



# **Annual Report of the London Short-Term Holding Facilities**

**London Heathrow and City Airports  
and reporting facilities Becket and Eaton House**

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

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1 Statutory role of the IMB

The London Heathrow and City Airports Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) is appointed by the Home Secretary to monitor and report on the welfare of people in short-term holding facilities (STHFs) through observation of their treatment and of the premises in which they are held. The Board also monitor the treatment of people being removed from the UK through London Heathrow Airport on scheduled flights.

The Board conducts its work in line with the Short-Term Holding Facility 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 IMB (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. 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. They 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 STHF manager about any matter which they consider requires their attention, and report to the Secretary of State any matter of which they consider the Home Office needs to be aware.

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

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

## **2 Description of the holding rooms and removal activities**

### **London Heathrow Airport holding rooms**

Each of the four terminals (Terminals 2, 3, 4 and 5) contains a holding room suite. The Home Office contracts the management of the holding rooms to Mitie Care and Custody (C&C).

Under the STHF Rules, detention may be for periods of up to 24 hours, and in exceptional cases even longer. From the holding room, passengers may be allowed entry to the UK, be granted immigration bail or taken to an immigration removal centre (IRC) for further detention. If a person is refused entry to the UK and a return flight is available within a reasonable period, they wait in the holding room until they are escorted to the aircraft door for their return flight.

Holding rooms are also used to accommodate people where there is a need for them to return to the airport for a further interview by Border Force. They may have returned voluntarily in accordance with their bail conditions after one or more periods of immigration bail or have been brought back to the airport from an IRC.

There is a further holding room at Cayley House, part of Terminal 3, which is used for people brought to the airport for removal. This is a different type of facility, in that most of the men and women arriving there will have already spent varying periods of time in detention in an IRC and/or prison, and it is anticipated that they will be compliant with their removal.

### **London City Airport holding room**

There are two separate holding rooms, one for adults and one for families and unaccompanied minors. Each room has its own toilet and shower facilities. There are in principle no overnight stays, only in exceptional circumstances.

### **Eaton House holding room**

Eaton House is a Home Office (HO) reporting centre located in the Borough of Hounslow. There are no overnight stays since detained people are all taken to immigration removal centres (IRCs) from here. In July a new and improved holding room facility was opened in the basement. It now has two separate holding rooms, one for men and one for women and search areas, which are separate from the office, that allow for more privacy.

### **Becket House holding room**

Becket House, a HO reporting centre located in the Borough of Southwark, was closed in June 2022. The Board monitored this facility on a monthly basis until it was closed.

## **Controlled waiting areas**

When Border Force officers stop a passenger arriving at the UK border and need time to follow up inquiries regarding entry into the UK, they first take the person to wait in the controlled waiting area (CWA), a seated area by the immigration desks.

Since March 2022, the Board has had a trial protocol with Border Force enabling members to visit the CWAs at Heathrow Airport, accompanied by a senior Border Force officer, and to engage with passengers who are waiting there as well as the officer in charge.

## **London Heathrow Airport escorted removals**

The Board regularly monitors overseas escorted (OSE) removals, during which an individual being removed from the UK is taken by a team of escorts onto a scheduled flight and accompanied to their final destination. Such passengers may have stated that they refuse to go voluntarily, have been assessed as presenting a risk to themselves or others, or are being deported having served a prison sentence for a serious offence. The Board monitors such removals taking place through Heathrow Airport until the passenger is seated in the aircraft.

The Board also occasionally monitors in-country escorted (ICE) removals, during which a person is escorted through the airport to board the aircraft as a regular passenger.

### **3. Key Points and main findings**

The report refers to the Heathrow holding rooms unless indicated otherwise.

All numerical data is provided by Care & Custody.

#### **Safety**

- All holding rooms in all facilities can reasonably be said to provide a safe environment for detained individuals. Vulnerable people and children are checked on regularly by the detention custody officers (DCOs).
- Not all residents are offered a translator upon arrival in custody. They should be offered this, regardless of whether an officer believes that the level of English is of a sufficient standard or not.
- Delays and unavailability of certain languages in the Big Word translation service can cause problems for inductions and further communication afterwards.
- In most of the inductions monitored, the detained persons were not reminded that they had the right not to disclose certain information, in line with Rule 21 of STHF rules. Some people would prefer not to disclose their religion or marital status.
- Until recently, it was normal practice for a person being removed to be subject to a light guiding hold. The Board has welcomed the decision that the guiding hold is now only used if supported by a risk assessment.

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

- Insufficient numbers of Border Force officers sometimes result in long waits in the controlled waiting areas.
- Asylum seekers (adults and children) who have been bailed sometimes face long waits for the accommodation provider, Clearsprings, to pick them up. Unavailability of accommodation or transport is often given as the cause.
- The holding rooms are not equipped for stays of over 24 hours, and the Board would like to see the number of people having these long stays, currently at 5%, go down to pre-pandemic levels of 1%.
- The promised update of the family room and shower facilities for the main holding room in Terminal 5 has still not materialised.
- Those held in the CWAs have no or very limited privacy, other than in Terminal 4, where a thin partition affords privacy. The CWA at Terminal 2 appears to be too small for the number of people regularly being held there.
- The promised toilet seats in holding rooms at Heathrow have still not been installed.
- There appear to be no clear and regularly observed protocols for offering food and drink at reasonable pre-defined periods in the CWAs.
- The provision of up-to-date newspapers to the holding rooms is still erratic and sometimes non-existent.

- On two occasions identified by the IMB, BF officers caused distress to detained people when they conversed with each other in a language other than English which was not known to the detained person.
- In past reports, we have recommended that DCOs are reminded to engage regularly with people during their long periods of detention because people do not remember everything they have been told during their induction. This year again, we observed people who would have benefitted from a reminder of what was available to them.
- Lack of internet access still causes problems with translation devices and prevents passengers who struggle to communicate verbally from interacting with their environment. The promised internet trial has still not taken place.
- Some wheelchair users were denied access to the holding rooms because C&C staff were not trained to lift and carry a disabled person in and out of a wheelchair.
- There is still no consistency and/or consistent labelling of religious books in the holding rooms, although there is a large selection of books available. At the time of writing this report, the Board has been informed that C&C is going to carry out an audit.
- The Board has observed that some children had extended waits in the CWA. The facilities in the CWA do not compare with the environment in the family holding room, and the Board would like to see these children being accommodated in the holding room instead.
- The Board is concerned about the complaint form handling process. This whole process needs more transparency, from filing the complaints from the complaint box to answering the complaints.
- The facilitated return scheme (FRS) payments, applicable to some people being removed, were not always arranged properly and sometimes caused disappointment to persons being removed or even the failure of the removal.

