consistently run structured activities continue to be concerns for the Board.

9.1 Facilities

Facilities include a small well-used gym with 22 pieces of equipment, two IT rooms with controlled internet access, a music room and a basic cinema room. At the end of the year the cinema room was advertising showing films a few days a week. It holds up to 35 men with a supervisor and is popular. Much of its success is due to the efforts of the G4S education officer who runs many of the sessions.

The Music Room is a good size and has a very good range of equipment. However, it is under-utilized and at year end its opening was subject to the availability of staff to supervise.

9.2 Library

During the year, the Library has been regularly used by small groups of card or games players. G4S staff are suitably pragmatic about this, given the reality of lack of alternative spaces in the Centre, and usually manage to keep noise levels down and minimize impact on others using the Library. However, there have been both formal and informal complaints about the disruption and noise levels. Plans are in place to use the Music Room as an alternative.

9.3 Education and Arts and Crafts Rooms

For most of 2018, there was only one teacher in the Education Room. A second has started early in 2019 and a former overflow IT room has been adapted to provide a second classroom. The Board welcomes this as the Education Room remains popular with detainees and, together with the Arts and Crafts Room, has been an area in the Centre where there has been a consistent run of programs on offer in 2018.

The main course offered in the Education Rooms is instruction in basic English (ESOL).

As we have said before, the Board believes that the Centre's Education and Art instructors are hugely committed and enthusiastic. When visited, the engagement of students is obvious and they are unanimous in approval for the classes.

The Board welcomes the news that the Art Room will be open on weekends from late February and recommends that there also be some opening of the Education classrooms and the Cultural Kitchen on weekends, which can be long and empty times for the men in the Centre.

9.4 Cultural Kitchen

A very positive development was the re-opening of the Cultural Kitchen in June 2018. The G4S staff member now running it has shown real enthusiasm and initiative in the events offered there and it is very popular with detainees.

9.5 Outside Access and Organised Sports Activities

The ongoing staffing shortages referred to in section 7.7 have had a negative impact on access to outside space and organised activities for detainees in 2018.

As was the case in 2017, there were still not sufficient staff to have all yards open at once on a regular basis. This means reduced access to yards sometimes used for impromptu cricket or football and large numbers in the one yard which has some seating and astro turf cover. Low detainee numbers throughout the year have eased the problem. The feasibility of having a second of the yards covered with astro turf has been under consideration since May 2018 and the Board welcomes the recent news that approval has been given for this.

In our annual report for 2017, the Board reported that there had been a decline and eventual end of organised sports such as cricket and football competitions. In the last few months of 2018, there have been some early signs of recovery here with notices up for some competitions.

9.6 Other Organised Activities

At various times during the year, the Board has been informed of work around introducing a wider range of activities – both sporting and other kinds. There was a very successful program of activities run in All Nations Week in August and the start of sessions run by the charity Music in Detention, which the Board welcomes.

But, at year end, even advertised activities were not always held and, from what we see, there doesn't seem to be consistency, with the events remaining subject to staffing needs and priorities in other areas.

The Board's view is that, from our observations, the range of sport and other organised activities actually held did not meet the needs of detainees throughout 2018.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

Roles available for paid work include various orderlies, kitchen and serverly workers, barbers and wing cleaners. These paid jobs are generally well represented across the different resident nationalities. While paying only the £1 per hour permitted under Home Office rules, demand tends to be high and it has the benefit of providing purposeful activity. With lower numbers in the Centre, at year end, there was generally enough work for those who wanted it.

G4S has put more focus on the provision of some vocational training in 2018. For example, a pilot has been run with the Change Foundation which seeks to use sport as a way to give detainees skills for entry to a network of sports people in their returning country; recruiting is going on for a barber who could also train detainees and there are discussions about setting up a small café in the Visits Hall where detainees could be trained as baristas.

While the Board welcomes this focus, it is still very early days and too soon to say what might be provided for detainees. As well, the indeterminate length of stays and the restrictions on space in the Centre bring challenges.

11 PREPARATION FOR RELEASE OR REMOVAL

Issues directly relating to the immigration status of detainees are outside the IMB's remit. However, we do monitor the impact on detainees of Home Office processes and decisions. Further, 34% of the applications received by us in 2018 related to immigration matters and it is a rare rota visit where we don't get informal requests for help on the topic or see its impact on detainees. As has been the case in previous years, the local Home Office teams are unfailingly helpful with information.

