



# **Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at the Kent Coast Short-Term Holding Facilities**

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

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# Contents

<b>Introductory sections 1 – 3</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Statutory role of the IMB	3
2. Description of the holding rooms	4
3. Executive summary	8
 <b>Evidence sections 4 – 7</b>	
4. Safety	16
5. Fair and humane treatment	18
6. Health and wellbeing	20
7. Preparation for removal, transfer or release	22
 <b>The work of the IMB</b>	 25
 <b>Annex A</b>	
Abbreviations of key terms	26

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## Introductory sections 1 – 3

### 1. Statutory role of the IMB

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

The Board conducts its work in line with the Short-Term Holding Facility (STHF) Rules 2018, 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 person, all immigration detention facilities and most records, at all times. IMB members can speak to detained persons outside of the hearing of officers. They must consider any complaint or request that a detained person wishes to make to them and make enquiries into the case of any detained person whose mental or physical health is likely to be injuriously affected by any conditions of detention. The IMB must inform the STHF manager about any matter that they consider requires their attention and report to the Secretary of State any matter about which they consider the Home Office needs to be aware.

The Board's duties also include the production of an annual report covering the treatment of detained persons and 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, detainees 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**

Kent Coast STHF IMB was renamed (from IMB Dover) in 2022, as it now monitors the Kent Intake Unit (KIU), Western Jet Foil (WJF), both situated in Dover, Manston (previously a Ministry of Defence training base), and Frontier House in Folkestone. Western Jet Foil is not part of the STHF, but we are granted equal access. WJF is a SOLAS (safety of life at sea) landside reception area. In the past, Frontier House, a Holding Room facility, in Folkestone, was originally used as an overspill for KIU, Dover. During 2024, it was reopened and used for mainly 'lorry drops', or for people brought in by Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) or other Border Force teams. The short-term holding facility in Frontier House is managed by Mitie Care & Custody Services (a private Ministry of Justice provider). Consequently, throughout this report, there will be subsections pertaining to the four establishments, individually.

### ***Western Jet Foil (WJF)***

Western Jet Foil is the point of entry after people are picked up at sea. It has its own pontoon landing, which makes the facility more compact. There are two sets of toilet blocks, in the form of portable toilet units. The odour of these improved during the reporting year. There is a 'red' tent for induction (see below). In addition, there are three isolation units, used when there is a need to isolate detained people, due to potential infectious diseases. These are smaller 'containers'. Two units have one window at the side, plus a table, chair and mat. Both windows can be opened. The third unit does not have a window and you could only get fresh air by leaving the door open, with an Interforce (a private security company) officer sitting outside (see section 5.1). After the 'red' tent, detained individuals move on to the 'processing hall'. This is where they are informed of their illegal status (see below). There are a couple of showers here, which are used, in the main, for individuals who have suffered acute chemical burns that urgently need irrigation. There is an additional portacabin, which is the emergency clinician's assessment area for arrivals needing emergency/urgent care in a clinical environment. This facility is stocked with appropriate medication, a 'point of care' blood-testing machine, an ultrasound scanner and a fully equipped resuscitation bay. At WJF, Medevent has a team of one bronze/two senior paramedics, three further pre-hospital staff and either one or two senior emergency specialist doctors, dependent on predicted numbers that day. Overnight, Medevent has four pre-hospital staff residents at WJF to triage/treat arrivals, with an on-call physician for support.

Food available includes sandwiches, rolls, crisps and fruit. Halal meat is served, which detained individuals are made aware of. Water is always available. There are two other 'office' cabins: 'bronze control', an IT facility linked to the Manston ops room, which provides live online information; and 'quartermaster', which looks after security procedures. Interforce provides the majority of security resourcing. From here, unaccompanied children are taken by minibus to the KIU in Dover, while other detained individuals are transported by coach to Manston.

When picked up at sea by Border Force or the RNLI, individuals are issued with blankets, as well as hats, gloves and hand warmers, plus bottled water. A barcoded band is attached to their wrist (which they keep on for their stay in Kent). It has a unique number and information about the boat they were on, which is helpful if a group of people need to be isolated due to infection. The barcode is also used for identifying their personal belongings, which are put into blue plastic bags at a later stage. If the detained people have fuel stains on their clothes, these are placed in yellow bags. On landing, they are ushered to the 'red' tent, where they are medically triaged, including being questioned about their age, any medical problems, past medical history and if they take medication, etc. They are provided with pictorial aids to help

Medevent understand if they have suffered chemical burns or have signs of an infectious disease. At this stage, their vital signs are taken, and BF is made aware if the Medevent team suspect a safeguarding issue. If, at triage, any significant medical issue is identified, these individuals are cohorted separately from the other arrivals from their boat and assessed in more depth by the medical team.

At this point, children are identified and processed more quickly. They are given a change of clothes, while their original clothes are placed in blue plastic bags, which they keep with them until the next stage. Clothing for babies, children, men and women is available, usually in the form of tracksuits and plimsols with Velcro fastenings, instead of laces. In the summer, flipflops are sometimes issued.

At all times, children, families and single women are separated from men. Children and families are processed first.

Once the detained people are in dry clothes, they move to the processing hall, where there are television screens showing information, in various languages, on subjects such as modern slavery. While in this area, the screens show information about how they have the option of, returning to their home countries. However, some people may not be literate so won't be able to understand what the screens are showing.

