



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at South and East Short-Term Holding Facilities**

**For reporting year  
1 February 2022 – 31 January 2023**

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## **Introductory sections 1 - 3**

### **1. Statutory role of the IMB**

The South and East Independent Monitoring Board (the Board) is appointed by the Home Secretary to monitor and report on the welfare of people in various short-term holding facilities (STHFs) in the South and East of England through observation of their treatment and of the premises in which they are held. Board Members are publicly appointed volunteers.

The Board conducts its work in line with the Short-Term Holding Facility Rules (the 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 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 for the STHFs that it monitors. Board members have access, at all times, to all parts of the facility and can speak to detained individuals outside of the hearing of officers. Board members must consider any complaint or request which a detained individual 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 Board must inform the relevant STHF manager about any matter which it considers requires attention, and report to the Secretary of State about any matter about which it considers the Home Office needs to be aware.

The Board's duties also include the production of an annual report covering the treatment of detained individuals, the state and administration of the STHFs it monitors, 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. OPCAT 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 Board is part of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism.

### **2. Description of the establishments**

The STHFs at Gatwick, Luton and Stansted airports and the immigration centre at Lunar House in Croydon are all managed by Mitie Care and Custody (C&C). Each of these STHFs has similar facilities including a main holding room, a family room, access to hot and cold food with drinks, TV, newspapers and religious material in a selection of languages, children's toys and books and a pay telephone which will accept incoming calls.

In each of the airport STHFs there is limited space for people to sleep on the floor with space only for a few mats to be laid out, if mats are available. At the time of writing this report there were no mats available in any of the airport STHFs. When there is no space on the floor the only alternative is to sleep on the chairs. Unrelated men, women and vulnerable detainees sleep in the same area unless the family holding room at the relevant location is free.

Only Gatwick South Terminal has a disabled toilet and no other facilities for people with limited mobility, sight or hearing impairment are available at the remaining airport STHFs.

Detained persons are monitored by officers through observation windows. CCTV monitoring is available at all airports other than Southend.

None of the airport STHFs has access to natural light or an exercise area.

Gatwick Airport has a STHF in both the North and South Terminals. Showering facilities are only available in the South Terminal, where there is one unisex accessible toilet.

Gatwick North Terminal – In the main holding room there are 15 seats and separate male and female toilets. In the family holding room there are seven seats and a unisex toilet. Detained persons' luggage and personal effects are not securely stored. C&C have access to one of the Border Force (BF) interview rooms, providing privacy to conduct inductions.

Gatwick South Terminal – In the main holding room there are 28 seats and separate male and female toilets and a separate shower. In the family holding room there are 12 seats and a unisex toilet with a shower. There is no private space for C&C to conduct inductions.

Luton Airport – In the main holding room there are 10 seats as there are in the family holding room. Toilets are available in each room, but there are no showers. There is no private space for C&C to conduct the inductions.

Stansted Airport – In the main holding room there are 14 seats and separate male and female toilets, with baby changing facilities in the female toilet, but no showers. Within the main holding room is a small family holding room. Detained persons' luggage and personal effects are not securely stored. There is no private space for C&C to conduct the inductions for detainees.

Southend Airport – This facility is managed by BF. There are two separate holding rooms with capacity for eight and four people, neither of which has CCTV monitoring. Each holding room has a unisex toilet and shower.

Neither holding room contains a TV or DVD player.

The facility includes two interview rooms where inductions can be conducted in private.

Lunar House – In the main holding room there are 21 seats and separate male and female toilets. In the separate family holding room there are 10 seats and separate male and female toilets.

There is natural light in both holding rooms.

Summary of the shipping ports – The STHFs at each of the shipping ports monitored by the Board are managed by BF.

London Tilbury Port – There are two distinct port areas: Tilbury 1 which is the original facility and Tilbury 2, a considerably newer area, which is operated by P&O. The facility is only manned when individuals are detained.

