



Tinsley House

Immigration Removal Centre

Independent Monitoring Board

2015 Annual Report

Contents

Page No.

Section 1

Introduction	3
--------------------	---

Section 2

2.1 Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre	4
2.2 Key Agencies and Management Teams.....	5
2.3 Population Profile.....	5
2.4 Detainee Arrivals	5

Section 3

3.1 Executive Summary	6
3.2 Recommendations	7

Section 4

4.1 Operational Management	8
4.2 Age Disputes.....	8
4.3 Applications to see the IMB	8
4.4 Catering.	8
4.5 Complaints.....	9
4.6 Education, Learning and Purposeful Activities.....	9
4.7 Environment	10
4.8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI).....	10
4.9 Families and Children	11
4.10 Healthcare and Mental Health Care.....	11
4.11 Removal from Association, Use of Force and Temporary Confinement.....	12
4.12 Safer Community and Detainee Welfare.....	13
4.13 Security	14
4.14 Transfer and Travel.....	14

Section 5

5.1 Progress with previously reported matters	15
---	----

Section 6

6.1 Statutory role of the IMB	16
6.2 IMB Diversity Statement	16
6.3 IMB activity.....	17

Section 1

1. Introduction

This report is presented by the Independent Monitoring Board for Tinsley House (the Board). It covers the period from January 2015 to December 2015. The Board sees its primary role as ensuring that all residents of Tinsley House are cared for humanely and with dignity. As Board members we are committed to the task entrusted to us. Our concerns for the establishment are expressed in the body of the report, and form the basis of the recommendations we make. The figures quoted in this report are based on the IMB's analysis of statistics supplied by the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team, G4S, and local records. These statistics have not been independently audited.

For ease of reference our key findings are summarised on page 6 and recommendations listed on page 7.

Section 2

2.1 Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC)

Tinsley House IRC is a modern purpose-built centre occupying a building on the south perimeter of Gatwick Airport. It holds detainees awaiting decisions on their immigration status and possible removal. The Centre was opened in 1996 and mainly provides accommodation for male detainees. Under the statutory provisions relating to the removal of unauthorised foreign nationals and those subject to immigration control, Tinsley House has a full operational capacity of 154 detainees. The Centre is able to provide accommodation for 119 males, and is certified to hold 120 males in extreme circumstances. A separate, dedicated and secure family suite has 34 beds within 8 separate apartments. A number of time-served foreign national offenders are held at the Centre. At the end of the reporting period these formed approximately 28% of the average population.

The male residential units are based on two floors with detainees sharing two or three to a room. There are also four and five bedded rooms. The rooms are each fitted with Freeview TVs with a small selection of Sky TV channels. There is good access to toilet and shower facilities on each floor and detainees have secure lockers in which to store belongings. Other facilities include: a central dining area, communal and visitors' lounge, recreation rooms, a health care clinic suite, a library, controlled access to the internet and 24 hour access to a telephone interpreting service. A single room provides care for detainees removed from association with the rest of the detainee population.

A Mosque, Chapel, and multi-faith rooms are located within the Centre. The Centre has a well-equipped gym, sports hall and open space where popular ball games are played. There is a cafeteria and shop where residents and users of the Centre can purchase a wide range of general provisions. Profit from the shop is used to add to the range of educational and recreational activities available to detainees. The Tinsley buildings achieved an average "E" rating for energy conservation.

Male detainees are able to associate freely throughout the Centre between 06.00 and 23.00 hours. Families are able to mix within the family suite or remain in their apartments. At night there is no lock down as such, but each corridor is secured to restrict movement between individual corridors from 23.00 to 06.00 hours. Tinsley House is due to be upgraded, refurbished and reconfigured within the existing footprint in 2016.