Detained individuals are asked their age again (pictorial aids, showing numbers, are again, available) and their photo is taken. They are given a pat-down body search, and their belongings are searched, too. The electronic wand is sometimes used. Mobile phones and other possessions are placed in the blue bag. If their clothes have been soiled by fuel, their yellow bags are checked outside the hall, to keep the hall free from the fumes. At this point, the blue bag is tied securely and a copy of their wrist band information is attached. The blue bag is kept separately, but they are given back to the detained individuals when they leave Manston.

Some IS91s are generated here. These are written forms that allow someone to be kept in immigration detention under the powers of the Immigration Act 1971. They are only generated at WJF for people not being transferred to Manston, such as for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) who are being transferred to KIU; for people with communicable disease cases who are moved to isolation facilities; for arrivals requiring further assessment at hospital; and for those for whom Manston is not suitable (including heavily pregnant women and people with significant disabilities). IS91s for everyone transferring to Manston will be completed in the arrivals area. The Bigword translation facility is available for the officers to use, or they sometimes use online translation services.

### ***Kent Intake Unit (KIU)***

Unaccompanied children are taken to the KIU, where the short-term holding facility is managed by Mitie Care & Custody (C&C). The Irregular Migration Intake Unit (IMIU) has offices upstairs, where they carry out welfare interviews with the children who have been detained. The entrance is where non-detained people stay while they are waiting to be transported to their next stage. There are 33 seats here and a further 10 available in the Refugee Council area, which could be a problem when there are larger numbers. The induction room has individual booths and can hold up to 30 people. These continue to have the translation phone facility and also access to The Bigword and other translation services. The main holding room can accommodate up to 85 people. The family holding room can accommodate 34 people. Both holding rooms operate a 'fish eye' CCTV system. There is a small, secluded area, which provides an outside space, and is covered by cameras. Mats and blankets are available if detained people need to sleep. Snacks are available at all times,

a machine provides a basic choice of hot drinks and microwaved meals are served. There is a comprehensive array of photos of the food. There are three showering facilities in the facility. One is situated in the family holding room and two are situated in the main holding room. There is a limited range of toys for young children, plus some reading material in English, which tend to include lots of pictures Games such as Jenga and dominoes are available and well used by children, and DVDs are available from staff. There is one medic on the site, who is managed by Aeromed (Mitie C&C uses Aeromed facilities). The Refugee Council staffs an area for bailed unaccompanied children 24/7. The area has three 'rest rooms', a quiet room and a facility for providing food and drink.

### **Manston**

The operations room (ops room) has a number of screens that monitor activity. As mentioned before, when people are picked up at sea, they have a wristband, with a unique number, attached to their wrist. This number is recorded at Manston. All the marquees and areas at WJF with doorways feature 'arches' that record the wristband information. Consequently, a detained person can be easily located when in WJF or Manston. Adjacent to the ops room is a site management room, which coordinates the activities of contractors and monitors detention.

During the reporting year, there have been various improvements on the Manston site. There are now 12 marquees, all with rigid walls. Mitie C&C continues to manage the marquees, while MTC oversees the barracks, which provides residential holding rooms (RHR).

The medical centre is in the 'Tempest' building, and the medical team is managed by Medevent. (There are three medical providers on site: Medevent, Aeromed and Complementary Medical Services/CMS). The Medevent team consists of a senior emergency department clinician, a duty bronze paramedic, two paramedics and three support staff. Emergency and urgent care is provided at the medical centre, which is within the 'scope of practice' of the Medevent team and facilities available. As with WJF, the team's remit is to reduce any unnecessary NHS secondary care burden. The facility has appropriately stocked medication cabinets, treatment rooms and a resuscitation suite. Medical-note keeping uses the EMIS digital system. Any straightforward medical needs can be overseen by Aeromed. There are eight cabins, which are used as isolation units Towards the end of the reporting year, the medical centre was being revamped, so that it now has isolation rooms upstairs and consultation rooms downstairs. This enables the medical team to better care for detained people.

'Barrack' buildings were converted into residential holding rooms (RHR): each floor has six rooms, with two beds and a washbasin in each. At the end of the corridor, there are showers, toilets and a recreational room, where there is a drinks machine, three or four seats and a TV. Each building has a secure outside area, which is accessible by detained individuals. The facility has residential space for up to 288 single men. Men used to have their meals in a marquee, which was set out as a dining room. However, meals are now served in their rooms. This makes it easier for staff and it also frees up the time of staff who would previously have had to accompany men to and from the dining room.

MTC also has its own induction marquee with interviewing booths. A small medical team is available here, managed by Complementary Medical Services (CMS).

All marquees and RHR areas are serviced by the catering firm OCS. Frozen food is delivered here, then defrosted and supplied to the rest of the campus. Mitie C&C and MTC staff are trained in the management of food in their area. Fresh fruit is available at all times. The menu

is decided by a Home Office team. All marquees now have a comprehensive folder on food ingredients and allergens, which can be shared with people who are detained.

On arrival at Manston, people are held in the seating area/marquee before being taken to the 'arrivals area' for biometric and further assessments. A separate area has been created for single women and families. From here, they are taken to the marquees. Their blue bags, which contain their personal belongings, are now stored in a secure room.