## **Health and wellbeing**

- The child-sized benches in the City Airport holding rooms still have not been replaced and are an injury risk for detained persons.
- As of 1 February 2022, AeroMed has been contracted to provide a 24/7 paramedic presence at Heathrow Airport. This service appears to be working well.
- People detained at London City Airport and Eaton House still do not have access to their own prescribed or over-the-counter medication.
- The smell of aircraft fumes is still reported in the holding rooms at City Airport.

### **3.1 Recommendations**

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

##### **Long stays:**

- The holding rooms are not equipped for stays of over 24 hours and the Board would like to see the current 5% of people experiencing these long stays go down to pre-pandemic levels of 1%.

##### **Access to medication:**

- Eaton House and City Airport urgently need a workable solution for administering personal medication. This issue has been raised for many years now.

#### ***TO HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT***

##### **Complaints made by detained people:**

- The Board is of the opinion that a review of the complaints process is required to guarantee transparency of this process.
- One person or a team should be made responsible for sending out a consolidated reply that incorporates all replies from all agencies to the complainant.
- A more compassionate and personal reply to the complaints made would be welcomed.

##### **Accommodation:**

- The Board would like to see the promised improvements to the Terminal 5 family room and the showers for the main holding room delivered as soon as possible.
- As mentioned in last year's report, the maintenance of showers in all terminals should be prioritised so that they remain functional at all times.
- The temperature problems in the holding rooms, both at London Heathrow and London City Airport, need to be resolved. The Board would like to see DCOs be given some form of control, either by being able to directly adjust the temperature or by asking someone to adjust the temperature at their request. The temperature problem in LCY was also raised in last year's report.
- A solution needs to be found to give people waiting in the CWAs more privacy, and the CWA in T2 needs to be enlarged.
- The Board has been asking for a replacement of the child-sized benches at City Airport and the provision of toilet seats in all terminal holding rooms for the last few years and we would like to see these issues finally resolved.



**Internet access:**

- The Board would like to see a quick completion of the Wi-Fi trial in the holding rooms, so a decision can be made on how to introduce internet access.

**The Big Word translation service:**

- Delays and the unavailability of certain languages in the Big Word translation service need to be addressed.

**Facilitated returns scheme:**

- Better coordination between establishments is required to ensure that payments for the facilitated return scheme (FRS) are being made.

***TO THE UK BORDER FORCE***

- The Board recommends that more officers be deployed at peak times to avoid unnecessarily extended periods of detention in the controlled waiting areas and in the holding rooms.
- We hope that BF has permanently addressed the situation where officers caused distress to detained people when conversing with each other in a language other than English, unknown to the detained person. The IMB identified two instances of this happening.
- The Board has observed that some children had extended waits in the CWA. The facilities in the CWA do not compare with the environment in the family holding room and the Board would like to see these children accommodated in the holding room instead.

***TO MITIE CARE AND CUSTODY*****Inductions:**

- We repeat the recommendation that the detention contractor should ensure that DCOs use the Big Word interpretation service for inducting non-English-speaking passengers and that they should not assume that passengers with a limited grasp of English really understand what they are being told.
- During inductions, detained people should be reminded that they have the right not to disclose certain information, such as marital status and religion in line with Rule 21 of STHF rules.

**Continuing engagement:**

- In past reports we have recommended that DCOs should be reminded to engage regularly with people during their long periods of detention because people do not remember everything they have been told during their induction. This year again, we observed people who would have benefitted from a reminder of what is available to them in the holding rooms.

### Equal access for wheelchair users:

- The Board would like to see C&C staff trained to deal with wheelchair users, to ensure that detained people with disabilities have equal access to the facilities available in the holding rooms.

***TO CLEARSPRINGS***

- We would like to see shorter collection waiting times for those seeking asylum.

### 3.2 Progress since last report

Issues raised	Response given	Progress
<p><b>Minister</b></p> <p>1. Improved facilities in T5 for families and children. Including the provision of showers to the T5 holding rooms.</p> <p>2. Recommendation that if a holding room is being reconstructed in the future, to consider separate accommodation for men and women.</p> <p>3. The maintenance of showers in T2 and T3 should be prioritised so that they remain functional at all times.</p> <p>4. [London City Airport and Eaton House] The Board recommends that a workable solution be found for detainees to</p>	<p>1. HO continues to work with HAL regarding improvements to the facilities of T5.</p> <p>2. The Home Office will explore the potential to have separate areas for men and women as part of any new build or substantial reconstruction. Due to the limitations on space and cost, it is unlikely that whole separate holding rooms can be achieved.</p> <p>3. This matter has now been escalated to Ministry of Justice Estates (who assume responsibility for detained accommodation) to try and permanently resolve the issue with HAL.</p> <p>4. The Home Office is committed to finding a workable and affordable healthcare solution for the</p>	<p>1. No progress has been made.</p> <p>3. Problems with the showers have been ongoing during the year.</p> <p>4. No progress has been made.</p>

<p>have access to their prescribed medication.</p> <p>5. The Board repeats its recommendation that the Home Office should arrange for Wi-Fi and internet access for detainees in all holding rooms</p> <p>6. The Board recommends that Wi-Fi is accessible in the holding rooms for those with hearing and speech impairment so they can communicate with DCOs.</p> <p>7. We recommend that, where overnight stays for those coming from prisons and distant IRCs are required, the practice of accommodating them for a night or two at one of the Heathrow IRCs should be resumed at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>8. [London City Airport] The Board recommends that further pressure be brought to bear on LCY management to address the issue of the erratic temperatures being experienced in the holding rooms.</p> <p>9. [Eaton House] The Board recommends that when a new contract is negotiated with the transport contractor, the</p>	<p>remaining holding room estate.</p> <p>5. The Home Office has previously agreed to trial internet access in a holding room to properly assess the cost and practicability impacts. The specifics on how to achieve this are currently being discussed.</p> <p>6. The Home Office has commissioned the Ministry of Justice Estates to carry out a national disability access review of all holding rooms, which will also include accessibility for hearing, sight impairment and neurodiversity.</p> <p>7. Cayley House was used for a limited period and on an exceptional basis during the pandemic.</p> <p>8. The Home Office is aware of the temperature issues at LCY and continues to work with the airport to resolve the situation.</p> <p>9. There are no plans to change the contract collection times. The HO monitors holding room</p>	<p>5. The risk assessment of the trial is still ongoing at the time of writing this report.</p> <p>6. This national review just started. We have no dates yet when the holding rooms at Heathrow, City Airport and Eaton House will be reviewed.</p> <p>7. No overnight stays observed in this reporting year.</p> <p>8. Problem still exists.</p> <p>9. The Board has not observed any long stays at Eaton House due to long collection times.</p>
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collection time is reduced from the current 8 hours to 5 hours.	length of stays and the reporting centre average during the reporting year was 4 hours 20 minutes and Eaton House was under 4 hours.	
<b>Border Force</b>  1. [London Heathrow Airport] The Board recommends that more officers be deployed at peak times to avoid unnecessarily extended periods of detention in the controlled waiting areas and in the holding rooms.	1. Border Force will continue to deploy resource to risks. Border Force are recruiting more Officers to improve the number of people they can deploy to assist in minimising detention times, but this will take between six and twelve months to deliver the desired impact due to recruitment timelines.	1. This problem still exists. The Board repeats its previous recommendation.
<b>Mitie Care &amp; Custody</b>  1. We repeat the recommendation that the detention contractor should ensure that DCOs use the Big Word interpretation service for inducting non-English-speaking passengers and not to make the assumption that passengers with a smattering of English really understand what they are being told.	1. C&C's policy regarding translation services details that all residents must be offered a translator upon arrival into custody. This is regardless of whether an officer believes that the level of English is of a sufficient standard or not. The Big Word telephone translation service will be used in the first instance, unless on rare occasion a qualified translator is physically present. If there is a situation where the Big Word is attempted but the required language is unavailable or the service	1. We repeat this recommendation again, since we still observe situations where the Big Word should have been used.