2.2 Key agencies and management teams at Tinsley House

Tinsley House is managed and operated under contract by G4S on behalf of the Home Office in accordance with Detention Centre Rules (2001). The Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team maintain a permanent presence at Tinsley House and are responsible for ensuring contractual requirements are met from its sub-contractors. G4S have operational responsibility, including detainees' welfare, and the security of the estate. Another G4S subsidiary is responsible for the provision of healthcare on behalf of NHS England. Aramark provides cleaning and catering services and Tascor delivers escort and transportation services.

A number of voluntary organisations may provide assistance to detainees. These include: Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group; the Samaritans; Red Cross; Refugee Action; Migrant Help, and the local Mothers Union.

2.3 Population Profile

The population profile varied throughout the year and as many as 30 different nationalities were represented at one time. The Centre saw an increase during the year of detainees from Albania, but at the end of the year Pakistan remained the highest represented nationality, with Islam being the most common religion.

2.4 Detainee Arrivals

During 2015 a total of 5,635 male detainees were registered at reception (this number includes repeat returners). The family suite accommodated 50 families, including 56 children, 213 single women and one transgender detainee.

At the end of the year there were no detainees who had been either in the Centre or in the IRC estate as a whole for more than 6 months. The majority of detainees had stayed for between one week and one month.

Section 3

3.1 Executive Summary

The Board considers that arrangements at Tinsley House continue to be managed to a good standard. The Centre is well organised, and generally clean. It is looking somewhat tired in some areas and facilities are in need of upgrading but these issues should be addressed through the refurbishment due in 2016. The family suite is friendly and welcoming and security is proportionate. The large majority of staff strive consistently to maintain a calm and cooperative atmosphere. G4S senior management demonstrate a high level of commitment to maintaining an ethos of mutual respect.

The framework for securing the safe welfare of detainees is well established, and detainees are encouraged to feedback through a number of forums on issues such as safety and their treatment by staff. However, very few detainees attend these meetings. Similarly, attendance by professional representatives is extremely variable. IMB members rely strongly on the views of individual detainees to inform their knowledge of residents' experiences.

Detainees have a reasonable range of activities available to them while at the Centre but take-up for some, such as music, is limited by the availability of staff with skills to lead these sessions. Where opportunities to participate do exist, take-up is variable. IT provision has frequently been the cause of complaints: it has taken a long time for some equipment to be repaired and to respond to detainees' requests for access to other language web-sites. Access to social media is limited.

During the year, the Board has raised the issue of officers congregating in different parts of the building rather than patrolling. Some detainees have told us that they find encountering a group of officers intimidating. Conversely, IMB members have found it difficult on occasion to locate an officer when needed.

While detainees generally speak positively about their treatment when in Tinsley House, some, especially families, have a different experience of being collected, delivered and transported to or from the Centre. As in last year's report, we continue to have concern about the quick turn-around time for some families with young children. We have also noted that lack of experience of working with families has been evident in some Tascor transport teams.

3.2 Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. staff and management work with detainees and the IMB to increase detainee involvement both in meetings and in engaging more fully with the IMB where appropriate, so that all have an increased awareness of issues concerning the detainee population. This should include increased dialogue between Healthcare staff and detainee representatives.
2. there is a concerted effort to encourage and extend opportunities for detainees to broaden their learning and artistic experiences while in the Centre.
3. the practice of more than two officers congregating in corridors while on duty is stopped unless operational demands require it. Individual officers should be more visible while on duty around the centre.
4. IT issues are resolved promptly and detainees have increased access to other language web-sites and the use of social media such as Skype.
5. the transport of families should be arranged so that they spend the minimum of time in a vehicle, have sufficient time to rest, and are with suitably trained Tascor staff for all journeys.

Section 4

4.1 Operational management

Operational arrangements at Tinsley House continue to run smoothly. This is largely attributed to the collaborative efforts of the two key agencies: G4S and Home Office Immigration Enforcement. These agencies each have very distinctive roles and in our opinion worked effectively together to promote the care and welfare of the detainees within the constraints and demands of their respective duties.