The newly installed STHF is in a modern portacabin in Tilbury 2. The original, smaller, and dilapidated building in Tilbury 1 is now only used as an overflow facility. During the period covered by this report the holding room in Tilbury 1 was not used.

The Tilbury 2 portacabin houses two relatively spacious holding rooms either side of the BF office. Each holding room has an ensuite toilet and shower and one has baby changing facilities.

Officers monitor detainees through large internal windows and CCTV monitoring is also available.

#### Port of Purfleet

The STHF is attached to the BF office which is not manned 24/7. Detained persons are held in a separate very basic holding room. The holding room is unheated, has wooden benches attached to the external walls and no internal toilet facilities. Two dilapidated, freestanding chemical toilets for the use of detained persons exist outside the facility but no showers or washing facilities are provided.

Port of Felixstowe – The STHF comprises a small, dilapidated portacabin, situated in a dark area of a huge hangar, which is manned by BF officers only when detained persons are being held.

Port of Harwich – The STHF has two holding rooms each with a capacity of four people and both have toilet, shower and washing facilities. One of the holding rooms is fully accessible and has baby changing facilities. There is also a separate family holding room near the arrivals area with a sofa, bean bag, chair, television, DVDs and games.

The facility is staffed by BF officers only when detained persons are being held there. BF interview rooms are available close to the arrivals area.

Officers may monitor detained persons through windows into the holding rooms and with CCTV.

There are two fire-rated mattresses and pillows.

### **3. Executive summary**

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

The Board has monitored the activity at Gatwick, Luton and Stansted airports and Lunar House throughout the reporting period. The last twelve months has seen a significant rise in activity as international travel has increased.

Reporting at the other facilities started later in the reporting period and has been more limited – Southend from May 2022 and Tilbury, Purfleet, Harwich and Felixstowe from July 2022. Southend only operates May through October.

All data used in the report is provided monthly by the Home Office escort contract monitoring team.

#### **3.2 Main judgements**

We have observed that C&C officers, sometimes in situations which are stressful and emotional for those in their care, carry out their duties with tact and sensitivity.

We are very concerned that people are regularly detained for long periods in STHFs which are designed to hold people for very short periods only. The data collected, and shared with us by the Home Office, shows increasing numbers are being held for over 24 hours and in one instance in December several people were detained for nearly 100 hours (see section 5.0).

The STHFs we monitor are not residential establishments and do not have adequate facilities for sleep or exercise and do not offer any privacy. Other than Gatwick South no airport holding rooms provide showers.

We consider that it is inhumane to require people to sleep on the floor, particularly as sleeping mats were removed in September 2022 and these have yet to be replaced.

We are very concerned about the length of time currently being taken to resolve problems associated with the maintenance and repair of these facilities.

#### **Safety**

We are disappointed at the lack of commitment to resolve safety issues as noted in section 4.4.

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

For the second year we draw the Home Office's attention to the capacity issues at many of the airports' STHFs and the fact that the needs of those with mobility, hearing or sight impairment issues are still not being adequately addressed.

The sleeping mats were removed from all C&C operated airport holding rooms in September 2022 and we consider it inhumane that by the end of the reporting

period, detained persons, who are often held regularly for more than 24 hours, had totally inadequate provision made for rest or sleep.

### **Health and wellbeing**

We are pleased that Aeromed is now providing 24/7 healthcare support at Gatwick, Luton and Stansted airports.

### **Removal or transfer**

We are concerned that the length of time that people are being detained is often increased by delays on the part of Clearsprings in attending to transfer them elsewhere.

NB: Clearsprings is a government provider of accommodation and transfer services.

## **3.3 Recommendations**

### ***TO THE MINISTER***

As noted in 4.4, 5.1 and 5.3 the Board recommends that the contracts with the various airports are reviewed to ensure that adequate support is provided for those with limited mobility, sight or hearing impairment and that problems associated with the maintenance and repair of the STHFs are resolved in a timely manner.