<p><b>Clearsprings</b></p> <p>1. [London Heathrow Airport] We recommend that transport collection out of hours for those seeking asylum returns to the pre-pandemic timing of up to three hours for collection post notification.</p>	<p>cannot be obtained a translation tablet will then be used to aid the induction process. Translation tablets should only be used for shorter interactions whilst in C&amp;C care and only used during the induction when all other options have been exhausted.</p> <p>1.No comment received</p>	<p>1. We notice that some asylum seekers still experience very long waiting times, due to unavailability of accommodation or transport.</p>
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## Evidence sections 4 - 7

### 4 Safety

All holding rooms in all establishments can reasonably be said to provide a safe environment for detained individuals. In almost all areas of the holding rooms, apart from the toilet and shower areas, DCOs are able to keep detainees under observation, either directly or through closed-circuit television (CCTV).

### Reception

For passengers being brought by Border Force officers into a holding room for the first time, detention can come as quite a shock, so a good induction is important. The Board is pleased to report that the majority of inductions observed, even under difficult circumstances, were done to a high standard, and searches were conducted sensitively and respectfully.

**Below expected standard** - However, there were a few occasions when inductions were observed which did not meet the required standards. One such example is described below:

- BF officers and DCO had agreed to do a combined induction of two Spanish-speaking people who had no English. A period of at least five minutes then passed while the DCOs were busy and failed to acknowledge the women at all. When eventually the DCOs spoke to the women, it was without any warmth or care. At first, the DCO suggested that she could speak to them in English if she spoke slowly. Then it took a long time for her to get the correct number for the Big Word interpretation service. The induction was eventually carried out in a perfunctory manner, without any demonstration of empathy or interest in their wellbeing. (05.05.22)

**Problems with the Big Word** - This interpretation service is regularly used but is not without its problems. Sometimes, long delays are experienced when attempting to access the service. Some languages are not available at all. In those circumstances, DCOs have to show initiative and will sometimes use translation tablets or ask colleagues or other people in detention to translate. There is not always a suitable solution for the absence of a translator:

- Two Georgian-speaking men did not understand English or Russian. The DCOs on duty had to do their induction as best as they could, as the Big Word does not offer Georgian. The men refused to sign the induction form. (21.04.22)
- The DCOs explained that the Big Word could not find an interpreter on the previous day, and they had booked an interpreter for today, but that failed as

well. The detained person was bailed during this visit due to the lack of an interpreter. (17.06.22)

**Not offering the Big Word service when it should have been** - C&C's policy regarding translation services details that all residents must be offered a translator upon arrival into their custody, regardless of whether an officer believes that the level of English is of a sufficient standard or not. Unfortunately, as in the three previous years, the Board again saw examples of inductions being conducted in English when interpretation was needed. One example:

- A woman's induction sheet noted that she had a 'few words' of English and that the Big Word was not used for her induction. When we spoke to her, she did not understand our basic questions. After reading the translation card, she was able to indicate that she was happy with the way in which she had been treated. (06.09.22)

**Discrepancies in recordings** - Most of the induction checklists seen during monitoring visits were fully completed, but in some cases, there was a discrepancy between the IS91s, the information on the induction checklists, and the MEDS electronic record system. The rota reports highlighted the following:

- According to his IS91, one detained person only spoke Hebrew. The DCOs said he could not speak English. On the induction form use of the Big Word was ticked, and 'a few words (of English)' was marked. However, there was no record (ID number) of the use of the Big Word in the MEDS system. (11.07.22)
- In IS91, Arabic was recorded as the spoken language. On the C&C induction sheet, 'use of the Big Word' was ticked. However, she could speak very good English and said her induction was done in English. (13.10.22)
- In IS91, the 'languages spoken' section was empty. In the C&C induction sheet, 'basic understanding' and 'no use of the Big Word' was ticked. He could not communicate with us in English. (09.01.23)

**Not informed about the right not to disclose religion or marital status –**

In most of the inductions monitored, the detained persons were not reminded that they had the right not to disclose certain information, in line with Rule 21 of STHF rules. Some people would prefer not to disclose their religion or marital status:

- I monitored part of the induction of a middle-aged woman. The female DCO asked what her religion was and whether she was married. She did not explain that the only reason for collecting this information was to ensure that her religious needs were respected and that she had the right not to disclose this information in line with Rule 21 of STHF rules. (17.06.22)

- He asked what his religion was and whether he was married or not without informing him that he had the right not to answer. He was not introduced to the availability of religious material after recording his religion. (09.01.23)

## Vulnerable adults

### Self-harm

There were no reported incidents of self-harm in the holding rooms during this reporting year.