4.2 Age Disputes

The IMB receives monthly reports of detainees who declare themselves to be below the age of 18. These reports list the age-disputed cases together with a summary of their outcomes. A total of 20 age-dispute cases were dealt with in 2015; nine of the detainees concerned were assessed as being a minor and were accommodated by Social Services. The Board has some concern that a presumption of adulthood is made unless proved otherwise. As a result, potentially young and vulnerable detainees are likely to be placed with male adults. However, discussion with management has broadly reassured us that staff are aware of this and try, wherever possible, to place young males wherever they feel comfortable and can be most safely accommodated across the main rooms and family suite.

4.3 Applications to see the IMB

During 2015 the IMB responded to 23 written applications highlighting detainees' concerns. The highest number of complaints (seven) was about Healthcare, with four about staff conduct and three about missing property. During our weekly unannounced visits we also received and acted on a range of other queries. Although on one occasion G4S management took three months to respond to a detainee's complaint to the IMB, the majority of issues were resolved quickly.

4.4 Catering

The canteen and café are well used by detainees, staff, visitors and volunteers. Board members regularly eat with detainees and report on the food and its presentation. The system for ordering food, which was put in place in 2014, is now well established and detainees choose in advance from a publicised menu. This generally works well although some detainees dislike having to make a decision the day before they are eating the meal. The menu is varied and well balanced and usually includes a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables; soup and sauces commonly accompany the main dishes. Detainees generally report that they enjoy the meals provided. An on-going complaint from some sections of the population about the quantity and type of rice on

offer has been addressed; chips or other potato dishes are more often available as an alternative. The custom of providing only baguettes on Fridays is not universally popular but it does allow time for detainees to attend Friday prayers should they wish to do so.

Detainees have raised on a number of occasions that they would like to do their own cooking, perhaps catering for others too. Despite numerous conversations and plans, this has not proved possible and we are pleased that improvements to the building planned for 2016 will include a cultural kitchen.

4.5 Complaints

The Centre received relatively few written complaints with a total of 14 for the year. Most of these related to services provided for the detainees, missing items, alleged negative attitudes from an officer or an inability to get on well with another detainee. None of the complaints were appealed to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsmen.

We feel the complaints were promptly investigated and the decisions made in 2015 were generally reasonable, and communicated to the detainees in sufficient detail.

4.6 Education, Learning and Purposeful Activities

Tinsley House provides a range of social and learning activities for its male population. The Arts and Craft classes remained popular throughout the year, and continued to be well attended. It was disappointing, though, that this year no entry from Tinsley House was included in the Koestler Trust exhibition of prisoner and detainee art works at the South Bank.

Classes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) were available throughout the year, although opportunities to take accredited courses were limited due to the transitory nature of detainees' stay. Detainees can continue their learning through self-tuition or internet learning in order to gain accredited qualifications, but we know of none who have done so. Detainees we have spoken to vary in their response to the opportunity offered by the English classes so attendance is variable. The introduction of Yoga classes has been welcomed by some detainees. The dedicated music room, originally intended to actively promote the musical skills of detainees, continued to see relatively little use during the reporting period. We would like to see a concerted effort by staff to encourage and extend opportunities for detainees to broaden their learning and artistic experiences while in the Centre.

A range of voluntary paid activities existed for detainees who met the medical and security vetting requirements. Roles available have included that of barber, a gym and fitness orderly, and laundry orderly. Detainees have also been able to engage in library work, give assistance with translation, and perform tasks as a multi-faith orderly, safer detention orderly, or diversity orderly. Such work is paid at a rate of £1.00 per hour. Involvement in paid work is entirely voluntary, and is not intended to substitute for the work of trained staff. It has been difficult at times to recruit such volunteers as many detainees are at the Centre for a relatively short time.

4.7 Environment

The overall environment of Tinsley House engenders a relaxed atmosphere and detainees appreciate being able to move freely throughout most of the building and use the outside areas for socialising or for sport. In 2014 and the first part of 2015 the Centre had a recurring problem with bed bugs in some rooms. Rather than wait for the upcoming refurbishment to solve the problem, efforts to eliminate the problem by fumigation and intensive cleaning were successful. As a result, later in 2015 the Centre gained an environment award. Congratulations are due to G4S for recognising that this was a quality of life issue for the detainees concerned and tackling it so successfully.

