

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

# 2016

Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England and Wales No. 4911257

Registered Charity No: 1124328

Patrons: Lord Dholakia PC, OBE, DL,

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

## Annual Report



# Detainees' Words

## Some words from released detainees

*Visiting ease my stress and help me overcome bad feeling of what I want to do to myself.*

*Out of the visits in detention I am connected to many people. I made contacts and friends through the walk programme and Refugee Tales.*

*Because of the friendship with my visitor, I made connections with GDWG after detention through the walking. This helped me physically and mentally.*

*I get so much advice from the walkers and they encourage me. You encourage me and so my inside is a bit of peace. If I had no peace I could not go out meet people and make friends where I live.*

*You give links to local charities and local people who can help me integrate where I live.*

*In detention, I feel only myself. My visitor come to visit and I feel like family. I lost my brain at that time. I thought about dying. She gives big moral support to me and help me move from dark to the light. She change my life. GDWG change my life. You are my light and my life. I never forget. Thank you.*

*Visit make you less depressed. I lost appetite before I had a visitor. Your visitor encourage you. She say 'I'll see you next week' and you look forward. She say eat something and I'll ask you next time what you ate and you eat for her.*

*I look forward to the next week and I knew [my visitor] would come.*

*At the time in detention I had little English. In visits I had no interpreter. But my visitor do everything to understand my idea. She teach me language slowly. I try to talk to help her receive my ideas.*

*My visitor was sent by God to help me learn English.*

*I think all you are doing is good. You face the authorities. You take your hearts and time to campaign for us for freedom. You do great. How many organisations do that? You help the individual.*

*They listen and if you listen you can help. You can solve the problem. In detention you are condemned as a prisoner and immigration say you tell a lie.*

# Chair's Report

As we look back over the last year, we realise that this has been a year of changes for our charity. Through it all we have continued to care for our friends, the immigration detainees detained near Gatwick.

We said a sad farewell to our previous director Nic Eadie at our last AGM. This year we are most capably looked after by James Wilson who, after nearly a year in post, has worked very hard so that we can be ready to serve the increased number of detainees soon expected at the Gatwick detention centres. The core of our work is the support the office and the visitors offer to these forgotten people, many of whom have suffered under great burdens even to arrive in the UK. Every one of us tries to show a friendly face to those for whom perhaps our country has not yet seemed so welcoming. With increased numbers of detainees this care is of vital importance to the strangers on our shores, who, with our love, will become friends.

Some time ago we announced the retirement of our long term patron and friend Baroness Shirley Williams, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude. We are very pleased to announce today that Baroness Helena Kennedy QC has agreed to be our new patron. She is well known for her efforts in the field of human rights and we look forward to working with her in the future.

We have started a new project aimed at addressing the issue of those who find our help difficult to reach, due to language or other barriers. This work was started with the assistance of a legacy from our previous Chair and friend, Anna Seddon, who sadly died last summer. We are determined to make an ongoing difference to this group of detainees who always very close to her heart. This work will continue in her name, reminding us to continue looking for those in deepest need. Anyone interested in joining this project would be very welcome; please do contact the office.

Our Refugee Tales outreach project continues to grow, and our next walk will soon be upon us. Our 2016 project was a great success with national media coverage. It is not yet clear how the election will affect our campaigning. Some of the language used and attitudes expressed nationally during the referendum campaign, and following the Brexit vote have been disappointing, and to some of us distressing. This event is our opportunity to stand up for what we believe in and generate discussion and awareness of the human stories behind some of the easy phrases.

In times like these it is too easy to get tired and discouraged, and I must thank all the Trustees who have supported us so wholeheartedly and the staff in the office who always go the extra mile. And, of course, the very heart of our work is the befriending that all of you do, day in day out. When you smile at one person in despair you bring a little piece of light- with visitors like ours it will never be dark.

For me, this year it was the occasions when I found a friend has achieved indefinite right to remain, or was invited to Paris to celebrate a birthday with another friend that reminded me why we exist. Whatever trials and tribulations are in store, we walk with our friends and remember that hope and loving friendship are the most important things in the world.

**Dr Gemma Stockford**

April 2017

# Director's Report

The 2016 AGM came at the end of my first day at GDWG; my fantastic predecessor Nic Eadie had been handing over to me at the office, about a month before I started the role in earnest in June. To say a quite lot happened in 2016 – within Gatwick IRCs, detention in this country, our charity, the UK and the world – would be something of an understatement. One thing that has remained constant for me personally, though, is that I am ceaselessly blown away by the dedication and brilliance of those involved in GDWG, from our incredible visitors, wonderful staff team, excellent board and utterly inspiring Refugee Tales team. I am a naturally optimistic person in any case – this is probably a prerequisite for working in this field – but for all the immense challenges of our work, it is not hard to remain hopeful when working with such extraordinary and compassionate people.

