

Bulletin 5 May 2009

SDV News and events

Easyfundraising and Easysearch for SDV

Please remember both these very easy ways to raise funds for SDV. Details on the website:

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.html>

Immigration, asylum and detention news

Waking nightmares: arrest and detention of children

A review of the new report by the Children's Commissioner (in England), which reveals the impact of immigration detention on children and calls for its abolition.

To come out of sleep to loud knocking and shouted orders, to open your eyes to uniformed strangers milling about in your home, sometimes pulling you by the arm or pushing you onto the floor, handcuffing your parents as if they were criminals. To be brusquely and summarily pushed out of your home into a van, with no time to collect belongings, to have medicine confiscated and medical complaints ignored. Not to be able to dress or use the toilet in privacy. Not to be told where you are being taken. To be transported in caged vans which were dirty and smelled of urine or vomit while guards laughed. This is not Stalin's Russia or Nazi Germany, but are some of the terrifying experiences gone through by children in families facing immigration detention in the UK, as described to the Children's Commissioner Sir Al Aynsley-Green and his team of investigators and reported in The arrest and detention of children subject to immigration control.

Read full review at the link below where you can also download the commissioner's report and an executive summary

<http://www.irr.org.uk/2009/april/ha000028.html>

Saturday 9th MAY, Borders, Migration & Freedom of Movement Dayschool

An opportunity for people to get together to share info and ideas on the border regime and the growing movement against borders and for the freedom of movement for all!

10.30am til 6pm, plus evening social and music
@ the Forest Café,
3 Bristo Place,
Edinburgh, EH1 1EY

www.unitycentreglasgow.org

Friday 8th May Public Meeting "Fortress Europe: How immigration controls destroy civil liberties and human rights"

7.00 - 9.00 pm
Wellington Church
77 Southpark Avenue G12 8LE
Off University Avenue and near Glasgow University

With Teresa Hayter - author of 'Open Borders - The Case Against Immigration Controls'

www.unitycentreglasgow.org

News from AVID

The latest edition of In Touch is attached at the end of this bulletin

Other news and events

Two Jobs at Friends of the Earth Scotland

Friends of the Earth Scotland is seeking to fill two vacancies:

- Communications and New Media Officer, 35 hours per week, Salary scale £20,387 to £25,550
- Activism and Volunteer Development Officer, 21 hours per week, Salary scale £20,387 to £25,550 pro-rata

Further information, job descriptions and application forms are available at the link below:

<http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/jobs/>

Volunteer Opportunity with World Development Movement

The World Development Movement, one of the UK's most leading campaigning organisations, is looking for an enthusiastic and effective volunteer to support a new community-based initiative which aims to share skills for active global citizenship.

Tasks will include

- Developing materials and resources
- Event support
- Research
- Some basic administration

Demonstrated experience of two or more of the following would be an advantage: Good interpersonal skills, writing for the public, research and resource development, events organisation, popular education, international development and social justice, campaigning, climate change or trade justice awareness, media skills.

scottishdetaineevisitors

This will be considered as an internship position for 1 day a week in central Edinburgh starting mid-May, for at least 2 months. Local travel and expenses can be covered. To apply, please send a CV and short email/covering letter explaining your interest in this work, to the email address below by Friday 8 May

simon@wdmscotland.org.uk.

AVID Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees

Patrons: Belinda Allan, Colin Firth, Lord David Ramsbotham, GCB, CBE and John Scampion, CBE
Registered Charity No. 1063784

in touch

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AVID contact details:

Address: PO Box 1496, Oxford OX4 9DY

enquiries@aviddetention.org.uk

AVID Chair (Sally Tarshish)

Tel: 01865 250690

st@aviddetention.org.uk

Vice Chair (Liz Cox)

Tel: 01483 417649

ec@aviddetention.org.uk

News from the Groups

GDWG reports some problems at Brook House particularly linked to association and access to activities as well as increased visitor security checks. It looks as if the ARC cards may not be usable as identification. GDWG are waiting to see how the centre settles down

LDSG will be dealing with GEO, the American contractors at Harmons worth from June 29th and there will be 365 new bed spaces by 2010.

Lindholme report that the centre is now holding mostly time served FNPs. Stanley Platt is also keen to know more about the Facilitated Return Scheme. Does anyone have any experience of detainees returning on this scheme and how the details were worked out?