4.8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI)

There are regular meetings for all concerned with EDI as well as detainee consultative meetings. However at the EDI meetings the ratio between professionals (including G4S officers, Healthcare and/or Immigration Enforcement representatives and Samaritans) and detainees is usually around 9:4. We question whether detainees always feel that they can fully express their concerns in this under-represented environment. We have also become aware that external social conditions impact upon day-to-day activities, such as regular attendance at the Mosque, where one group of detainees may exert pressure on a few others. IMB members feel social relations such as these are becoming more complex and less visible and therefore need to be addressed by everyone. We would welcome the opportunity to work with those responsible to increase detainee involvement both in meetings and in engaging more fully with IMB members so that we all feel we have a comprehensive and representative view of all detainees' experiences.

The highest proportion of residents is Muslim and these detainees have expressed concern that Imam presence is sporadic, particularly on Fridays. We welcome plans to employ an Imam with a more flexible work schedule. Other faiths that are represented are catered for well by the chaplaincy staff.

In 2015 focus was put on the older and younger populations. Sessions of 'Beverages and Bingo', and Disco-type exercises were put on specifically for these groups and were very well received.

4.9 Families and Children

The family suite has continued to meet effectively the needs of families, single women and, on occasion, trans gender detainees, while they are resident at the Centre. The unit is described as a calm and friendly place by staff and residents alike. Detainees invariably report that they receive a high standard of care, and that staff are polite and responsive.

In the summer, as the result of families being picked up at a port, the unit responded well to a surge in numbers. This required great flexibility as families were arriving and leaving throughout the day and night over a weekend. The timings around these arrivals and departures were of concern to the IMB as the families included pregnant women and young children. For example, of a family of three: two family members arrived at 21.35, one at 00.38 and all were taken for departure at 05.00. Another family of three arrived at 01.15 and were picked up again at 05.00. Two families who left were returned but with no order for Tinsley House to admit them. They were appropriately given food and allowed to enter for toilet breaks but were not brought into the Centre, having otherwise to remain on the transport vehicle. The IMB regards this as unacceptable and would like to see more responsive and humane treatment of families on arrival at the UK borders. Ten families arrived at night (between the hours of 23.00 and 6.00) and left less than nine hours later. We raised our concern about lack of sufficient time for families to rest in last year's report and this concern remains despite the efforts of G4S staff to alleviate its impact.

4.10 Healthcare and Mental Health Care

G4S Healthcare provides the healthcare for all detainees across the Gatwick estate but has involved the local specialist NHS mental health trust, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to oversee mental health services.

The healthcare provision appears to be well organised. New detainees are seen by a nurse within two hours of arrival, and a GP within 24 hours, so that their physical and mental health needs can be assessed and vulnerable/at risk individuals identified. Nursing staff are on site 24 hours a day and a GP visits every day. GPs can be called on at other times, as can other health professionals when required. If a detainee needs more intensive care they may be transferred to

Brook House which has enhanced healthcare facilities, or to local NHS hospitals if necessary. A consultant psychiatrist visits Brook House weekly and Tinsley House detainees can be taken to see him there or to the Emotional Health & Wellbeing group run at Brook House.

As in previous years there have been problems maintaining a full complement of staff, especially nurses: recruitment difficulties are attributed to lengthy security checks, and a pay structure that has improved but still does not match NHS provision. During most of the year there were 13 vacancies in healthcare staffing across the Gatwick estate so that agency staff had to be hired.