My background includes years working with refugees and asylum seekers, and my previous job had included responsibility for the British Red Cross's family tracing work at the Heathrow IRCs. Despite this experience, every day at GDWG I am freshly shocked by the situations of those held in detention, and also their phenomenal resilience. Every day also underlines the importance of all of our work, but in particular the value of visiting, which is the heart of all we do. I believe the befriending of our visitors transforms and even saves lives, and I am in awe of those who carry out this work.

The full implications of Brexit are of course still to be felt generally, as well as specifically for detention and the conditions of asylum seekers and other migrants in the UK. One immediate consequence for us, though, is that the political establishment and the media are so focused on Brexit that raising issues around detention conditions and the existence of indefinite detention itself has become even harder. Despite this, we have made great progress in speaking to decision-makers about detention in the past year, both through our collaboration with other organisations as part of Detention Forum, and through our own Refugee Tales project. While it is easy to feel that things only get worse for detainees, Stephen Shaw's report last year is one of several developments in recent years that point the way to improvement, and I believe that we can play a key part in continuing to press for change.

The figures below about our work in the Gatwick IRCs in 2016 present a somewhat mixed picture. We provided assistance to more people in detention than any previous year, and sadly it seems that more very vulnerable people are being detained than even before. We started visiting fewer people, though, due to changes and temporary closures at the IRCs. Tinsley House has been closed for refurbishment since September, but is due to re-open with an expanded capacity by the end of May. When Tinsley is re-open – to include a new family centre, following the closure of Cedars – there will be more people held in immigration detention at Gatwick than ever before. I and the staff team are working hard to ensure that we are able to develop our services, in turn, to increase the support we can give. I believe we can continue being a light in the dark to those detained at Gatwick, and that we will, in the end, see an end to indefinite detention in the UK. We can and will play a big part in that.

I wanted to say a particularly big thank you to my office staff team, to the Refugee Tales committee, to Gemma and the board of Trustees, and to Dan, Hannah, Celia, Marygold, Anne, Leanne, Mariam and Irene for their invaluable extra help in the office.

And, thank you so much to everyone who helped us in any way in 2016.

**James Wilson**

May 2017

# Facts and Figures

In 2016 we provided a form of assistance to 1376 detainees in total (compared to 954 in 2015).

## Assistance

Below are some of the measurable ways in which GDWG assisted detainees in 2016.

<b>Number of Detainees Requesting</b>	<b>Total 2016</b>	<b>Total 2015</b>
Agency Liaison/referral	360	109
Clothing	369	330
Drop-in	181	375
Information/signposting legal advice	327	287
Phone cards	1389	887
Removal Money	181	125
Section 4 Assistance	47	83
Transport Money for families to visit	22	14
Visitor	121	231

## Length of Detention

We had carried out a 'snapshot' of how long each of the detainees we were in touch with on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 had spent in the Gatwick IRCs:

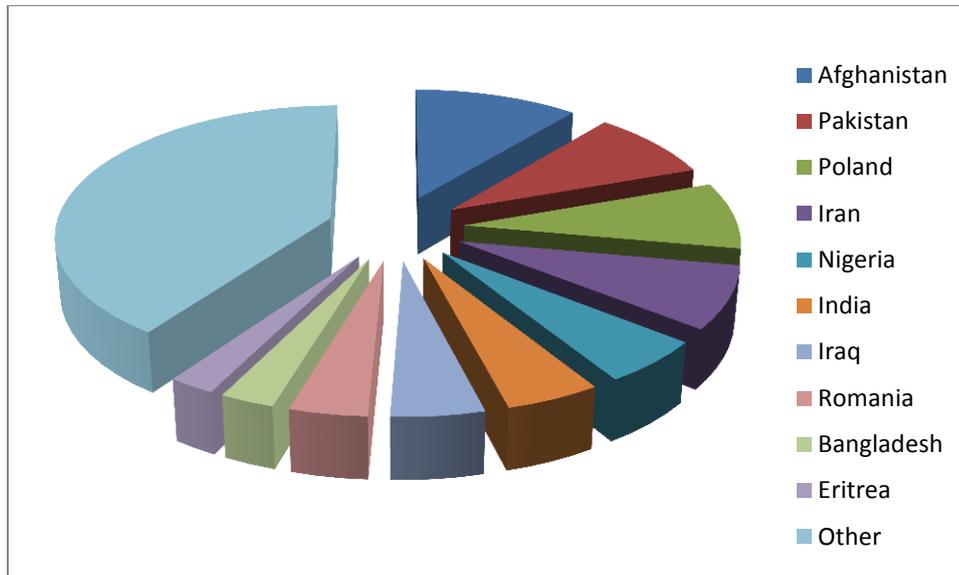
<b>Period of Detention</b>	<b>Number Detainees (2015)</b>		
	<b>BH</b>	<b>TH</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>0-30 days</b>	36	14	50
<b>1-3 months</b>	57	12	69
<b>3-6 months</b>	19	4	23