All groups – any news you would like published in In Touch please send to me.
ec@aviddetention.org.uk

Outside events

The Churches Refugee Conference is to be held on Saturday 6 June at Holy Apostles Church, Pimlico London from 10.30 - 16.00. The theme is **From Asylum to Sanctuary** -

Restoring Wholeness. If anyone would like to have a table/stall at this conference, please contact Geoff Duncan
world.churchandsociety@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

Strangers into Citizens - reminder

National Rally
Monday May 4th
Trafalgar Square from midday.

More information on
www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk

BID South have been at the following address for some time but their address in your copy of the handbook may not be up to date.

BID(South), All Saints Centre, Commercial Road, Portsmouth PO1 4BT

Tel. 0239281 6633

Fax 0239282 1529

email, bidsouth@biduk.org

DUG Medical Sub Group Meeting

Sally attended this meeting on behalf of AVID. For the most part the meeting was concerned with the terms of reference and personnel for future meetings. Meetings are to be thematic and the next meeting in June will look at the Operating Standards for Medical Care and Rule 35. If anyone wants to feed into this meeting please send any comments you have to Sally Tarshish.

Quarter 4 asylum support statistics

UKBA have published the asylum support statistics for 2008 and Quarter 4. The report found the number of applications excluding dependants for asylum was 10 percent higher in 2008. Key findings were;

- 82% of the total applications were from single men
- Total number of asylum seekers in receipt of asylum support was 37% lower in Q4 2008 than at the end of Q4 2007
- 2,580 decisions to grant Section 4 support were recorded in Q4 2008, 63% higher than in Q4 2007
- To read full document go to <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/immig408.pdf>

Current Numbers in Detention

As of 1st February 2009, there were 1,984 men, 285 women and 36 children detained in the UK Border Agency Removal Centres. (Refugee Council)

Section 4 Vouchers

UKBA are to pilot from June a plastic payment card system for the administration of section 4 support which will be personalized for each applicant and will replace the voucher system.

Inspection Programme

The Inspection Programme for the Chief Inspector of UKBA was launched 2 April 2009 and it identifies asylum as one of two thematic inspections that he will undertake in 2009/2010. The Chief Inspector wants to review the effectiveness of the new model for dealing with asylum applications. For more details, see <http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/inspection-programme/>

Zimbabweans in Detention

BID have been in correspondence with the Director of Criminal Casework, Richard Quinn. He confirms that there are 23 Zimbabweans currently in detention who have claimed asylum. He stresses that each case has a case owner who considers whether detention is appropriate bearing in mind the key consideration is public protection. He refers to Chapter 55 of the Enforcement and Guidance (<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/guidance/enforcement>) which sets out release conditions and lays out what offences UKBA considers indicate a serious level of harm.

Waiting Times for JR and High Court

There were about 150 JRs and 500 reconsideration cases waiting for hearings in the High Court. There were a further 72 cases for the Court of Appeal and 500 cases awaiting reconsideration by the AIT. In completing these cases, UKBA give priority to those on NASS Section 4 support. There is no means of giving priority to those who have no

support at all and so are completely destitute.

Judicial Reviews and Removals

In 2007, there were over 4000 applications for JR related to immigration matters. The National Audit Office report states that less than 10% of JR applications related to asylum matters are granted permission to proceed. In the first 4 months of 2008 only one applicant was successful at the substantive hearing. UKBA believe that the great majority of JR applications merely delay the inevitable. In addition, over the last 3 years nearly 100 JRs have been found to be "vexatious" and legal representatives have been ordered to pay costs, which total tens of thousands of pounds.

Removal without Notice

A case on 18 Feb revealed that there is an unpublished Detention Service Order 07/2008 which allows an exception to the rule that there should be 72 hours notice between serving Removal Directions and actual removal. This states in para 11(b) :

"The detainee (or a member of his/her family who is also detained) has a history of non compliance either with the operator and/or the UK Border Agency **and** there is strong evidence to suggest that an attempt to remove him/her with advance notification poses a risk to good order and discipline of the Centre which cannot be managed effectively in another way. In such circumstances the detainee should normally be removed from association 24-48 hours in advance of removal. Removal Directions should then be served by a member of the UK Border Agency team in the Immigration Removal Centre as soon as possible. Only in very disruptive cases or where it is not possible to remove the individual from association (e.g. a family where there are no suitable rooms available) should removal directions be withheld completely."

There is a suggestion that some removals are not being operated with respect for the rule of law. It all highlights the need to keep in close touch with anyone facing removal.

Liz Cox 26.04.09