Three complaints about healthcare at Tinsley House were made officially to G4S Healthcare during 2015. None of these were upheld, although additional advice was provided to further support one detainee. This is quite a low figure and only slightly higher than during 2014 when there was just one. However, as an IMB, we received seven complaints and criticisms about Healthcare, and other less specific concerns that were raised by detainees in passing. Occasionally there has been mention of establishing a Healthcare Forum where detainees could bring concerns about healthcare; however this has not been set up. Although healthcare is an item on the Safer Community and EDI meeting agendas, these offer difficult forums for detainees to raise healthcare-related issues or, if raised, to receive a response.

4.11 Removal from Association (RFA), Use of Force (UoF) and Temporary Confinement

The use of RFA is only used as a last resort and it is pleasing to see a drop from the previous year, from 28 to 24. Detainees were invariably removed for a minimal period and, following a satisfactory review, allowed to resume full association with other detainees. By exception a few detainees were transferred to nearby Brook House IRC which has more appropriate facilities to meet their particular needs. RFAs were predominantly used to ensure the safety of Centre users, and to protect a detainee intent on self-harm. They were, however, also used to isolate detainees suspected of having an infectious illness. The IMB reported on this in last year's annual report. We do not feel that the ambience of the room commonly used for RFA for behavioural reasons is suitable for those suffering, or recovering, from illness or for those who are vulnerable for other reasons. We are pleased to see that separate medical accommodation is planned as part of the refurbishment.

There was an increase in UoF compared to the previous year, from 17 to 31. All incidents are investigated, and the reason explained in monthly reports to the IMB. The reasons given for the rise in UoF this year are two detainees who had to be prevented from self-harming and an

increased need to use force in order to present detainees for flights. We regard this increase as regrettable but unavoidable in the circumstances. Rule 42 (temporary confinement) was not invoked in 2015 or in the previous year.

4.12 Safer Community and Detainee Welfare

Detainees invariably say that they feel safe at Tinsley House. The number of reported incidents of bullying, and the number of incidents of a serious nature (self-harm), were 14 and 19 respectively. We note that the number of incidents was virtually the same as in the previous year for self-harm, but for bullying there was an encouraging drop of about one third.

During the first part of the year some male detainees complained that female staff were checking the bathrooms without knocking first. Detainees felt uncomfortable that they may be observed without clothes by the staff involved. We were concerned about this with regard to both detainees' and female staff's welfare. We note that initiatives, including a poster reminding all staff to knock and wait before entering any rooms, appear to have been effective and the complaints have decreased. We are also pleased that additional water coolers and microwaves were installed in the Centre after comments from detainees were raised by the IMB.

As mentioned above, the generally positive relationship between G4S staff and detainees is a strength of the Centre. However, gathering of staff in corridors has been raised on three separate occasions. Detainees report that they feel vulnerable walking through ranks of uniformed officers and the IMB feel it is detrimental to the usually good communication between detainees and staff. Although reminders have been issued in handover reports to staff it continues to be a recurring issue. Conversely, there are times when it is difficult to locate an officer in certain parts of the building. We would like to see a more consistent presence of individual officers across the site rather than groups of officers gathering together.

Detainees have raised, and IMB members have reported on a number of occasions, that access to a printer is affected by faulty equipment. Detainees have also said that they would like a more relaxed regime with regard to access to web-sites. We share with detainees and staff a frustration that IT issues sometimes take weeks to be resolved. We support the suggestions that use of social media such as Skype would be a useful initiative to allow detainees to maintain contact with family and friends. We hope strongly that this may be implemented in 2016.

4.13 Security

During the year the IMB was notified of 78 incidents of concern with regard to security but none were major. At one point, in response to some negative media coverage of another centre, 17 detainees decided to stop eating food from the canteen. This was taken seriously and a meeting held with the detainees concerned and representatives from Home Office Immigration Enforcement and G4S. Detainees were also offered the opportunity to meet officers or Immigration Enforcement managers to discuss their issues individually. These actions resolved the situation very effectively.

The occurrence of illegal substance within the Centre remains low, and synthetic drugs including Spice and Black Mamba have not been a problem. There are no residential facilities to address these issues, and detainees with identified drug and alcohol dependency are transferred to other centres where appropriate resources for dealing with substance abuse issues exist.