There are separate marquees for single adult men and family groups with children at Manston. Single women are housed in the family marquees. All the marquees have their own toilets and showers, plus a small 'prayer' room and a quiet area. The prayer room is equipped with religious books pertaining to the main religions. Prayer mats are also available. All staff have received training about Ramadan, and the Board have observed them being empathetic to needs of detained people during this time. Mats and blankets are available for those who need to sleep. Used linen is sent away to be laundered. Mats are easily washed down. There are TVs, board games, playing cards and toys for the children.

Snacks, fruits and water are available in all the marquees. Family marquees have additional access to milk, baby food and baby clothes. Child-feeding rooms have been updated to offer more privacy. Single-use feeding bottles with teats are available. Sanitary products are available in the toilets and are also included in their 'wash bags'. Each marquee also has a kitchen, with fridges and hot ovens for use by Mitie C&C staff only. A selection of hot food is sent to each marquee. Mobile phones are available for detained persons to use. These are provided by Mitie C&C staff. All marquees also have private phone booths with landlines, from which international calls can be made, without any cost to the detainee.

### ***Frontier House***

The facility has a holding room, with a capacity of 38, plus toilets, an observation room, an induction office and a medical room (where a medic can work when necessary). All arrivals to Frontier House receive an induction by Mitie C&C. There is a second waiting area in the building. By the end of the reporting year, this area was used for pre-induction, where non-inducted arrivals wait prior to their detention. Mitie C&C staff from KIU, in Dover, are brought in when needed.

At the beginning of the year, when Frontier House was reopened, people who had just been detained were held in vans while Mitie C&C staff carried out the induction process. This led to frustration by the teams, which mirrored the Board's view, in that it wasn't a satisfactory system.

### **3. Key points**

#### **3.1 Main findings**

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

During the reporting period, the number of individuals crossing the Channel was dictated by the weather. The Board was informed that there were no 'beach landings' reported during the reporting year.

In July, all four sites had an HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) inspection. On the whole, the HMIP report observed a marked improvement on the previous inspection. From July, several improvements have been made as a result of the HMIP report. The Board was contacted before the inspection and was also sent a copy of the draft report before publication.

In October, a visit by two members of the Board, accompanied by Border Force staff, was made to the Dunkirk, Coquelles and Calais sites, with a view to possible monitoring taking place by the Kent Coast STHF IMB Board.

##### **Safety**

Western jet Foil (WJF): In the Board's view, this can be considered the least safe of the four establishments, as it can be viewed by the public from the cliffs and it is also in the working area of Dover Western Docks. That said, WJF is not a short-term holding facility (STHF) so is not subject to the same requirements as Manston, KIU and Frontier House. WJF is a SOLAS landside reception area. CCTV is in operation, which has greatly improved security.

Kent Intake Unit (KIU): This building is behind a high fence and has security gates. The Board is concerned that induction interviews are not held privately. However, welfare interviews, which take place slightly later and are used to identify vulnerabilities or safeguarding issues, are held in private rooms.

Manston: this is a large former Ministry of Defence site so is adequately fenced around the perimeter. The security here is monitored by Mitie C&C, which also uses guard dogs. The interviewing process has improved since our last report, with more space between detained people who are waiting and those who are being assessed.

Frontier House: The holding room has no access to the outside, so can be classified, in the Board's view, as safe. The main entrance to the building has Mitie security staff on duty.

All sites have CCTV, which is monitored by staff in the various offices/observation rooms. When we spoke to some detained people, they said they felt safe. During the reporting period, there were no reported assaults or self-harming incidents on any of the premises.

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

Whenever the Board has visited, staff have been observed to be courteous, empathetic and, often, attentive to the needs of those who have been detained. WJF has improved the system of making sure that those who are detained are given dry clothes and something to eat (they are given water at pick-up point). In the main, they get a food bag after they have been processed. But if someone indicates that they are hungry, they are given something to eat immediately.

A new digital system of photographing detained people was established in March 2024. This meant that digital photos of those on IS91s could be printed straight after their arrival, which resulted in faster flow through of initial scribe processes at WJF. At the same time, the



scribe/arrest desks were changed and increased to four workstations to improve flow. At Manston, all IS91s forms and paperwork are electronically generated and printed.

The implementation of the new Detainee Management System, by Mitie C&C, at Manston, has streamlined operations and appears to have improved the accuracy and accessibility of information. Key benefits have included faster and clearer access to important information about a detained person, such as allergies and vulnerable adult warning forms; and enhanced monitoring of at-risk individuals through suicide and self-harm warning forms. This system promotes better communication among staff and ensures timely interventions for those in need of additional support.

Officers' Mess is a new building for conducting in-person screening interviews, with some additional capability for remote interviews. There are separate waiting areas for single adult males (SAMs), single adult females (SAFs) and families. There is a facility for children to be looked after by a member of staff, in the case of lone parents, so that the child cannot hear what could be distressing accounts being conveyed.

The movement of detained individuals to interviews or the medical centre has been shifted to one supplier, ensuring the flow of residents through the system is more efficient and provides better care.

### **Health and wellbeing**

All four sites have trained medical staff available. If there is a medical issue at Frontier House, the medic from KIU is sent to Folkestone. At WJF, arrivals receive a medical triage and are immediately treated if significantly unwell. If they have a condition, such as scabies, for example, they are isolated and treated with permethrin cream (a second dose of cream is supplied by the Medevent clinician to use in a week's time, which reduces future NHS burden). Cases of diphtheria seem to have fallen during the reporting year, but this condition would be quickly picked up on induction at the 'red tent' check-up and treated by the Medevent team. Those who are suspected of having diphtheria are, most commonly, dispersed to a hotel that has a dedicated medical team, to which the Medevent team hands care over.