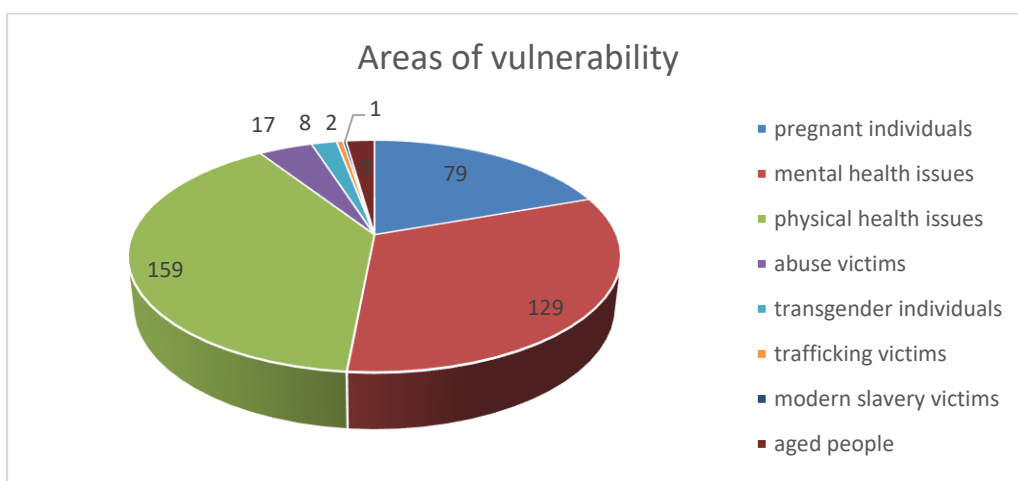
The DCOs are trained to be alert to this possibility. At Heathrow, there were 16 people for whom a suicide and self-harm warning form (SSHWF) was opened by the DCOs, mostly due to the person expressing the intention of wanting to kill or harm themselves.

The Board does not often see anyone with an SSHWF. There was one visit report from Eaton House where a man with an SSHWF was observed in the holding room with six DCOs standing around him. He had been very upset, but was calmed down by the DCOs and was compliant afterwards:

- He had threatened to kill himself, had been banging his head and had also been very aggressive towards staff. The DCO said that he was now on the phone with his girlfriend, which they claimed calmed him down. (15.02.22)

### Safeguarding

The DCOs are required to pay particular attention to vulnerable people and open a vulnerable adult warning form (VAWF) where there are known vulnerabilities. The vulnerability can be mental or physical health issues, pregnancy, abuse, etc. (See figure 1.)



**Figure 1:** Number of VAWFs and SSHWFs issued for February 2022 – January 2023 at Heathrow airport, showing areas of vulnerability



A total of 388 VAWFs were opened at Heathrow Airport during this reporting year, 96 more than the previous year. The Board observed that vulnerable people are generally treated with care and consideration.

At London City Airport four VAWFs were issued, mainly for pregnant women.

There were no VAWFs issued in Eaton House.

Although Border Force gives priority to vulnerable persons, we have noticed occasions when some have been detained for a considerable length of time, as in one Board report:

- A woman had already been in the holding room for 40 hours. On her IS91, it indicated that she has a psychiatric illness and feels safer in the holding room than in detention. A VAWF had been opened for her and she had seen a medic twice. (14.03.22)

Twenty-one of 396 vulnerable people detained in the terminal holding rooms had stays of over 24 hours. (See table 1.)

	<b>0-8 hours</b>	<b>8-12 hours</b>	<b>12-18 hours</b>	<b>18-24 hours</b>	<b>24+ hours</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Terminal 2	67	30	27	15	1	140
Terminal 3	55	10	16	4	9	94
Terminal 4	22	12	6	5	4	49
Terminal 5	49	24	21	12	7	113
<b>Total 2022/23</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>396</b>

**Table 1:** Number of vulnerable adults in the Heathrow Airport holding rooms with the length of their detention time for February 2022- January 2023

## Unaccompanied children and children in families

All unaccompanied children and families with a member under the age of 18 are accommodated in the family room. The DCOs complete a paper copy of a childcare plan for each child, which names the DCO as the person responsible for that child, whether or not a parent is also present. In addition, the DCO must check on each child every 15 minutes and record that on MEDS. They also record the child's activities, such as eating a meal, playing with toys, watching a DVD or sleeping. As was observed during our visits:

- A mother and her 11-year-old son had a stay of 3 hours 20 minutes. The childcare plan and the child's 15-minute observations on MEDS had been fully completed. (17.05.22)

Board members have observed children being inducted into the holding rooms in a friendly and sensitive manner by the DCOs. They search children using a wand rather than giving them a body search.

Children who arrive unaccompanied, 10% of the 1710 children at Heathrow Airport, (see table 2), are a priority for Border Force. Often, the complexity of their situation, involving safeguarding issues and/or concerns that they may be victims of trafficking, may mean that they are detained for several hours. DCOs will arrange for an adult to sit with them in the holding room, depending on their age and situation. The children often have to wait to be collected by a social worker.

Location	Unaccompanied children	Children in family units	Total number of children
LHR TN2	58	440	498
LHR TN3	48	479	527
LHR TN4	33	185	218
LHR TN5	38	429	467
Cayley House	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>1710</b>

**Table 2:** Number of children in the Heathrow Airport holding rooms for February 2022 – January 2023

At London City Airport, a total of 11 children were detained during this reporting year and three of them were unaccompanied. No children were detained at Eaton House.

Board members met unaccompanied children during their stays.

- A 17-year-old boy was sleeping on the seats with a blanket in the family room. The childcare plan was completed. We looked at the MEDS record, which was updated every 15 minutes saying that he was asleep. We asked whether he had any food. The male DCO informed us that he said he had eaten before entering the holding room. I later learned that he had left for social services after a stay of 12 hours 50 minutes. (13.04.22)
- Two children aged 15 and 16 were detained until social services collected them after stays of 24 hours 11 minutes and 20 hours 45 minutes (including CWA time). MEDS recorded that they had had showers, eaten, played electronic games, chatted and rested during their lengthy stays. (19.10.22)

## Use of force

Heathrow Airport holding rooms – seven incidents of UoF were reported:

- Two incidents involved people being transferred from the holding room to a van and the reason recorded for the UoF was to prevent them from escaping.

- The third UoF was recorded as being to stop someone from self-harming.
- The Board did not receive specifics for the other four incidents that took place earlier in the year.

London City airport :

- One incident of UoF: it was reported that a resident had become disruptive on the way to the return flight. Force was used and he was returned to the holding room where he claimed asylum.

Eaton House:

- No UoF was reported during the reporting year.

## 5 Fair and humane treatment

### Length of stay

#### In the controlled waiting areas

Border Force aims to have people waiting for a maximum of two hours in the CWA. However, our visit reports show that some passengers have substantially longer waits.

It remains the view of the IMB that there are still insufficient Border Force officers on duty to deal with surges of passengers as the examples below show:

- Children needed to be prioritised, resulting in a group of adults having to wait for 8 hours 30 minutes. (11.03.22)
- A Spanish woman had a wait of 8 hours due to queue pressure at the border. BF informed the Board that the officer who was on the point of placing her in the holding room was asked to process passengers on the arrivals control. The case was not reallocated until midnight. (05.10.22)

#### In the holding rooms

Our rota visits have shown that one of the greatest concerns for incoming passengers is the length of time that they will be detained in the holding rooms.