<b>6-12 months</b>	11	0	11
<b>Over 12 months</b>	3	0	3

When HMIP inspected Brook House between 31<sup>st</sup> October and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016, they recorded 87 people who had held at Brook for over 2 months, with one detainee having completed 545 nights at the centre. They also found that – since their previous report – the average length of detention had actually increased from 28 to 48 days. It should be noted that some of those detained will have previously been held at a different IRC, so the actual overall length of detention will be even longer. The most recent Home Office statistics show that the proportion of people being eventually released back in to UK society after being in detention is around 55%. There seem no clear signs of reduction of length of detention, or of a reduction in the size of the detention estate.

## Countries of Origin

We had contact with detainees contacting us from an even wider range of different countries of origins this year: 107 different countries, compared to 97 in 2015. We supported more people from Afghanistan (111) than any other single nationality. The most significant development was the continuing increase in European nationals we came into contact with, which rose to 217 (from 187 in 2015, and 94 in 2014), with Polish detainees (87) rising to the second most supported nationality by GDWG.



# Outreach, Research and work with other organisations

Following a six month residency at Salford University, the GDWG quilt was exhibited at the Hawth Theatre by Crawley Campaign Against Racism at the time of their anniversary. The quilt was also hosted by Worth Parish at the time of a Lampedusa Cross service. The outreach committee continued to demonstrate the work of the group inviting visitors including Niamh Cusack to GDWG to meet volunteer visitors and former detainees.

Stories of the refugee experience were published in the 'Refugee Tales' publication by Comma Press and the book was launched at the Hay Festival in May 2016. The tales were read in literature events at Manchester Literature Festival (with Marina Lewycka and Dragan Todorovic), Small Wonder Festival at Charleston (Dragan Todorovic and Patience Agbabi) and the South Bank (Kamila Shamsie, David Herd, Caroline Bergvall and Josh Cohen). Talks on Refugee Tales were given in Ludlow, Lewes, Motion Festival Paris, Reid Hall Paris, Violence of Detention Forum, Simon Fraser University Vancouver and at Rylands Library, Manchester. Some of the tales were published in Japan. Refugee Tales has been used on university syllabuses in King's College, London, The George Washington University, University of Ottawa, The Open University, Simon Fraser University and is highlighting indefinite immigration detention in the UK and overseas to audiences we have not reached before.

2016 was the year that Abdulrazak Gurnah became patron of Refugee Tales alongside Ali Smith. Refugee Tales continued as an outreach project, raising awareness of indefinite detention across the counties of Kent Surrey and London on a walk from Canterbury to Westminster. Olivia Laing's 'The Abandoned Person's Tale' was featured in The Observer reaching a nationwide audience and I was interviewed on Woman's Hour with Jackie Kay to an international audience; the book was featured in 'Start The Week'. Ali Smith and David Herd were recorded for a Guardian Podcast talking about Refugee Tales and the book was Scots Makar, Jackie Kay's 'Pick of the Year' in the Scottish Review of Books. The collaboration with the University of Kent, started in 2015, was deepened with joint working on a Forum at the university with speakers on detention from many different disciplines and institutions.

Refugee Tales continued to campaign for a 28 day time limit to detention. Contemporary writers wrote tales of the refugee and detainee experience and read the tales in free evening events ending with a performance at the Institute of Contemporary Arts with Billy Bragg performing and with host Shami Chakrabarti. Jeremy Irons read Shakespeare's plea for refugees on the steps of the South Bank Centre. A large team including catering crew, drivers, walk team with walk leaders and back markers, cake bakers, first aiders, a press and publicity team, arts team, and support crew came together in a tremendous feat of co-operation. Special thanks to David – Chair of Arts Committee, Christina - Chair of the Walk Committee, and Mary - Chair of the Publicity Committee. Thanks to John for work on the website. Thank you Katie, Avril, Marie, Mary, James, and Dan who have worked on using the Refugee Tales publication as a tool to engage with parliamentarians from all parties on indefinite detention. Parliamentarians have met with the team and signed a statement of support for an end to indefinite detention.