During the year, WJF reorganised the processes in the red tent. With the onset of cold weather, as soon as the migrants were landed, they were offered dry clothes to change into, then triaged. Previously, it was the other way round, as in, they were triaged, then offered a change of clothes.

In cases of significant hypothermia, the Medevent team is able to treat 3-4 patients at one time. If numbers of affected individuals are beyond capacity of the Medevent team, additional support would be requested from SECamb. Initial treatment includes removing wet clothes, putting on dry clothes and, potentially, resuscitation with warm intravenous fluids and bair-hugger external warming.

### **Preparation for removal, transfer or release**

The vast majority of people who completed the process at Manston were considered 'dispersals' (a term used in Government policy to house those seeking asylum in various local authorities across the country). In the main, detained individuals are not in Manston for more than 24 hours. When Mitie C&C staff are informed that people are being moved out of the Kent area, detained individuals are collected and their belongings made available. When observed by the Board, this was carried out in an orderly and empathetic manner. There have been some instances when their blue bags were not with them, but these were

forwarded. ('Removals' is a specific term used for a very small cohort of people who are transferred to an immigration removal centre for removal from the UK.)

Detained individuals still appear to be at a loss about the exact procedures. The Board finds it difficult to understand why it is not possible for them to know where they will be taken to and for how long.

In the course of the reporting year, efforts to improve this 'dispersing' process were set in place. Detained individuals transported from marquees 8 and 9 has led to better organisation and reduced overcrowding. These changes contributed to a calmer and more structured environment for detained people and reduced stress for staff, in the Board's view.

### **3.2 Recommendations**

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

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

- The Board has observed that detained people are still in need of information about their 'process journey'. We continue to note that the welfare of detained individuals has been sometimes adversely affected by their lack of understanding about where they are being taken. The Board understands that work has begun to address this issue, but we are disappointed about the length of time it is taking to solve this problem.
- The Board has been informed that unaccompanied children should not go through an initial age decision interview during night hours, unless in exceptional circumstances. This results in some individuals resting on wooden benches overnight. The Board has requested, for several months, that mats should be provided for them to sleep on. The Board has also requested that the advice given to allow for resting before interview if arrivals after 10pm is revisited, as arrivals in the morning have often been many hours overnight on a small boat with no sleep and are interviewed straight away.
- The Board recommends that detained people should continue not to be held at Manston for longer than 24 hours. And at the RHR facility, they should continue not be there for more than 96 hours.
- Work with Mitie Care & Custody teams to get repairs done promptly and quicker.

#### ***TO UK BORDER FORCE/HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT***

- The Board recommends that there should be visual information on the screens instead of it just being in a written format. In addition, detained people should have access to visual aids to help them when they are being interviewed.
- We recommend that children should be rested before being interviewed and that BF/HOIE does not carry out welfare interviews with children at KIU in the middle of the night. In addition, sleep mats should be provided for those who have to spend the night at WJF.
- That SBOC's positive engagement with the Board continues and that senior personnel maintain their attendance at the monthly Board meetings.

#### ***TO THE DETENTION CONTRACTOR***

- We recommend that the contractor liaises with Border Force to ensure that the cleaning contract for KIU, Manston marquees and Frontier House has consistent high levels of service.

- In addition, we recommend that the contractors work with Home Office/Border Force to get repairs done promptly and faster.
- That your constructive engagement with the Board continues and that senior personnel maintain attendance at the monthly Board meetings.

### 3.3 Progress since the previous report (2023)

Issue raised	Response given	Progress
<b>To the Minister</b>		
1. Detained people should be given information of their 'process journey'. The Board continues to note that the welfare of detained people has been adversely affected by a lack of understanding of where they are being taken. We understand that work has begun to address this issue, but we are disappointed as to the length of time that it has taken to solve this problem.	<p>The HO continues to monitor and progress communications and engagement with small boat arrivals. Progress continues, including the displays in holding rooms, which have been further enhanced to ensure the wordings (displayed in the top 10 languages of arrivals), are succinct and provide key process information in its simplest format, including timeframes, rights and process information. We will continue to track the most appropriate languages to be displayed, based on our arrival data and review regularly.</p> <p>In relation to dispersal arrangements after the screening interview, service users are advised verbally, with the use of an interpreter, of the next steps after bail. This includes onward coach transfer to (hotel) accommodation; that they have been granted immigration bail; that employment is restricted; and that they remain liable for detention (whilst on bail). Communication engagement work is currently underway to support residents who may be dispersed before screening interviews are concluded.</p>	The Board feels this still needs to be addressed.
2. The Board recommends that detained people should not be held at Manston for longer than 24 hours and continue not to have	Under the Short-Term Holding Facility Rules 2018, detained persons in holding rooms can be held for up to 24 hours, and 96 hours in residential holding rooms, unless an extension is agreed in	N/A

