

Bulletin 28 November 2008

SDV News and events

Fundraising pub quiz: Tuesday 9 December

Make sure you come to the Festive pub quiz at Stube on Kilmarnock Road. Full details on the website

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id1.html>

Remember easyfundraising whenever you shop online. Also remember easysearch when you search the internet. Both can generate funds for SDV. Find details of how to register for both on the SDV website.

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

Immigration, asylum and detention news

Independent Leading article: Talking sense on immigration

The decision by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to commission a study into the impact of an amnesty for illegal immigrants has not gone down well in Westminster. Mr Johnson's party leader, David Cameron, has refused to endorse the idea, and the Immigration minister, Phil Woolas, has described Mr Johnson as both "naive in the extreme" and a "nincompoop".

Behind this bluster, however, lies the fact that the present Government policy towards irregular migrants manages to be inhumane and economically inefficient. Migrants are left without access to basic health services and the Treasury is denied their tax contributions. These issues are especially pressing in Mr Johnson's jurisdiction of London, where more than half of the UK's estimated 700,000 illegal immigrants live. Full article at:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/leading-articles/leading-article-talking-sense-on-immigration-1033816.html>

News from AVID

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

Other news and events

STUC St Andrews Day Anti Racism March and Rally

Saturday 29 November 2008, Assemble 10.30am St Andrew's in the Square (off Saltmarket) Glasgow

March off 11.00am. Rally 12.00 noon Glasgow Film Theatre, Rose Street, Glasgow

Come and show your support!

Bring Your banners!

All anti-racists welcome!

St Andrew's Day is about showing a united Scotland.

Everyone deserves an equal chance to live free from fear of discrimination, prejudice and racism.

Act On Climate Change – Just Solutions Now

- Saturday 6 December
- Assemble: 12.30 at the Amphitheatre, Clyde Street ;
- Rally: 2.00 pm at Glasgow Caledonian University

We, the Scottish Climate Change Campaign, are organising this march as part of the Global Day of Action during the United Nations Climate Talks in Poznan , December 1st to 12th 2008, to call on world leaders to take urgent action on climate change.

For more info, please email:

cindy_courtillier@yahoo.co.uk .

Half price Guardians and Observers

Follow this link to get vouchers for half price papers for a month.

<http://www.guardianmarketing.co.uk/vouchers.html>

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

AVID Chair (Sally Tarshish)

Tel: 01865 250690

inscapedgardens@btinternet.com

Vice Chair (Liz Cox)

Tel: 01483 417649

e.l.cox@btinternet.com

News from AVID

AVID's new website is now up and running at

www.aviddetention.org.uk

and the general email is

enquiries@aviddetention.org.uk

All the trustees now have AVID addresses

which are automatically rerouted to their

home emails. They are as follows:

Sally Tarshish; st@aviddetention.org.uk

Catrin Ingham; ci@aviddetention.org.uk

Eike Muller; em@aviddetention.org.uk

John Alleyne; ja@aviddetention.org.uk

Liz Cox; ec@aviddetention.org.uk

Mike Slinn : ms@aviddetention.co.uk

Tony Oteh: to@aviddetention.co.uk

The website

Please have a look at the website. The Visitor Groups are all listed on two pages and you may like to check that the details are as you would wish. There is still more to go on the site, and we hope to have some kind of bulletin board where ideas can be exchanged and notices posted. I hope that this will be in place shortly. Any other ideas welcome.

AVID Consultation

Many thanks to everyone who responded to the consultation document. A lot of groups did not seem to have received the document which went out by post to chairs (or coordinators if no chairs) c/o group

addresses. But in the end we did get comments from nearly everyone. Trustees met on the 19th November to discuss the findings and Sally will be writing to all groups individually. The Trustees meeting in Guildford at Diocesan House in Quarry Street on December 6th will be followed by an open meeting from 2 -4pm for anyone from the membership who would like to come along to hear and comment on the new strategy. There will be more opportunities in the New Year. Contact the Chair.

News from the Groups

Haslar

Anne Dickinson has been appointed as the new coordinator at Haslar, and will take over when Michael Woolley retires next year.

LDSG

Starting from 1st December, LDSG is to coordinate the collection of monthly statistics on lengths of detention. A snapshot at the beginning of each month from all visitor groups will build up a picture of the extent of long term detention, particularly important when there are no official statistics on length of detention.