Detentions of over 24 hours are not unusual. Of 13,089 adults in the terminal holding rooms, 6.6% had stays over 24 hours. (See table 3.) Last year that percentage was 2.8%; in the pre-pandemic year 2019-20 it was only 1.0%. (See table 4.) The holding rooms are not equipped for stays over 24 hours and the Board would like to see the number of people having these long stays go down to pre-pandemic levels of 2019/2020.

Location	0-8 hours	8-12 hours	12-18 hours	18-24 hours	24+ hours	Total
LHR TN2	2001	819	620	404	119	3963
LHR TN3	2411	652	535	519	501	4618
LHR TN4	865	320	277	217	79	1758
LHR TN5	1358	536	410	280	166	2750
<b>Total</b>	<b>6635</b>	<b>2327</b>	<b>1842</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>13089</b>
Cayley House	1199	76	19	6	9	1309
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7834</b>	<b>2403</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1426</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>14398</b>

**Table 3:** Number of adults in the Heathrow holding rooms with the length of their detention time for February 2022-January 2023.

Report year	0-8 hours	8-12 hours	12-18 hours	18-24 hours	24+ hours	Total
2022/23	6635	2327	1842	1420	865	13089
2021/22	6133	1513	944	863	276	9729
2019/20	8896	2118	1309	652	134	13109

**Table 4:** Total number of adults in the Heathrow terminal holding rooms with their length of stay for three different reporting years.

At City Airport a total of 159 adults were detained, and 2 people had stays of more than 12 hours.

In Eaton House three of the 166 people detained during this reporting period had stays of more than eight hours.

Enquiries from members reveal a variety of reasons for long stays:

- obfuscation by detained persons or late asylum claims
- awaiting responses from third parties (e.g. universities, employers or social services and police)
- shortage of Border Force staff
- slow-working systems (e.g. fingerprinting)
- long waits for collection by Clearsprings. We note that in many asylum cases delays are a result of the unavailability of transport and/or accommodation.

Some asylum seekers have been waiting for as long as 22 hours before being collected by Clearsprings. These long waits are also experienced by families with children. Some examples are:

- We asked about a Namibian family with a six-year-old child who was detained for 38 hours 30 minutes before being bailed. Case notes record that the family should have been picked up at 9pm, but there was no accommodation available. It took until 7pm on the next day to secure accommodation. (24.09.22)
- On asking for more information on a stay of over 15 hours for a woman and her four children, it was noted that there was a delay of over 10 hours in finding accommodation. (10.11.22)
- In response to a question about a stay of nearly 28 hours for a woman and her two-year-old child, Border Force noted that the delay was due to accommodation and transport shortages. (24.10.22)

## **Accommodation and food**

All the holding rooms are in good decorative repair. They have rows of standard airport seating and fixed tables with seats for eating meals. However, the rooms are windowless, with no natural light or fresh air.

Those held in the CWAs have no or very limited privacy and are visible to other passengers awaiting their turn to approach the immigration desks, other than in Terminal 4, where the frosted glass partition affords some privacy. The CWA at Terminal 2 appears to be too small and is often crowded.

Usually, the holding rooms are clean and tidy, but when a large number of people are detained together, standards can slip:

- The holding room was untidy with left-over food on the tables... The DCOs said that usually the cleaners would clear the tables, but it was noon and the cleaners were not due until 7pm. (13.04.22)

## **Mattresses and blankets**

Passengers arriving from long-haul flights, unsurprisingly, need to sleep. For the first half of the year, thin mats were in use and most people spread them across the seats in order to sleep. However, since the end of September, mattresses have not been available. They were removed as they were deemed to be a fire hazard and did not comply with fire regulations. Only pillows and very thin blankets were provided. This caused significant discomfort for people in the holding rooms, especially for those with lengthy stays.

- One report noted that a man had tried to sleep on the recliner seat, but this had resulted in back pain for which he sought medical assistance. The medic said that poor sleeping posture on a recliner was likely to have exacerbated or even caused the muscular injury. (01.11.22)
- Another example to note is that of 13 people held overnight in the T2 holding room, who had no option but to sleep on hard chairs or on the floor. (26.01.23)

At the time of writing, we have just been informed that new mattresses will soon be delivered to the holding rooms.

The blankets provided are very thin and hardly protect against the cold. Especially with the low temperatures sometimes experienced in the holding rooms, they do not seem to be thick enough.

## **London City Airport benches and table**

The adult holding room at City Airport has child-sized benches for adult-sized tables. Unfortunately, an adult cannot sit comfortably on these:

- The detained person was sitting on the child-sized bench. He said he was being well looked after, but the seating was very uncomfortable. He also added that it would be good to have some coffee. The DCO explained that he could make some black coffee as there was no milk (04.04.22)

For the last two years, the Board has asked if these benches can be replaced with something more suitable for adults. On many occasions, C&C and the HO have said that they will be replaced, but nothing has happened yet.

## **Showers and toilet seats**

There is no shower in Terminal 5. Border Force and HAL are in the process of negotiating and planning a restructuring of the accommodation, which will include a shower, but the IMB has not yet seen any plans.

The showers in T2 and T3 were frequently out of order during this period. There is no feasible option of using the hand basins in the toilet cubicles to wash since they are very small.

When holding room showers are unavailable, C&C can escort detained individuals to Cayley House for a shower. However, this can only happen when C&C has sufficient vans and escorts available. Meanwhile, members are seeing those in detention requesting showers:

- All those seeking asylum told me that they would like to shower. I asked the DCO, who said that there might not be enough time to take them to Cayley House for a shower. (05.05.22)
- The Brazilians indicated that they would like showers, but T3 showers were out of use. The DCOs contacted Cayley House, but due to staff availability this would not be possible before their flights. (31.03.22)

The Board would like to see a permanent solution to ensure the showers are in working order.

Some toilets are just metal bowls, and the Board would like to see that all have a proper toilet seat attached.

## **Heating**

The temperature in the holding rooms, both at London Heathrow and London City Airport, is sometimes too low and DCOs are unable to control it directly. This often causes discomfort for the detained people. Some extracts from our reports:

- A man was shivering because of the cold, and the Board member could not stay in the holding room for more than half an hour because of the cold. (11.07.22)
- The holding room felt very cold, and three of the detained people told me they were unhappy about the temperature. (02.09.22)
- One family said that they had not taken a shower because it was too cold in the holding room. (01.11.22)

The Board would like to see the DCOs be given some form of control, either by being able to directly adjust the temperature or by asking someone to adjust the temperature at their request.