detentions longer than 96 hours in an RHR.	exceptional circumstances. Border Force always ensures that the length of detention is kept to a minimum and for the shortest time possible, prioritising children and the vulnerable.	
3. Have visual information on the screens and for interviewing instead of just written format.	Pictorial references are already used to communicate basic information about the process being undertaken at any given time at WJF, accompanied by written information in the most common languages. The cycle of information on the screens at WJF is limited, but the system is predicated on flow and onward travel to Manston STHF at the earliest opportunity. Home Office staff do have access to online translator services, while in-person translators are available at Manston during the immigration processing.	The Board still feels that more work is needed in this area.
4. We recommend that work towards regaining/having access to the European security system (which was available before 'Brexit') to help Border Force teams when assessing suitability (in terms of criminal events) of detained persons.	<p>It is unclear the context under which this recommendation has been made by the Kent Coast STHF IMB, as the annual report does not detail any specific findings that inform such a recommendation.</p> <p>Following the UK's departure from the EU and the end of the transition period in December 2020, the UK disconnected from the EU SIS II system (Schengen Information System, generation 2). The UK had been a participant in SIS II since April 2015. The UK returned to using Interpol for systematic exchanges of alerts with law enforcement agencies in the EU. Interpol is a tried and tested mechanism for alert exchange, which the UK already used for cooperation with rest of the world partners and which the UK used with EU member states before joining SIS II. Interpol data, specifically Stolen and Lost Travel</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>The Board accepts this comment.</p>

	<p>Documents and nominal data, is routinely available to Border Force teams.</p> <p>The Government made a manifesto commitment to ‘<i>Seek a new security agreement with the EU to ensure access to real-time intelligence...</i>’ in the context of a new Security Agreement with the EU.</p>	
<b>To the UK Border Force/Home Office Immigration Enforcement</b>		
5. Have more consistent representatives at our monthly Board meetings from IMIU.	A representative is sent from Manston/KIU on a monthly basis.	Much improved over 2024.
6. Request that SBOC’s positive engagement with the Board continues and that senior personnel maintain their attendance at the monthly board meetings	SBOC teams (and contracted custodial partners) will continue to be represented at monthly Board meetings and are committed to working collaboratively to resolve any matters relating to the provision of safe and secure services and facilities for small boat arrivals. SBOC is keen to ensure that our partnership engagement remains positive, open, and honest so we can continue to protect and safeguard people in our care.	Ongoing. Board accepted.
7. Recommend that Board Members are given some form of personal safety training.	It is not considered that WJF and Manston STHF pose an enhanced risk to IMB members during their visits, in comparison with other establishments. IMB members are encouraged to report to Home Office staff at each location so they can be made aware of any safety issues. At the pre-search areas at WJF, IMB members are required to wear body armour when there are arrivals in this area. This is in line with a site-specific risk assessment for all staff, contractors and visitors, but this will be kept under review in line with risk	Ongoing. Board accepted.

	assessments.	
<b><i>To the detention contractor</i></b>		
8. Ensure that the cleaning contractor for the KIU and Manston marquees provide consistently high levels of service.	Standards of cleaning at the KIU are carefully monitored. At Manston, there are consistently high levels of service provided, with a good system in place to review when there are increased arrivals to ensure the frequency of cleaning is right. Performance is reviewed at monthly governance meetings to ensure the levels of service being provided are in keeping with contract service levels.	Ongoing.  Still needs better coordination.
9. Request that contractors work with the Home Office to get repairs completed promptly and quickly.	There is a process in place to ensure repairs are completed promptly, with good oversight by both the SMR and the estates team. Whilst the report refers to issues with the showers at KIU, this is not correct. The showers do not flood as a result of a fault but rather when a shower is left on.	Ongoing.  Repairs continue to take time to be carried out.
10. Try to make induction booths more private, so detained people can feel at ease answering personal questions.	<p><b>KIU:</b> Privacy of all small boat arrivals at the KIU is taken very seriously. Personal identity questions are asked at the induction booth, but any personal questions are asked later on in the process in private as part of a welfare check.</p> <p><b>Manston:</b> The induction booths at Manston are managed by a Home Office contracted custodial supplier. After a recent refurbishment in 2023, these provide separation from other residents during the induction process, focusing on ensuring privacy and dignity. There are, however, additional private room/spaces available in the induction area and in the holding rooms, which enable a more in-depth induction if required, or where a resident has expressed</p>	Completed.

	additional privacy for personal or compassionate reasons. The induction booths remain fit for purpose, with no plans for any additional enhancements to the current induction area or induction booths. The HO will, however, keep this recommendation under review.	
11. Ensure that the Board receives the safer detention and security reports, as required.	Due to the uniqueness of Manston Short-Term Holding Facility, the safer detention and security reports, usually provided by the main SBOC custodial supplier, are being re-introduced and will be shared on a regular basis. SBOC Landside Operations also share a data information report, covering safeguarding/vulnerability and security, at the monthly board meeting with the IMB.	Ongoing.  Reports have been received more regularly.
12. Request that their constructive engagement with the Board continues and that senior personnel maintain attendance at the monthly Board meetings.	SBOC teams (and contracted custodial partners) will continue to be represented at monthly Board meetings and are committed to working collaboratively to resolve any matter relating to the provision of a safe and secure services and facilities for small boat arrivals. SBOC is keen to ensure that our partnership engagement remains positive, open and honest, so we can protect and safeguard people in our care and deliver suitable services.	Ongoing.