The Home Office Detainee Engagement Team (formerly the Pre-Departure Team) set up permanently in 2017 is building up its numbers and its main function is direct contact with detainees, explaining options and realistic outcomes with a view to shortening time in detention and encourage more voluntary departures. The Home Office Compliance team has been reorganised with individual managers being assigned specific areas of focus. The Board believes that this has been a significant contributor to improvement in areas such as cleanliness in the Centre and compliance with rule 40 processes.

For 2018, approximately 31% of all detainees departing from Brook House were being released into the community – whether by way of temporary admission, unconditional release or bail. 48% were removed from the UK, requiring resettlement in their destination country. (The balance of 21% were transfers to other IRCs or men in Brook from prison for a short time for embassy interviews, and then returning to prison.)

11.1 Release Arrangements

In last year's report the Board raised concerns about some releases in more complex cases, and whether there was adequate preparation and an established and robust multi-disciplinary process in place for clarity on responsibilities as between the Home Office, G4S and Healthcare. With changes made in 2018, more complex cases are now usually looked at in the weekly Adults at Risk meetings (see section 4.4). This group has created a release plan template and can develop release plans for more vulnerable detainees, although the IMB has not had the chance to see an example of this in operation from our monitoring.

11.2 Bail: Lack of Suitable Accommodation

The Board is concerned by what appears to be an increase in the number of detainees who are granted bail but remain in detention due to want of suitable accommodation. These men are usually TSFNOs who have already gone through the stresses of being "released" from prison at the end of their sentence, but then find themselves further detained in an IRC.

Their hopes are raised by the grant of bail, but then weeks later they may find themselves in detention still. They may have a type of offending history that is deemed to pose a level of risk to the public, hence the release condition for suitable accommodation.

The Board has raised the issue with the Home Office and understands that the caseworker and local Home Office team are to work together and with local charities, police and the probation service. The Board is not able to monitor this process of finding accommodation, so it is not possible to see where the problems lie. We recommend that the process be reviewed by the Home Office to see whether there can be an improved outcome for detainees affected by it.

11.3 Short Notice Charters

Detainees receive notice specifying a three-month window in which removal can be effected. Those set to leave on charter flights receive no further notice, but can be taken for removal on the charter date with no more than three hours' warning.

The Board is of the view that these so called "no notice charters" can lead to inhumane treatment. They leave detainees in a limbo of uncertainty with the psychological stresses that brings. There is not proper time to allow for farewells to family, and others in the UK, the return of property or to make firm arrangements in the returning country – which might be completely new to some detainees.

A Section – Work of the IMB

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended Complement of Board Members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Number of new members joining within the reporting period	2
Number of members leaving within reporting period	3
Total number of Board meetings during reporting period	11
Total number of visits to the Establishment	183
Date of Annual Team Performance Review for 2018 year	20/2/19

The Board recruited twice during the year: adding two new members in 2018 and with a further three candidates currently awaiting clearances or ministerial approval. We operate a rota system where one member covers monitoring duties, out of hours' calls, etc each week.

Monthly board meetings usually begin with training. Several sessions were devoted to considering issues raised by the Verita Report.

The Board's Chair and Vice-Chair were interviewed as part of the investigation by Verita.

Each year we hold a Team Performance Review to examine our performance and identify our monitoring priorities for the year.

Some members visited Harmondsworth and Colnbrook with the Heathrow IRC's board, and we hosted a visit from members of the Dungavel IMB. We also met with Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group.

Section - Applications

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation including laundry, clothing, ablutions	9	9
B	Discipline including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	11	8
C	Equality	4	0
D	Purposeful Activity including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of room	5	1
E 1	Letters, visits, phones, public protection restrictions	9	8
E 2	Finance including pay, private monies, spends	3	4
F	Food and kitchens	6	1
G	Health including physical, mental, social care	19	20
H 1	Property within this establishment	6	5
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	7	6
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	N/A	N/A
I	Immigration and Probation concerns	49	47
J	Staff/detainee concerns including bullying	11	9
K	Transfers	3	5
	Total number of IMB applications	142	123