### **Food and drink**

The water fountains have not been in use since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and have yet to be restored; instead cartons of water and cartons of fruit juice are provided. Hot drinks are available from a machine.

There are pictures on the walls showing what food is provided. People can help themselves to snacks and fresh fruit. A good selection of microwaveable meals is available; these include vegetarian, halal, kosher, vegan and gluten-free meals.

The certification on halal meals is less clear than it could be, and C&C are addressing this.

[In the Controlled Waiting Areas] The Board is concerned that there appear to be no clear and regularly observed protocols for offering food and drink at reasonable pre-defined periods. A report in June showed that in discussions with passengers who had been in the CWA in excess of two hours, they had not been proactively offered any refreshments.

### **Access to telephones**

Those who are detained are not allowed to use their smartphones which contain cameras. They are allowed to make a five-minute call in the office area to family or friends either in the UK or abroad, to give them either the number of the payphone in the holding room or the number of a C&C loan phone. Each holding room has roughly 10 loan phones available.

[Eaton House] There is bad phone reception in the men's holding room. When no women are detained, the DCOs let the men use the female room so that they can stand by the window for the best phone reception. A phone signal booster is needed. The Board has been informed that this is being addressed by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HO Facilities departments.



## **Newspapers**

In previous years there was a selection of current newspapers available in a range of languages. More recently, we have found very few or no newspapers. Those available were often out-of-date. C&C has informed us that the DCOs have petty cash which they can use to buy newspapers, but this does not happen often.

More recently we were informed that newspapers would arrive at Cayley House and will be distributed from there to the holding rooms, but recent reports still indicate a lack of (current) newspapers.

## **Staff relationships with those in detention**

### **Border Force officers**

We observed Border Force officers interacting with those in detention as they escorted them to and from the holding rooms or gave them information. They almost always treat people with respect and consideration, even when faced with anger, reluctance or distress.

- One report noted that a woman was brought into the holding room by Border Force and was in some distress. The officer spoke to her very patiently and tried to reassure her that her case would be considered very carefully. (06.10.22)
- One report noted that the DCOs and BF officers who came to talk to a family with an infant were kind and empathetic in their interactions, showing care and concern for the family. One BF officer spoke fluent Spanish, which was much appreciated by the family and engaged warmly with the little girl. (26.01.23)

However, there are occasions when officers may cause unnecessary distress:

- A man was uncomfortable when BF officers were conversing with each other in a different (non-English) language. (01.11.22) This issue was also raised on a complaint form by another detained person.

Border Force have assured the Board that this is unacceptable and said they would ensure that this is communicated to officers.

## **Detention custody officers**

Frequently those detained have told us that they have been treated kindly and respectfully and have all they need. One detained person said that the name 'Care & Custody' was comforting in the sense that 'care' was prioritised over 'custody'.

We have observed some very good practices from DCOs interacting with those detained, and we have noted these in our reports for feedback to the staff.

However, there were occasions when the DCOs were observed to perform less well, as the example below shows:

- The DCOs in TN3 looked exhausted. They were sitting in the office area from where at least one of them was unable to see the holding rooms for the duration of the visit (as she was facing away from the windows) nor the security monitors. Answers to questions raised in the visit report were very short, even defensive. (13.04.22)

In past reports, we have recommended that DCOs are reminded to engage regularly with people during their long periods of detention because people do not remember everything they have been told during their induction and therefore are not always aware that they can ask for food, a shower or an extra phone call. This year again, we observed people who would have benefitted from a reminder:

- A man appeared several times in front of the office window, looking stressed and the DCO was asked whether she should attend to him. She said that she would attend to him later. The man informed us that he was stressed because he could not contact his girlfriend. He had been given a loan phone but was not aware that he could contact her by looking up her number on his own phone under supervision. (01.12.22)

Passengers first encounter the DCOs when they are inducted into the holding room, so this first contact is important. However, their experience can be one of the DCOs appearing cold and uninterested in them. The following was reported:

- For a period of at least 5 minutes the DCOs were busy and failed to acknowledge the women who just had entered the holding room. The induction was carried out in a perfunctory manner. There was a lack of empathy or interest in their wellbeing. (05.05.22)

## **Equality and diversity**

### **Access to information**

C&C provides information for those detained in 20 different official languages, both on paper and on video.

Cut-out photographs are displayed on the walls in all the holding rooms, showing the available items such as blankets, pillows, wash-kits, prayer books and prayer mats, as well as available meals.

### **Access to Wi-Fi and the internet**

The Board finds it unsatisfactory that despite previous recommendations, those in detention still have no direct access to the internet. The Board was informed by the Home Office that a trial with internet access was likely to take place in one of the holding rooms later in 2022, but at the time of writing this report, the risk assessment for a trial has not even been finished.

Below are two examples where the lack of internet/Wi-Fi gives rise to problems.

Not having internet access renders translation devices unusable:

- There were two translation devices. Both were not charged and were not being used. The DCOs said they do not use them as they usually translate incorrectly due to poor internet reception. (17.06.22)

Hearing-impaired passengers need to be able to connect to Wi-Fi in the holding rooms in order to communicate with DCOs and those around them. The following was reported:

- A passenger's IS91 noted: 'Spasmodic dysphonia meaning he is unable to, or at least struggles to, communicate verbally'. Asked about possible communication difficulties, C&C responded: 'There were some communication issues with this resident however, the induction was successfully completed through the translation device as he struggled to communicate verbally. However, he was able to read.' (24.03.22)

The Board repeats the recommendation from last year that, even if it takes place under the supervision of the DCOs, detained individuals should have internet access in order to communicate and to access personal information.

### **Access for wheelchair users**

All the holding rooms at Heathrow terminals are wheelchair accessible. This year we observed that wheelchair users were denied access to the holding rooms. The reason given was that C&C staff are not trained to lift and carry a disabled person from and to a wheelchair. In the case below, the disabled person was accompanied by their partner, who could have assisted:

- There were three people in the CWA, one had just arrived, and the other two had been there for 7 hours 27 minutes and 7 hours 29 minutes. I was informed by a Border Force officer that they were told by C&C that they could not be accommodated in the holding room as one of the detainees was in a wheelchair. I spoke to a senior Border Force inspector who advised that their

case had been prioritised and that they were awaiting transport. We later learnt from C&C that their staff are not medically trained to be able to lift and carry a disabled person from and to a wheelchair. (26.11.22)

### **Access to legal advice**

Legal advice sheets listing the phone numbers of legal advice centres and local solicitors are provided in all holding rooms next to the payphones. The Home Office is responsible for ensuring that they are regularly updated. Visits to the holding rooms have found these generally up to date, although this can slip over holiday periods.