## **Evidence sections 4–7**

### **4. Safety**

#### **4.1 Reception**

##### ***Western Jet Foil***

On arrival, detained individuals have their temperature and blood pressure taken and are asked about their age. Anyone who is identified as a child, as well as families and single women, are processed quickly to help ensure their safety. The wristbands aid safety and security.

Multiple TV screens were fitted in the holding areas in WJF to display information about some of the processing procedures in several languages, so that those who can read know what to expect when they are called forward to officers. Despite this, the Board noted that many arrivals, whilst cooperating with all staff, seemed to be confused during this process, possibly because they were unable to read or because information was not displayed in their language. The Board believes it would be useful to have pictorial formats.

All staff and Board members need security passes to access these areas (and not just WJF, but all areas of the STHFs). All SBOC and Interforce staff, as well as Board members, wear stab vests, as new arrivals have not yet been searched until the processing hall. (In the red tent area, those who have been detained are given a rudimentary search.) Stab vests are provided on arrival at Bronze Control.

##### ***Kent Intake Unit***

As well as small-boat Channel crossing arrivals, some individuals processed through the KIU are also picked up from the port, having arrived in distribution lorries and freight lanes.

During monitoring visits, Board members were concerned at the lack of privacy when detained people were being asked if they had been involved with modern day slavery. Even with the use of translators, how are these questions put across? Also, when detained individuals were asked about their general health and mental health, there was not much privacy, which the Board is concerned about, especially as these are, in the main, children.

##### ***Manston***

On arrival at Manston, detained people have their fingerprints taken and further questioning is carried out by Home Office and Border Force staff. Following interviews, they are held in marquees managed by Mitie Care & Custody, where they are, once again, questioned about health issues. Mitie C&C asks general health questions, but there is still not enough privacy, as mentioned above. Property is also checked by Mitie C&C staff and secured in safe rooms (the blue bag is returned to detained individuals when they leave Manston).

#### **4.2 Suicide, self-harm, deaths in custody**

There were no reports of suicides, self-harm or deaths in custody in the reporting year.

#### **4.3 Violence and violence reduction**

The Board has not been made aware of any violence during the reporting year. In the main, there is very little violence in any of the four establishments.



#### **4.4 Security**

From the Board's observations, security on all four sites seems robust. Interforce provides security at WJF. In April 2024, Mitie C&C took over responsibility for security at Manston, with operations no longer governed by SIA regulations. Prior to this, Mitie SIA provided perimeter security at Manston, with detention security provided by Mitie C&C and MTC. When there are arrivals at WJF, KIU and Manston, a large number of Border Force, IMIU and C&C personnel are usually present. Increasingly, there has also been a police presence. The Board has also observed the police in interviews and when talking to detained people in the processing hall at WJF.

##### ***Western Jet Foil***

As referenced earlier, the outer perimeter is more secure and there is CCTV on site. Pat down and clothing searches are completed as part of the induction process at WJF, inside the main processing hall. When the detained individual person changes into dry clothes, their belongings are put in a blue bag, which is more thoroughly searched in the main processing hall. The bag is then sealed with their unique identity number.

##### ***Kent Intake Unit and Manston***

When people are moved to KIU and Manston, Mitie C&C carry out their own searches. Once again, the blue bags are centrally stored securely. MTC at Manston carries out its own induction, too (for those who are transferred to the residential holding room/RHR).

#### **4.5 Vulnerable adults, safeguarding**

When staff identify any safeguarding issues, this information is passed on to the IMIU team. During their stay at KIU, Manston and Frontier House, Mitie C&C staff carry out wellbeing checks. The enhanced CCTV helps with safeguarding.

The Board has a representative who observes meetings by the safeguarding team, which not only includes the agencies on site, but a wider circle, such as Kent County Council (KCC).

#### **4.6 Use of force**

The HIMP Inspection referred to two incidents at WJF and three at Manston during the first half of the reporting year. A Care & Custody officer was subsequently dismissed. When this was brought up with the management, we were informed that we should have been notified and that we will be informed in future.

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

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

Please see section 2 for description of the accommodation provided.

#### ***Western Jet Foil***

Arrivals are given track-suit style clothes, as well as plimsoles, as soon as they are landed at WJF. This changes as the weather turned colder, when they are then given warm jackets, plus hand warmers. Nappies and other such items for babies are available.

With the electronic facilities, it is easier to plan eating arrangements at WJF. Food is sent from the catering department at Manston. The sandwiches offered are either with a salad or chicken filling. All meat is halal and notices provide this information to those who are detained.

When the Board was able to check, there were always sanitary products in the toilets.

The Board believes that the isolation units at WJF are inadequate, inappropriate and unsatisfactory. However, the Board has been informed on several occasions that, according to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the isolation units are acceptable. Even so, the HMIP report stated that *'The regularly used Western Jet Foil isolation units were bleak'*.

During the year, the isolation units have been moved to a more suitable location, with an opening window. They now have two wooden benches and blankets, plus a fan or heater, depending on the weather. However, the Board is concerned about the hygiene of the wooden benches, as we are not sure that they are easy to disinfect.

#### ***Kent Intake Unit***

Hot, microwaved rice or pasta dishes are available for new arrivals; and baby food is also available at all times at all four sites-

It has been noted by Board members that social workers are available from Kent County Council to collect and transfer unaccompanied children to accommodation anytime in a 24-hour period, including the middle of the night. However, this practice seems to deprive children of rest.

