

Ref	Recommendation / Issue / Concern	Accepted / Partially Accepted / Not Accepted	Comments	Progress Ongoing or completed
TO THE MINISTER				
1.	<p>It is neither fair nor humane to subject people being removed from the country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to a process for their delivery to the airport, which always takes place through the night, to meet an arrival timetable HOIE has agreed with the overseas authorities and (as part of this process) to hours of confinement in vehicles to reach departure airports selected by HOIE. <p>A fairer and more humane approach should be adopted.</p>	Not accepted	<p>The scheduling of charter flight departures must account for various considerations, including the preferred arrival times stipulated by receiving countries. These preferences are shaped by factors such as the need to avoid peak arrival periods and to ensure the availability of adequate official and support staff for efficient processing upon landing. Morning arrivals offer particular advantages, as they facilitate onward travel during daylight hours for those being returned.</p> <p>To enhance delivery reliability, we operate from multiple airports to reduce risk and avoid dependence on a single location. We regularly review our airport portfolio and engage with new airport operators whenever better options emerge for charter operations, considering factors like proximity to IRCs and optimal operating conditions.</p> <p>Immigration Enforcement strives to take a fair and humane approach, coupled with balancing the wellbeing, welfare and safety to return those who have no lawful right to remain in the United Kingdom and Foreign National Offenders who have committed criminal offences.</p>	
TO HOIE				
2.	<p>The processes used to identify interpretation needs are unreliable and should be improved. Consideration should be given to having translators on all operations, including ones where it might be considered most of the returnees might speak English.</p>	Not accepted	<p>The requirement for interpreting assistance is communicated to Returns Logistic (RL) Charters by the case owner when an individual case is referred for charter removal. This need is determined using information from Home Office systems and prior interactions with the individuals being returned. After an individual has been inducted at an IRC, staff are expected to notify RL Charters if an interpreting need is identified during induction that was not previously flagged, or to withdraw the request if the induction determines that the individual's English proficiency is sufficient for the removal process.</p> <p>Following the CFMT IMB 2024 annual report, the Home Office agreed to take steps to improve interpreter services on charter flights. Since September 2025 more interpreters are be requested for charter flight operations, with the objective of having an interpreter at each IRC and STHF where individuals being returned are collected for a flight.</p> <p>Interpreters are not civil servants directly employed by the Home Office and therefore have the autonomy to select assignments according to their preference. Charter work is generally less favoured among interpreters due to its extended and often irregular hours, as well as required travel. To encourage participation in charter flight assignments, interpreters receive an additional fixed payment on top of standard fees.</p>	

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3.	In the Board's view, the risk assessments should be written in such a way to ensure clarity, avoiding, for example, too many acronyms. This would mean that the document could be easily understood by escorting staff and observers.	Not accepted	The board was asked to clarify which risk assessments the recommendation applied to and confirmed that it pertains to assessments given to escorts involved in the operation. Escorting staff are trained to understand risk assessments and our contracted service provider have confirmed that there have been no issues identified with understanding acronyms. Observers seeking additional information regarding risk assessments during operations are advised to consult the coach commander for further clarification.	
4.	The use of single aisle aircraft presents a challenge to both the Chief Immigration Officer (CIO, a Immigration Enforcement representative who travels on flights) and the returnees wishing to speak with the CIO. On occasion, the CIO is unable to talk to everyone because aisles are blocked for (flight) operational reasons. Consideration should be given as to how the CIO's 'surgery' could best be carried out so that all returnees are given an opportunity to meet with the CIO.	Not accepted	The type of aircraft selected for Home Office short haul charter flights is regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the current level/rate of returns required by the department. Currently this need is met using single aisle aircraft for these flights. There is a significant price increase between single and twin aisle aircraft, therefore making best use of public funds when procuring these aircraft is another factor taken into consideration. Furthermore, due to ongoing construction work on the infrastructure at Tirana airport, twin aisle aircraft are unable to operate into the airport which currently prevents the use of these aircraft for this destination.	
TO HOIE AND TO THE ESCORTING CONTRACTOR				
5.	The length of time returnees are held in coaches, before the road journey to the selected airport even begins, is another long-standing concern of the CFMT. These long periods of confinement have continued and should be reduced.	Not Accepted	<p>Reducing coach waiting times remains operationally challenging due to the geographic locations of our centres and departure airports. We acknowledge the impact extended waiting times can have on individual wellbeing and take steps to mitigate this by providing recreational packs to all people being returned.</p> <p>To further reduce delays and in response to this recommendation in previous reports, we implemented the deployment of advance parties to prepare documentation and property ahead of time, helping to streamline the collection process. Additionally, we have developed a tracking process to monitor coach waiting times, identify trends, and investigate any outliers, whether particularly long or unusually short to continuously improve our procedures.</p>	
TO THE ESCORTING CONTRACTOR				

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6.	The plan given in response to our previous annual reports, detailing the various steps escorts would take to achieve interpreting support for returnees when a professional interpreter was not present, has been achieved to only a limited extent. The plan was impressive, but it needs to be fully delivered.	Accepted	<p>In response to feedback from Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs), the Home Office identifies the requirement to provide interpreters for charter operations. Where an interpreter is not available, Escorting Officers must follow the steps outlined below to ensure effective communication:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact Big Word – Attempt to secure an interpreter via the Big Word service. 2. Phone Interpretation via Another Coach Commander – If Big Word is unavailable, contact another Coach Commander who has access to an interpreter and request telephone translation assistance. 3. Use a Translation App – If no interpreter is available via phone, use our trusted translation app to facilitate communication. 4. Utilise Bilingual Escorting Officers – Only as a last resort, an Escorting Officer who speaks the required language may provide interpretation support. <p>We acknowledge the importance of clear communication and continue to work on improving this process to ensure dignity, understanding, and compliance throughout the operation.</p>	
7.	We recommend that further discussions take place with IRCs about locating suitable areas where – once they have gone through the induction process – returnees can be held before boarding a coach.	Not accepted	We previously reviewed this option following site visits and discussions with staff at Colnbrook, Harmondsworth, Brook House, and Tinsley House IRCs. At the time, due to a range of identified risk factors, the option was not pursued further.	