### **Faith and religious affairs**

All holding rooms have either a separate multifaith room or at least a cupboard containing prayer mats, a qibla and a selection of sacred books relevant to many faiths.

In general, these books are treated with respect, but on occasion, visits have found them to be placed next to inappropriate material, as the examples below show:

- In T5, some magazines were stored on the same shelf as the religious books.
- T4 family room: Holy books were stored together with the children's books.

In the four previous annual reports, the Board noted that there was no consistency between the terminals regarding the selection of sacred books and we did not know whether they were appropriate for those following major religions. Also, we suggested that the books be labelled in English so those unfamiliar with the original languages could identify what texts were or were not being provided. Following our suggestion, the Home Office undertook a review of the sacred books with the help of an IRC chaplain. The holding rooms have now been supplied with new religious books, but there still needs to be consistency and/or consistent labelling. At the time of writing this report the Board has been informed that C&C is going to do an audit.

### **Children and families**

The IMB is concerned about extended waits in the CWA for children. The facilities in the CWA do not compare with the family holding room, and the Board would like to see these children being accommodated in the holding room instead when long waits cannot be avoided. Some examples of long waits in the CWA:

- A 6-year-old Botswanan was waiting with a female staff member from Menzies Aviation, the airline's handling agent. The child was moved to the holding room 9 hours after initially being held in the CWA, and he was released to the care of Social Services and a relative after a total of 16 hours (12.05.22). While writing this report, the Board received an explanation that this was a complex case which revealed several safeguarding and logistical

concerns as it progressed. However, given the age of this child, it is our opinion that enquiries should have been expedited to enable the minor to be placed and supported in the family room earlier in the process.

All detained children and all detained families with a member under the age of 18 should be accommodated in a family room.

A total of 1,710 children were detained in the terminal holding rooms at Heathrow Airport. (See table 4.) This compares with 1,502 children in the previous reporting period. Thirteen per cent of the children in the Heathrow holding rooms had a stay of more than 12 hours. (See table 5.) While at City Airport, no children were held longer than 12 hours.

Location	0-8 hours	8-12 hours	12-18 hours	18-24 hours	24+ hours	Total
LHR TN2	375	70	34	15	4	498
LHR TN3	384	70	38	19	16	527
LHR TN4	147	37	11	15	8	218
LHR TN5	337	68	40	11	11	467
Cayley House	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1710</b>

**Table 5:** Length of Stay for children in the Heathrow holding rooms for February 2022 – January 2023

In Terminals 2, 3 and 4, there are separate family rooms situated directly beside the DCOs' offices. The rooms all have toilets and baby changing facilities for the sole use of the family room occupants. However, the rooms are small and sometimes have to accommodate two families. With no natural light, no fresh air and no space for running around, the Board considers that the holding rooms are unsuitable for the detention of children beyond the very briefest period.

In Terminal 5, the family room is a small, partitioned area within the main holding room. It is small and narrow, with a table so positioned that it is difficult for occupants to lie down to rest. It can only hold one family at a time. In addition, to use the toilets and baby-changing facilities the parents and children have to go into the main holding room, where adults are being detained, to use the facilities. One example:

- A mother and her 2-year-old child had stayed 26 hours 45 minutes in T5 family room and during our visit the mother took the child to the baby-changing facility, which is located in the adult holding room (13.10.22)

We repeat our recommendation from previous reports that improved facilities for children are urgently required in Terminal 5. At the time of writing this report, in March 2023, the Board has not been shown any progress, except that three project managers were appointed by HAL.

## **Toys and activities for children**

All the holding rooms have toys for younger children, DVDs and games for older children, books, colouring books, pens and crayons. The DCOs are responsible for keeping these clean and in good order.

We are able to report that during the year some new toys have been purchased and distributed across the holding rooms and new colouring books have been ordered. We advise that the presence and condition of the toys are regularly checked upon.

## **Complaint forms**

We were informed of only two complaints during this reporting year.

The complaints were about the following issues:

- the low temperature in the holding room (while DCOs could not control it)
- the behaviour of Border Force officers
- absence of mattresses
- lack of internet access
- no control over tv channels
- absence of Muslim showers

Both complainants received responses within the required time period. But we felt that there were a few issues with these replies:

- The tone of the replies – especially the letter written to one complainant which was very impersonal, technical and lacked compassion.

It is not the tone and wording which would be used in reply to a customer's complaint.

- Denying ownership – in reply to the first complainant C&C said that the temperature in the holding room was not their issue (but the airport's) and therefore the complaint was unsubstantiated.

All parties involved know that the temperature in the holding room is a problem, and not acknowledging this in a reply is unacceptable. Not taking ownership of this complaint shows a lack of intention to address complaints.

- No one has oversight of the full reply – the reply to the second complainant left out the complaint raised about the BF officers' behaviour. When we questioned the sender of the reply about the absence of this part of the reply, we were told that 'unfortunately, as Mitie and BF are two separate agencies, we would not normally respond to complaints jointly unless it was a contribution required as a response to a minor point in the complaint.'

The Board is of the opinion that a dedicated person or team should be appointed to oversee that all complaints are replied to in full, in one letter.

The Board is also concerned about the complaint form handling process. There is a lack of transparency about when complaint forms are collected and processed, as the example below shows:

- [Eaton House] The DCO told me that a Zambian woman had made a written complaint, and a BF immigration officer had taken the complaint out of the complaints box and had tried to email it to the email address that is on the HO complaint form. He came back to the DCO saying that he found out that this email address was no longer in use. The DCO told me that the BF immigration officer had said that he would try and find the right email to forward it to, but the DCO never heard anything back. (20.05.22)

This matter was then discussed at the IMB Board meeting in July. C&C acknowledged that there were clearly issues with communication around the complaints process, and we were told that they would look to resolve these quickly. Part of this was establishing what happened to the complaint of the Zambian national and reprinting all complaint forms with the correct email address.