Mckenzie Friends Training 29th November

Due to a larger number of participants, McKenzie Friends Training will be at St Vincent's, Carlisle Place, London SW1P 1NL 020 7834 4004 instead of 38 Ebury Street as stated in the registration form. It is a short walk from Victoria Station.

Registration and coffee will take place in Room 1 from 9:00am. The training will be held in Room 1 and lunch will be held in Room 2. Lilian, the Administrator of the Zacchaeus Trust will be at the venue in the morning. Her mobile is 07787302303 should you need any assistance in finding the place. The Trust's telephone number is 020 7259 0801; fax: 020 7259 0701.

Asylum Aid - Report of the Refugee Women's Resource Project

6pm Thursday 27th November

Guest Speaker: Kathryn Cronin, Barrister, Ga Garden Court Chambers,

57 – 60 Lincolns Inn Fields

London WC2A 3LS

RSVP

women@asylumaid.org.uk

Outsourcing Abuse (new date)

Public meeting hosted by Diane Abbot and organized by Medical Justice, on the manner in which people are removed.

Wednesday 10 December 2008

11am – 1pm Committee room 14

House of Commons

Meeting open to all but space is limited;

contact emmaginn@medicaljustice.org.uk

The report, 'Outsourcing Abuse' can be downloaded from the Medical Justice website.

Detainee's property – follow up

In response to the new regulations about property (the 20 kg rule), a list of concerns, drawn up by GDWG was presented to UKBA at a DUG meeting. It was not clear how this would work in practice and reports from ILRs since suggest there is much variation – and confusion - across the estate. Of particular concern was how detainees can manage their property if it is not allowed into the removal centre, or if it is, and what facilities exist for detainees to sort their property when they are in detention. The next DUG meeting is on 12th January and it would be good to present any difficulties and inequalities in the system. Please send any comments you have to me and I will present them at the next DUG meeting.

Evidence to the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment

Avid, together with Medical Justice, LDSG, Barbed Wire Britain, Yarlswood Befrienders, and BID were delegates from the ARC Detention Users Sub Group to give evidence to this committee. The oral submissions followed the written one and highlighted detention of children, unlimited long term detention, effects of detention on mental health and complaints. It is unlikely that there will be a written report until late 2009 and then only after the UK Government has responded and agreed to publication.

Foreign National Prisoners Workshop on 8th November

Steve Simmons (ILPA) Jerome (LDSG) and Steve Mason (DAS) gave an interesting and informative workshop covering the background - information and statistics; legislation – deportation, appeals, removals and leave to remain and visiting in prisons with reference to end of sentence and removal. Notes on these topics will be available shortly on the website.

Return of Somalis

The European Court of Human Rights has recently stated, in a letter to Wilson and Co, Solicitors, of 21 October that it is adjourning all appeals against expulsion to Somalia until a series of appeals in the UK courts have been decided. The Home Office has appealed against the decision in a country guidance case (HH & others Somalia CG[2008] UKAIT00022) that there is a real risk in returning anybody to Mogadishu !!

Meanwhile the protection against removal provided under Rule 39 of the ECtHR to all those who have appealed to the court remains in place.

Something more cheering - Judges can be Forthright !

Miss M came to UK on a student visa and married, quite legally, a settled partner. While her visa was still valid, she applied for leave to remain as a spouse and for leave for her daughter to remain with her. This was refused solely because there were insufficient funds in her bank account to cover the cheque when presented. She resubmitted the application but was again rejected because, due to delays, her leave to remain had then expired. She applied for Judicial Review. Mr Justice Sullivan was not impressed by the way the Home Office had conducted the case. While agreeing that the decision was in accordance with the letter of the rules, he concluded that to return Miss M and her daughter to Jamaica at considerable public expense solely for the purpose of her applying to return to UK at considerable expense to herself was "manifestly disproportionate and unreasonable" He went on to say "This is a classic example of a thoroughly unreasonable and disproportionate, inflexible, application of a policy, without the slightest regard for the facts of the case, or indeed elementary common sense and humanity. Such an approach diminishes, rather than encourages, respect for the policy in question."

He quashed the Home Office decision and said "I hope that a little common sense and humanity will prevail when this case is reconsidered"

There will be no IN Touch next month so this is my chance to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Liz Cox

24.11.08