There are showers at the KIU, and arrivals are each provided with a bag containing washing products, with those for women including sanitary items. The showers have a low-level tap to facilitate the washing of feet for religious purposes. Over several ~~many~~ months in the reporting year, the showers were prone to flooding, due to the angle of the flow towards the waste pipe, with water seeping into the induction room. Repairs were slow and inadequate, with the showers often out of use. The Board understands that the issue with repairs appears to be due to the Home Office being slow in giving the go-ahead.

#### ***Manston***

Detained people sleep on floor mats. When the facility is busy, there is often no floor space to be seen in the marquees, with individuals sleeping in close proximity.

All marquees at Manston have showers and toilets. The toilets in the family marquees are stocked with sanitary products and nappies are available. There were instances during the reporting year when Board members felt that the bathroom facilities should have been cleaned more than twice a day, especially when it was very busy. This was addressed and Mitie C&C staff were observed trying to keep marquees tidy by doing the cleaning themselves. But there were times when the facilities needed cleaning.

The barracks have a recreational room to facilitate the 12 detained men on each corridor. However, this room only had 3-4 chairs, which is inadequate for 12 people.

### **Relationships between staff and detained people**

During our monitoring visits, staff appeared to have an empathetic, attentive and caring relationship with detained individuals. When we observed interactions between staff and families, we saw staff taking an active interest in what the children were doing.

### **Children and families**

#### ***Western Jet Foil***

New arrivals were separated, with families, women and those identified as unaccompanied children being kept at the front of the induction areas. After the induction process, they were held separately, with unaccompanied children then sent to the KIU. Families were generally sent to Manston. They were moved as a matter of priority.

The Board has asked to be able to observe age assessment interviews, with permission granted to the Chair of the IMB. However, this is yet to be carried out.

In the last few months of the reporting period, the Board asked for mats to be made available in the area so that detained people could rest if they have to wait overnight. (See KIU note, below.) In June, new comfortable seating was installed, with upgraded toys, a TV and books, etc, for entertainment.

#### ***Kent Intake Unit***

As previously stated, children are placed at KIU. The family room is used for lone single women if required. Very young, unaccompanied children are placed with the Refugee Council, or in the family room.

The HMIP Report states: *"It was good that, since March 2024, unaccompanied children were no longer held with adults in the KIU Dover. Unlike adults at Manston, they were still, however, woken at night for a welfare interview. Some interviews took place without an appropriate adult and some interview records suggested safeguarding issues were not sufficiently explored. Our review of cases suggested that safeguarding referrals were not always made when necessary."*

It has been noted by Board members that social workers are available from Kent Count Council to collect and transfer unaccompanied children to accommodation anytime in a 24-hour period including the middle of the night. This practice also seems to deprive children of rest.

#### ***Manston***

Families and single women were housed separately, in different marquees, from single men at Manston.

### **Property**

#### ***Western Jet Foil***

In May, search desks were changed and the area reconfigured. This included the installation of 18 search stations, a private search bay with pull-around curtains, and significant CCTV enhancements to ensure full coverage of the area, and from all angles, for the benefit of staff and arrivals. CCTV enhancements were also made to the outside search area and the isolation process room.

## **6. Health and wellbeing**

### **6.1 Healthcare general**

During the reporting year, medical staff were provided by Aeromed and Medevent, and Complementary Medical Services (CMS) across all the four sites.

#### ***Western Jet Foil***

There is usually a team of 4-5 Medevent officers, which includes 1-2 doctors and a paramedic, on site. There is a cabin, where consultations and examinations can be conducted in privacy.

The electronic management information system (EMIS) is used among the medical teams. When a detained person needs medical attention, a green band is attached to their wrist. Treatment depends on their ailment. The Board has observed staff frequently checking those with green bands across the sites.

Family members are given a pink band for attaching to their wrists so that families can be kept and processed together. Once again, the Board has observed staff checking on this at various points.

Towards the end of the reporting year, as a result of the Board's requests, we have started monitoring the isolation units at WJF.

#### ***Kent Intake Unit***

Aeromed are available 24/7 for attend to medical issues at the KIU.

#### ***Manston***

If a detained person in one of the marquees needs to see a healthcare professional, they are either escorted to the medical building or the medical team visits the marquee. When there are large numbers on site, the medical team visits the marquees to check that all is well.

### **6.2 Physical healthcare**

***Western Jet Foil*** This has been covered above.

#### ***Kent Intake Unit***

The HMIP report stated: *'The isolation facilities remained inadequate and the identified room at KIU Dover was still used as a storage area, but we were told that a mobile storage unit could be removed quickly if the facilities were required. We were told that children who were suspected of having scabies were freely mixing with others.'*

#### ***Manston***

The Board observed staff being vigilant in ensuring that those detained were as comfortable as they could be, despite the conditions on some occasions. If a detained person indicated that there were unwell, they were accompanied to the medical centre.

### **6.3 Mental healthcare**

There were no issues observed or reported during monitoring visits. On the whole, detained people do not stay more than 24 hours at Manston. (Except if they are moved to the RHR facility, then, too, they have not been known to be there for more than 96 hours.)

#### **6.4 Soft skills**

The Board has observed the efforts made by staff to help keep detained people occupied in these settings. Most areas have access to outside space, even if it is small. The barracks (RHR) has a fenced outside area. The marquees have TVs.