### ***TO THE DIRECTOR/CENTRE MANAGER & TO HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT***

The Board recommends that the Home Office review the capacity of each of the holding rooms, noting the increase in international travel, and ensure that these facilities meet the standards needed to support those with mobility or sight/hearing impairment, families with children and vulnerable people.

We also recommend that an adequate supply of sleeping mats, pillows and bedding be provided within all airport holding rooms without further delay.

## **3.4 Progress since the last report (ministerial response 9 August 2022)**

### **3.4.1 Access to medication and healthcare support**

We are pleased to note that 24/7 access to healthcare is available at Gatwick, Luton and Stansted Airports although with some reservations regarding access as noted in section 6.1.

### **3.4.2 Gatwick North accommodation**

The Board acknowledges that the seating in the family room in Gatwick North was replaced in March 2022 however we are unaware of whether the promised review by Border Force South and Gatwick Airport Limited regarding the overall accommodation in Gatwick North has taken place (please note our comments in

sections 4.3 and 4.4) and if not, we recommend that this review takes place as soon as possible.

#### 3.4.3 Disability access and support

The Board is concerned that we have not yet seen an outcome from the review indicated in the ministerial response to our previous annual report and we continue to have this same concern (see comments in section 5.3).

#### 3.4.4 Stansted accommodation

The Board notes the comments in the ministerial response: “This is being explored by Border Force Central and will be subject to infrastructure and space constraints within existing areas”. We continue to be very concerned about the accommodation and the impact on those detained (see sections 4.4 and 5.1).



## **Evidence sections 4 – 7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Arrival and induction**

We regularly monitor the induction process and have observed that C&C officers carry out inductions following a common standard including the use of translation services, for example Big Word, efficiently and with sensitivity. The assessment of medical needs, personal safety and risk are generally carried out efficiently and relevant documents are completed properly.

We have observed the use of Big Word and the recently provided tablet translation application, but occasionally we have noted that these are unable to provide the language support required. This may have an adverse impact on the experience of detained persons, but we have observed that C&C officers usually manage to find alternative provision. For example, picture cards are used at Luton where standard translation services are not available.

We are very concerned that the C&C offices where inductions are carried out at Gatwick South, Luton and Stansted are not suitable due to the inadequate privacy.

At Luton and Stansted, the induction takes place in the detention custody officer (DCO) office area which can be accessed by BF officers and official visitors and at Gatwick South it takes place behind a curtain which provides little privacy. During the induction process, personal searches are carried out and a detained person may need to disclose very sensitive information, often using translation services again with little or no privacy.

As currently there are relatively low numbers of people being detained at the shipping ports it was agreed that BF would inform the Board when someone is detained, and this has worked well. Board members have reviewed all relevant paperwork completed and are satisfied that the inductions appear to follow the same standard process as used at the airports including the highlighting of risk.

We have observed generally good working relationships between C&C and BF officers.

#### **4.2 Vulnerable adults, safeguarding**

BF and C&C officers have a responsibility to identify and assess the risks relating to vulnerable adults and young people, and particularly unaccompanied children who are detained.

A written plan to safeguard vulnerable adults and/or children and young people is required, with a specific officer assigned to be responsible for each person and another carrying out checks every 15 minutes. We have observed clear logging of these checks.

We reviewed a sample of the documentation in place and noted that where people were identified, suitable plans were created, and the local authority Children's Services were notified. Although it has not always been the case throughout the year, we have seen a marked improvement of managers signing off on all vulnerable persons' paperwork.

We are unaware of any vulnerable people being detained at Lunar House, Southend, Tilbury, Purfleet, Harwich or Felixstowe over the year.

### **4.3 Children and families**

The current size and capacity of the holding rooms at Gatwick North, Luton and Stansted does not allow for multiple families or a family and other vulnerable adults detained at the same time to be cared for safely and decently when these facilities are nearing capacity.

We have observed single males, at extremely busy times, sleeping in family rooms and, where more than one family is being detained, BF interview rooms with no facilities for children having to be made available.