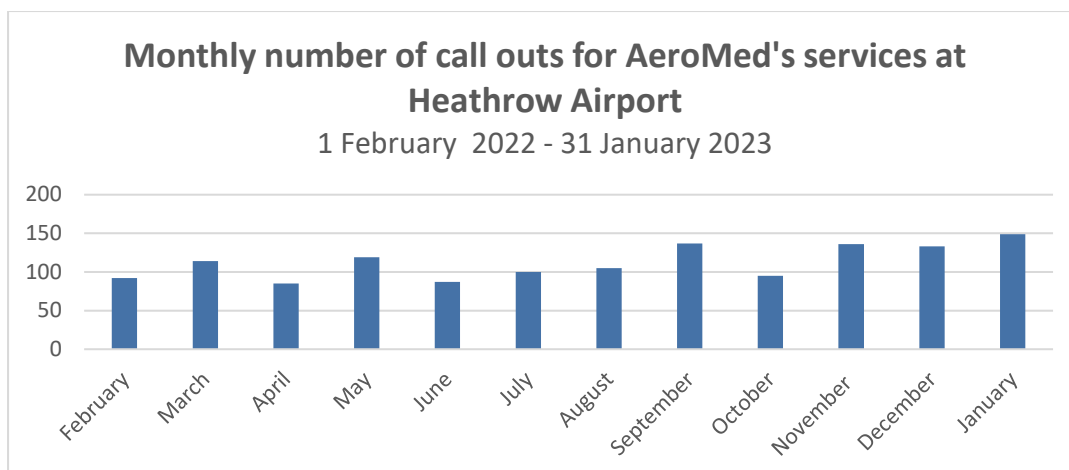
The Board never received any information about the complaint from the Zambian woman.

## **6 Health and wellbeing**

### **Access to medical assistance**

As of 1 February 2022, AeroMed has been contracted to provide a 24/7 paramedic presence, working from Cayley House. These paramedics assist with any medical issues in the Heathrow Airport holding rooms and immigration halls. The appointment of the AeroMed medic has been widely welcomed, and it appears to be working well. The Board has seen many examples of good outcomes.

The Board receives monthly updates on AeroMed. (See figure 2.) A total of 1352 people used their services during our reporting year. The majority of callouts were made to administer people's own medication.



**Figure 2:** Aeromed's callouts for Heathrow airport

London City Airport and Eaton house have no access to a service like AeroMed and rely on calling an ambulance service instead. A call out for an ambulance at City Airports is described below:

- Two sisters had arrived the previous day in the holding room, and the DCO explained that one of them appeared very unwell and was slumped in a wheelchair, unable to walk across the holding room, and he had refused to accept her into the care of C&C although the BF officers considered her to be well enough. The DCO said he conferred with his manager and called a paramedic who was unable to make a judgement on the spot, so an ambulance was called, and both women were taken to a hospital and returned the next day. The DCO said that the next day the woman who had appeared so unwell appeared to be better. They had a stay of just over 12 hours due to long waiting times for transport by Clearsprings. (06.08.22)

### **Aircraft fumes**

At City Airport, the smell of aircraft fumes penetrated into the holding rooms.

It was reported on many occasions:

- The DCOs confirmed that aircraft engine fumes were still an issue. They had been given a small electronic measuring device to assess air quality, but they suggested it was often inaccurate. (22.02.22)
- The DCOs noted that the issue of aircraft fumes was better, but at times the fumes were noticeable. I was conscious of the fumes in the holding room. (08.12.22)



## **7 London Heathrow Airport – escorted removals**

### **Safety**

#### **Use of Force**

Until recently, it was normal practice for a person being removed to be subject to a light guiding hold in an insecure area, such as from the van on the tarmac to board the aircraft, even when they had been totally cooperative. This was recorded as minimal use of restraint. The Board has welcomed the recent decision that the hold should only be used if supported by a risk assessment that this is necessary.

During the course of the year, there were only two observed removals where restraints were used. Both removals were cancelled. In one removal, the man was put in a waist restraint belt (WRB) in the passive position. (23.06.22) In the other removal the man was in a WRB in the restricted position, leg restraints were applied before boarding, and he was carried up the aircraft steps. His disruptive behaviour, shouting and struggling, resulted in the airline refusing to take him. (23.06.22)

### **Fair and humane treatment**

#### **Staff/detainee relationships**

The vast majority of removals went very smoothly because people seemed content to be going home, and there were good interactions between them and their escorts.

A typical comment is:

- This was a very smooth removal with the escorts working effectively to establish a friendly relationship with the person being removed.

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

During a number of removals involving Muslims, board members recorded arrangements being made to allow them to pray, either in the van or during the flight.

#### **Case management**

Administrative delays or mistakes have resulted in some removals being either cancelled or at risk of cancellation at the last minute.

Some examples are:

- The flight was missed at the departure gate because of late arrival of the necessary documents from the receiving country. (14.09.22)
- An error with paperwork by LHR Scheduled Returns Team resulted in the removal being cancelled. (20.09.22)

- A removal which almost did not go ahead because the destination country was incorrectly listed on the removal papers. It only went ahead because the lead escort persisted in pressing all parties to address the flawed paperwork. (09.08.22)
- Another removal almost failed because the returned person did not have his vaccination certificates. In the destination country, the escorts waited with the returnee until he got his test results. The HO accept that certificates should have been available prior to the flight. (07.01.23)

The Facilitated Return Scheme (FRS) payments were sometimes not well coordinated, which caused failed removals or disappointed detained persons. Some examples are:

- The lead escort then informed me that the removed person had tried to contact his solicitor because he was told at Brook House that he was entitled to FRS money. The lead escort had contacted different offices and Cayley House, but it appeared that he had applied for FRS only four days previously, and that was not timely enough to be processed. (11.04.22)
- The man talked about his disappointment with the FRS. He said he had applied for it in prison a while ago, and his removal two weeks ago had been cancelled as his FRS was not ready. Then he was informed that his FRS was ready for this removal, but today they could not find any correspondence records regarding his FRS. The lead escort was thankful to him for accepting to leave without causing any issues, despite the lack of the promised FRS. (15.10.22)

On some occasions, the escorts found ways to help.

- A man expecting an FRS payment card which did not materialise was given \$100 destitute payment instead. (11.04.22)

## 8 The work of the IMB

Every week a Board member made an unannounced visit to the holding rooms at Heathrow Airport to monitor the facilities and to talk to people in detention. In addition, roughly once every two weeks, an OSE removal was observed, and London City Airport, Eaton House and Becket House (until it closed) were visited once a month.

Reports were written after each monitoring visit and circulated to the Home Office, Border Force and C&C. The Board has appreciated the regular responses from all the stakeholders to the issues raised.

We welcomed six new members, who were recruited in the spring campaigns of 2021 and 2022. In addition, five long-standing members retired from the Board and we thank them all for their contributions.

<b>BOARD DATA</b>	
Recommended complement of Board members	12
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of members at the end of the reporting period	12
Total number of Board meetings in reporting period	12

<b>VISIT DATA</b>	Actual visits
London Heathrow Airport	
Holding rooms	52
Removals	22
London City Airport	12
Becket House	4
Eaton House	12
<b>Total number of visits</b>	<b>102</b>