4.14 Transfer and Travel

We have observed a number of departures and arrivals of detainees that have, in general, gone smoothly despite the increase in UoF. Our main concern lies with the transportation of families who have been picked up at a port (see para 4.6) and the lack of Tascor staff trained to work with families when they are moving them to an airport for departure. Lack of awareness of the needs of families has resulted in transport sometimes arriving far too early, so that young children would be in transit for much longer than necessary, or transport being delayed because escorts take too long to check that the correct child-seats and other arrangements are in place.

Section 5

5.1 Progress with previously reported matters

In 2015 we raised the following concerns.

1. Too many detainees are moved between the hours of 23.00 and 06.00. This concern continues.
2. Families often have to leave the Family Suite before they have had 8 hours rest. This concern continues. In discussion with the Home Office at the Centre it was pointed out that they often challenge transfers where travel time to and from the airport and checking-in/checking out time at the Centre, does not allow for sufficient time in the Family suite so we recognise there is a partial check on this concern.
3. The room used within the centre for RFA is unsuitable to be used for medical purposes or for holding the vulnerable for constant supervision. We note the refurbishment will provide a separate suitable room for these purposes.
4. Detainees with serious infectious conditions can be transported to the Centre with no advance warning given to the Centre. We have not seen a recurrence of this situation in 2015.
5. A concern about bed bugs. This has been removed in the short term and we hope that it will be completely removed by the forthcoming refurbishment.
6. The IMB should always be given the chance to participate in the review of any incident at the Centre. In 2015 we felt we were given this chance.

Section 6

6.1 Statutory role of the IMB

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 requires every Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) to be monitored by an independent board appointed by the Secretary of State. The Board is represented by members of the community in which the Centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

(1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in Immigration Removal Centres and Pre-Departure Accommodation (PDA).

(2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has;

(3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how far the Immigration Removal Centre has met the standards and requirements placed on it, and what impact these have on those held in the Centre.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively its members have right of access to detainees, the Centre, and also to the Centre's records.

This report has been produced to fulfill our obligation under (3) above.

6.2 IMB Diversity Statement

Members of the Tinsley House IMB are committed to an inclusive approach to diversity, and one which promotes interaction and understanding between people of different backgrounds. Our commitment encompasses race, religion, gender, nationality, sexuality, marital status, disability and age. The Board also recognises that a full and inclusive approach to diversity must respond to differences that cut across social and cultural categories such as: mental health, literacy and substance abuse.

This approach to diversity is incorporated in our recruitment procedures and Board development practices. The Board aims to increase its repertoire of skills and awareness and ensure it is able to positively reflect the diverse needs of the population within Tinsley House.

6.3 IMB activity

During the reporting period IMB members made weekly scheduled and unannounced visits to the Centre. We attended meetings held within Tinsley House as observers, and witnessed arrivals and removals of detainees and families. We have continued to build professional relationships with the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team, and G4S to ensure constructive monitoring of the facility. Much of the work we do is on low profile matters that nonetheless make a difference to detainees.

During 2015 the number of IMB Board members continued below the recommended full complement of 12. We started the year with eight members and ended with five (two resignations and our previous chair stepping down to take a well-earned sabbatical.) Our current membership represents a reasonable cross-section of the community, and members bring a good balance of skills and experience to the task entrusted to them. It is a credit to serving members that we were able to maintain the regular Board meetings, attend national conference and training events, and fully discharge our monitoring role without interruption. In the fourth quarter of 2015 we initiated a recruitment exercise with some success.

IMB members made a total of 184 visits to the Centre, including for Board meetings. The Board would like to thank our IMB Clerk for his continued support and assistance during the reporting period. We also appreciate the willingness of detainees, managers and staff to engage with us in a positive manner.

Anne Duffy
Chair
On Behalf of the IMB Board - Tinsley House IRC