### **4.4 General Safety**

As is noted in section 5.0, the Board is very concerned about the lack of commitment to resolving outstanding issues relating to the fabric at each of the STHFs which we monitor. We understand that delays are often attributed to the port operator who assumes responsibility for airside accommodation. It is unclear to the Board the extent to which C&C; BF and the Home Office are able to influence the port operator in this regard.

As an example, it took over 12 months to address a safety trip hazard at Gatwick North, where the power cord for the spider phone in one of the interview rooms was trailing across the floor to a power socket in the common area of the STHFs. This issue was highlighted by Board members throughout the year in rota reports and was only finally resolved in November or December 2022.

We have seen no evidence that the panic alarm installed in the C&C office at Gatwick North STHF has been tested. There is no panic alarm at Gatwick South STHF although it is understood that this is currently being pursued.

Within the holding facility at Stansted airport, hot meals for detained persons are prepared, using a microwave oven in a very small and congested area at one end of the C&C office. In our view this area, which lacks a sink or running water is unsuitable for this purpose.

## **5 Fair and humane treatment**

The STHFs are not residential facilities and yet the data which has been shared with us shows that individuals are regularly detained for more than 24 hours and often far longer. Exceptionally, in December 2022 by the time they arrived at Stansted, due to what we understand were operational issues at another UK airport, a group of detained persons had been held for around 100 hours, without access to showers or sleeping facilities.

At the airport STHFs which the Board monitors, only Gatwick South has showers. There are no adequate sleeping facilities, no access to fresh air or exercise space and no privacy making these facilities particularly unsuitable for children or vulnerable people. We do not consider it is humane to detain people for long periods (over 24 hours) in these conditions.

### **5.1 Accommodation, clothing, food**

The Home Office short-term holding facility rules state that a “Holding room” is defined as being an STHF where a detained person may be detained for a period of not more than 24 hours, unless a longer period of detention is authorised by the Secretary of State (in practice a Home Office official). The data shows clearly that people are regularly detained for more than 24 hours and in some cases for significantly longer.

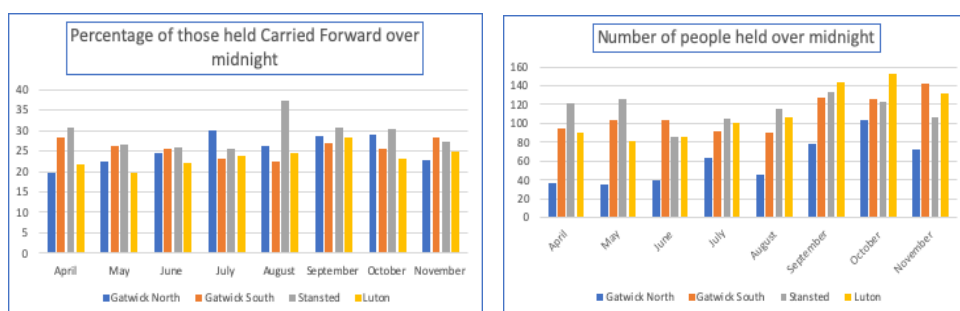
We are very concerned about the sleeping arrangements in all facilities monitored by the Board, as there is no provision for people of different gender to have separate sleeping facilities.

We are concerned about the inadequate sizes of most of the holding rooms:

- At Gatwick North the family room is too small and can only hold one family with extremely limited space to sleep. We have observed families being moved from the STHF to a BF room and vice versa to try to provide adequate privacy and ensure a safe environment.
- At Luton the overall space provided for the holding room is too small. When the holding room is at capacity (10) there is only space for five people to lie on the floor to sleep.
- At Stansted the size and layout of the holding room is inadequate, and the facility is regularly at capacity, sometimes with additional detained persons having to be held elsewhere by BF. The very small family room within the main holding room has no separate access, provides little or no privacy and is barely adequate to hold a family of four. When the holding room has been very busy, we have observed people sleeping on the floor in the corridor next to the toilets and single males sleeping in the family area.
- At Luton it was noted in December 2022 and January 2023 that BF exceptionally used the departure gate area as an additional holding facility from a mass arrival critical incident.