## **7. Removal, transfer or release**

### **7.1 General**

As in our previous report (2023), we are concerned about the lack of information detained people have about how long they will be staying at Manston. When they are moved on, Mitie C&C is not always able to inform them about where they are going, as staff are only told who to get ready for movement.

### **7.2 Length of detention**

**For the reporting year, 2024.**

#### **Small Boats Operational Command (SBOC) data**

- Total number of arrivals at WJF: 36816
- Gender: male, 26999; female, 3565; unknown, 1
- Number of families: over 1,700 families arrived at WJF
- Those aged 17 years and under: male, 3752; female, 1042

#### **No. of Manston residents**

- Approximately 33,000 individuals arrived at Manston

#### **Longest stay in Manston**

- Included in the Irregular Migration Intake Unit (IMIU) data response (below)

#### **No. in RHR**

- Approximately 5% of Manston arrivals admitted into RHR

#### **Family detention times: shortest /longest /average**

- Approximately 75 family groups were detained over 24 hours.

#### **Top four nationalities**

- Afghanistan: 5919
- Syria: 4630
- Iran: 4158
- Vietnam: 3602

#### **Irregular Migration Intake Unit (IMIU) data**

##### **Lorry drops**

##### **KIU**

**Dover (UASC):** approx 230

##### **KIU**

**Folkestone:** approx 550

##### **Small boat arrivals:**

##### **KIU Dover only**

**Small boats:** approx 2600

**Manston: small boats only:** included in the SBOC data  
**Numbers forwarded for safeguarding & the National Referral Mechanism (NRM):**

**KIU: arrivals referred to NRM:**

**KIU Dover:** approx 270

**KIU Folkstone:** approx 40

**KIU - Safeguarding referrals:**

**KIU Dover:** approx 450

**KIU Folkestone:** approx 50

**Manston - Arrivals referred to NRM:** over 2000

**Manston - Safeguarding Referred:** over 4000

**KIU Folkestone/Frontier House: individuals detained over 24 hour (adults)**

Less than 3% of individuals at KIU Folkestone/Frontier House

**KIU: individuals detained for over 24 hours (UASCs)**

Less than 0.1% of individuals at KIU

**Manston: length of stay (more than 24 hours)**

Approximately 8% of arrivals in Manston

*Figures provided by Scrutiny Oversight Team (SBOC, Custody & Detention)*

The HIMP Report stated: “*Detainees could be held for several hours in Western Jet Foil and no record was kept before completion of detention paperwork in Manston and KIU Dover. All detainees in these facilities were therefore held for longer than records indicated*”.

The response to this was that WJF is not part of the STHF. WJF is a SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) landside reception area.

On the whole, most assessments at Manston have been completed within the 24-hour window. Those men needing more time are transferred to the RHR area. Here, too, processing has usually been completed withing the 96-hour limit.

## Mitie Care & Custody figures

Location	Resident admitted into country - from holding area	Resident handed to escort /detention - from holding area	Moved to detention - from holding area	Border Force custody	Hospital/ medical release	Immigration bail
Kent intake Unit	2901	61	1	0	0	0
Frontier House	616	180	0	0	0	0
Manston	9240	2242	56	4	4	22258

Location	Immigration enforcement custody	Police custody	Border Force custody (Nov & Dec)
Kent intake Unit	0	0	0
Frontier House	0	0	0
Manston	13	64	4

From June, the DMS system recorded more than the first three columns above. *Figures provided by Business Intelligence Performance Lead, Escorting Services, Care & Custody – a Mitie company.*

### 7.3 Family contact

The Board has observed that there is access to phone calls and that officers make the phone available for detained people's use. If there are several requests for the phone, Mitie C&C staff appear to manage this well. Mobile phones are made available and all detainees have phone booths with landlines. When being processed at WJF, it has been observed that detainees can make a note of phone numbers before putting their mobiles in the blue bags.

### 7.4 Transfer or release

The Board has observed that interviews are sometimes delayed if individuals are asleep. They were left to sleep, then interviewed, although this sometimes took the detained person over the 24-hour limit.



## 8. The work of the IMB

Every week, a Board member makes an unannounced visit to the holding rooms at all four establishments, to monitor the facilities and talk to those who have been detained. Reports are written after each monitoring visit and circulated to the Home Office, SBOC, IMIU, Border Force and Mitie C&C. The Board has appreciated the regular responses from all the stakeholders to the issues raised.

### Board statistics

Recommended complement of Board members	10
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	9
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	8
Total number of visits to establishment(s)	104 (2 members visiting Dover and Manston each week)

## **Annex A**

### **Abbreviations of key terms**

- BF: Border Force
- BRS: Biometric Recording System.
- C&C: Care and Custody, part of Mitie.
- CMS: Complementary Medical Services
- EMIS Health: Electronic Management Information System: formerly Egton Medical Information Systems (EMIS)
- ICE: In Country Escort
- IMIU: Irregular Migration Intake Unit
- KIU: Kent Intake Unit, Channel View, Dover
- MTC: Management & Training Corporation
- RHR: Residential Holding Room
- SAF/SAM: Single Adult Female/Male
- SBOC: Small Boats Operation Command, Manston
- SOLAS: Safety of Life at Sea
- STHF: Short Term Holding Facility.
- WJF: Western Jet Foil, Western Docks, Dover
- UASC: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- UKHSA- UK Health Security Agency



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