In September 2022, the sleeping mats were removed from all the airport STHFs monitored by the Board as they did not meet current fire safety regulations. At the end of the period, we were advised that no timescale to replace these sleeping mats at the STHFs was agreed.

We consider that it is inhumane to require people to lie on the floor to sleep with only a blanket to cover them. The data shared with us shows that a significant number of individuals are currently being held for periods in excess of 24 hours on a regular basis each month. In November and December 2022 for example, in excess of 200 and 400 individuals respectively were held overnight and expected to try to sleep in these conditions.



Where responsibility for resolving problems with the maintenance and/or repair of the STHFs resides with the airport owner, there are often long delays in obtaining the necessary authority and the Board has regularly highlighted this in our monitoring reports which are shared with the Home Office and C&C.

The table below gives examples of issues which we have highlighted that have an impact on detained persons.

Location	Problem	Date	Status
Gatwick North	Hand basins holding wastewater which is unhygienic and possibly unsafe	2021	Unresolved
Gatwick North	13amp mains lead to spider phone trailing in open area	2021	Resolved circa November 2022
Gatwick North	TV not working	June 2022	Resolved September 2022
Luton	TV not working	December 2022	Unresolved
Luton	No hot water to hand basins	December 2022	Unresolved
Stansted	BT pay phone coin box is full meaning detained persons are unable to use the	2021	Unresolved

	phone to make calls		
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The holding room at Purfleet (see section 2.0) is not fit for purpose. This is acknowledged by BF and since the beginning of our monitoring, we have been assured that there is a new holding room at the port but that it is awaiting final commissioning before it can be used. The Board feels strongly that all efforts should be made to have the new holding room commissioned and put into use as soon as possible.

The portacabin at Felixstowe (see section 2.0) is not fit for purpose. This is acknowledged by BF. It is in a very poor state of repair externally and is intimidating as a place to be taken to for interview. The door is covered with tape and the structure is in a dirty and dilapidated condition. Inside, the facility is clean but is very small and cramped and we feel strongly that the facilities should be replaced as soon as possible with new facilities that are fit for purpose, for example with a new portacabin similar to that at Tilbury 2.

## **5.2 Staff/detainee relationships**

We continue to be impressed by the care and sensitivity shown by C&C officers to those in their care in what can be both emotionally and physically challenging circumstances. When questioned detained people generally indicate their satisfaction with their treatment by C&C officers.

During our visits, we have found that C&C officers are generally open to our questions and, as well as being candid in their responses, they will volunteer information should they have concerns relating to those in their care.

We are aware of only one formal written complaint that has been received by C&C during the reporting period. Complaint forms are available in each of the holding rooms and during the induction process we have observed that officers usually explain the complaints procedure.

## **5.3 Equality and diversity**

Apart from an accessible toilet at Gatwick South, none of the airport holding rooms monitored by the Board includes facilities for those with limited mobility or sight or hearing impairment.

As a priority, the STHFs need to be properly assessed and reconfigured to meet the needs of those with limited mobility, sight or hearing impairments.

Facilities for those with limited mobility are provided at Southend, Tilbury, Harwich and Lunar House.

We have observed that at each of the airport facilities C&C provide a culturally diverse range of food and drinks and make reasonable efforts to provide appropriate information in a wide range of languages.

With the use of the telephone translation service Big Word, or technology such as a tablet loaded with a translation application, most language needs are catered for, but we have noted that for some languages, for example Georgian and Tetum (East Timor), translation services are difficult to access.

#### **5.4 Children, families**

The family holding rooms at Gatwick North and Stansted are particularly small and cramped. There is effectively no room to sleep at Gatwick North family room and the family room at Stansted is often used by non-family members.

The family room at Stansted is currently being refurbished and C&C have informed us that once complete it will be reserved for the use of families, single females and vulnerable people, although we understand when not in use by these groups the room may potentially be used by others during periods of exceptional demand. Whilst this improvement is welcomed, in our view the space available for families continues to be inadequate if there is more than one family or a family and vulnerable people are in residence at the same time.

The Board's view is that a separate, secure, family room, which should generally be reserved for the use of families, single females, and vulnerable individuals, should be provided, as soon as possible.

There has been a limited need for family space or support at the other STHFs that the Board monitors although the Board notes the provision of space at Harwich.

Our examination of BF records has indicated that no children were detained during the period covered by this report at Southend, Harwich or Lunar House.

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

A variety of religious texts including the Bible, the Quran and the Torah are available at each STHF although not all the same religious texts are available in all holding rooms. We noted that C&C officers do their best to ensure that religious books are appropriately stored, and where necessary separated from those of other religions, but we have observed at busy times these can become mixed together. We have, however, not received any comments or complaints in this regard when speaking to detained persons.

A small selection of halal and kosher ready meals are generally available, and we have seen evidence of C&C officers visiting the local supermarket to provide other food when required. Our observations suggest that C&C officers are aware of the dates and requirements of various religious festivals and that these should be catered for.

#### **5.6 Property**

The property of detained persons is held by C&C for the duration of their stay in the STHF and is checked and security tagged, although the level of security at each of the holding rooms varies. Mobile phones and prescribed medication are removed from the detained person as part of the induction process and kept in their checked property.

At Stansted, due to the lack of space in the C&C office, the property storage cage was removed, and property is now stored in two metal baskets, which are not secure, in a room adjacent to the office.

In our view the current arrangements are generally inadequate across the STHFs and when a facility is reconfigured, a separate secure storage area for the property of detained persons should be provided ideally within view of the holding room.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare**

In our previous report we drew attention to the difficulty that C&C officers experience in obtaining access to healthcare professionals who could advise on the use of prescribed medicines and the health of the detained person generally. We are pleased to note that a 24/7 service, provided by Aeromed, has been made available during the reporting year at Gatwick, Luton and Stansted.

At the time of completing this annual report not all Aeromed staff had the necessary security clearances at each of the airports and this did lead to delays in their attendance

There is no Aeromed cover at Lunar House and this has been a problem in the past specifically with people requiring medication. In our view the C&C officers at Lunar House should have access to the advice of healthcare professionals as at the other STHFs.

At Southend and the shipping ports various arrangements are in place to provide medical support including the use of first aid-trained fire fighters at Southend and the use of the 111 and 999 service in the event of an emergency at other holding facilities.

### **6.2 Physical and mental healthcare**

Detained persons at most of the STHFs have no access to fresh air or an exercise area and this is of particular concern when people are held for a long time. Data shared with the Board shows that people are increasingly being held for longer periods and we recommend that the Home Office should address this issue.

Where people are identified by BF officers as vulnerable because of physical or mental health issues, C&C officers are required to prepare a written care plan and our observations suggest that these are generally appropriately detailed.

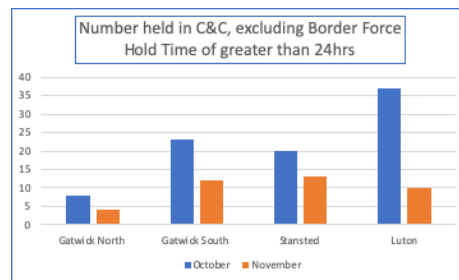
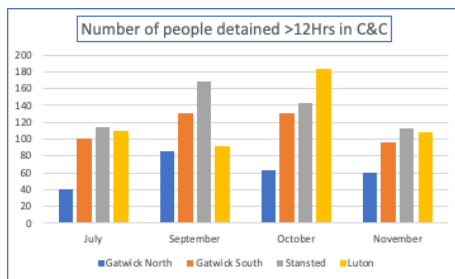
We are concerned that with the increasing numbers of people being detained it is not always possible for C&C officers to be aware of those with mental health difficulties who have not self-identified and we believe that this may be a potential safety issue.



## 7 Removal or transfer

### 7.1 Case management

We are concerned about the number of people detained for longer than 24 hours in the care of C&C. The following charts show the number of people detained for greater than 12 and 24 hours and this excludes the time held by Border Force.



For example, in October alone:

- At Gatwick South 10 individuals were held for more than 30 hours, three of whom were held for more than 40 hours.
- At Luton 19 individuals were held for more than 30 hours, one of whom was held for more than 40 hours.

We do not consider this to be dignified or humane when the only place to sleep is on the floor and when there are no showers at Luton.

The total time a person is in detention can increase significantly when the time a person is held by BF is added to the time the person spends with C&C.

One specific concern is for those individuals who are being bailed and are awaiting transport to safe accommodation: they can be held for an inordinate amount of time awaiting collection by Clearsprings, in some cases over 12 hours.

The staffing arrangement at Gatwick can on occasion result in only one member of staff being available in either the North or South terminal whilst the others perform escort duties. Although there has not been a problem, we are concerned that this could lead to safeguarding issues if a resident needs urgent attention and only one member of staff is available in the STHF.

### 7.2 Family contact

C&C officers will allow detained people to make calls to families and friends using their office landline or their mobile phone as part of the induction. Once they have moved to the holding room this is more difficult to accommodate.

Although payphones are available in holding rooms for calls, at Stansted the cash box in the BT pay phone has not been emptied for a very long time, meaning a credit card is needed to make an outgoing call.

We observed one detained woman become very agitated as she could not contact her partner and young children who were waiting to meet her in the arrivals hall as their only means of contact was through WhatsApp.

In view of these difficulties and understanding that detained persons are often very concerned to let families and friends know where they are, we consider that provision should be made to enable detained persons to access their contact lists on their phone or swap the SIM to a C&C or BF device to make outbound WIFI-enabled calls, albeit under supervision.

### **7.3 Removal**

During our monitoring at the airport STHFs we have regularly observed the escort of detained persons to aircraft for return to the country from which they arrived. We have noted that C&C officers have carried out these escort duties with discretion and that often in quite difficult circumstances they treat those in their care with sympathy and kindness. We have not observed the use of handcuffs or other restraints.

Delayed take-off has an impact on staff supporting the STHF as C&C staff are required to continue their escort duties until the plane doors close.

We have observed good working relationships between BF and C&C staff in the escorting of people to a return flight. Increasing pressure on the team at Luton due to the numbers of people being returned through the airport has however been noted.

The Board is pleased to see that in these circumstances C&C managers have made it clear it should be BF officers who escort the individuals to their flights, ensuring that C&C officers can concentrate on their core role of caring for those within the holding room.

### **7.4 Transfer or release**

We are concerned about the contracted service provided by Clearsprings. On many occasions people have been bailed and have had to wait many hours, on occasion over 12 hours in the STHF before Clearsprings have been able to transport people to a safe location.

When, as on occasion happens, staff of the escorting company do not have the appropriate security clearance, this may impact the staffing levels within the STHF as C&C officers may be required to escort the person concerned to the landside of the airport and this in turn may have an adverse impact on the level of care that the remaining officers can provide.

## 8. The work of the IMB

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	8
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	10
Total number of Board meetings	12
Total number of visits to Gatwick Airport STHF	46
Total number of visits to Luton Airport STHF	63
Total number of visits to Southend Airport	3
Total number of visits to Stansted Airport STHF	29
Total number of visits to Port of Felixstowe	9
Total number of visits to Harwich Port	6
Total number of visits to Tilbury Port	5
Total number of visits to Purfleet Port	3
Total number of visits to Lunar House Immigration Reporting Centre STHF	34



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