**Anna Pincus**  
May 2017

# Treasurer's Report

GDWG reported a surplus of £52,725 in 2016, compared to £7,541 in 2015. The £45k improvement consists of a £24k increase in grant income, a £12k increase in donations (including new income of £3k for the Walking Project for former detainees), £6k less other income (relating to Hawth Theatre ticket revenue for the Refugee Tales closing event in 2015) and a £15k reduction in costs. The surplus of £5k from the Refugee Tales in 2016 (a walk from Canterbury to London in solidarity with refugees and detainees) was £7k less than in 2015. 'Friends' income is growing but was still just £761 in the year.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	2016	2016	2016	2015
	£	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>				
Donations and legacies	62,107	167,598	229,705	193,197
Investment income	671	-	671	760
Other income	-	-	-	5,745
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,778</b>	<b>167,598</b>	<b>230,376</b>	<b>199,702</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	130	-	130	576
Charitable activities:				
Refugee Tales	11,111	12,101	23,212	30,129
Relief to immigrants and refugees	24,930	129,379	154,309	161,456
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,171</b>	<b>141,480</b>	<b>177,651</b>	<b>192,161</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b>26,607</b>	<b>26,118</b>	<b>52,725</b>	<b>7,541</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>	<b>88,132</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>88,132</b>	<b>80,591</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>114,739</b>	<b>26,118</b>	<b>140,857</b>	<b>88,132</b>

Total income was £230k in 2016 compared to £200k in 2015. There was an increase in grants (excluding Refugee Tales) of £35k, an increase in donations of £9k (also excluding Refugee Tales) and a reduction in Refugee Tales income of £14k (including a £12k reduction in grants restricted to Refugee Tales expenditure). Total expenditure of £178k in 2016 reduced by £15k compared to 2015, with staff costs £10k lower, Refugee Tales costs £7k lower and new Walking Project costs of £2k. Cash at year end was £184k compared to £108k at the end of 2015 and the Charity's financial position appears sound. Creditors increased to £45k (2015 £24k), mainly as a result of higher deferred income balances.

#### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER

	2016		2015	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets:</b>				
Tangible assets		1,428		1,269
<b>Current assets:</b>				
Debtors	459		2,677	
Cash at bank and in hand	183,837		108,210	
		<u>184,296</u>		<u>110,887</u>
<b>Creditors falling due within one year</b>		<b>(44,867)</b>		<b>(24,024)</b>
Net current assets		139,429		86,863
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>140,857</u>		<u>88,132</u>
<b>Income funds:</b>				
<b>Restricted funds</b>		26,118		-
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>		114,739		88,132
<b>Fund balances at end of year</b>		<u>140,857</u>		<u>88,132</u>

**George Fitzsimons**  
April 2016

# Support

## We are grateful for the support of:

### Major funders:

The AB Charitable Trust  
 Awards for All  
 Arts Council  
 Bernadette Trust  
 The Big Lottery Fund  
 Bromley Trust  
 Crawley Borough Council  
 Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust  
 The Henry Smith Charity  
 The Hillcote Trust  
 Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales  
 The Longley Trust  
 Souter Charitable Trust  
 Sussex Community Foundation  
 The Tudor Trust

### Our patrons:

Lord Dholakia PC, OBE, DL  
 Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

### Our friends and colleagues:

Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees  
 Bail for Immigration Detainees  
 Bhatt Murphy Solicitors  
 Birnberg Pierce  
 Brighton Against Detention  
 British Red Cross  
 Chris Oxlade  
 Crawley Community and Voluntary Service  
 Councillor Chris Cheshire, Mayor of Crawley  
 Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors  
 Detention Action  
 Detention Forum  
 Doughty Street Chambers  
 Duncan Lewis Solicitors  
 Freedom from Torture  
 Garden Court Chambers  
 Greg O Ceallaigh  
 Helen Bamber Foundation  
 Henry Smith MP  
 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons  
 Immigration Law Practitioners Association

Lawrence Lupin solicitors  
 Leigh Day Solicitors  
 Lisa Davies  
 Leonora Corden and Eastside Primetimers  
 Lewes Group in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers  
 Medical Justice  
 Morton Hall Visitors Group  
 Mother's Union  
 Public Law Project  
 Refugee Council  
 Richard Place Dobson  
 Samphire  
 Samaritans (Reigate branch)  
 SOAS Detainee Support  
 Steve Reed MP  
 University of Law  
 University of Kent  
 Verne Visitors Group  
 Yarls Wood Befrienders

### Refugee Tales contributors:

Anna Pincus for superbly coordinating the project  
 Katie Close and her incredible support  
 Chairs of the committees, David Herd, Mary Barrett and Christina Fitzsimons, and to all the committee members.  
 All former detainees who joined us and shared their stories  
 The catering crew, support crew, walk leaders, chaperones, logo and website designers, photographers and film-makers.  
 All the venues that hosted us, with particular thanks to the Institute of Contemporary Arts.  
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 Bridges Arts Group and London Nautical School.  
 Kent Refugee Help, Kent Refugee Action Network and University of Kent.  
 Refugee Week, Platforma Arts, Music in Detention, Dover Big Local.  
 Everyone who wrote the Tales.  
 Everyone who walked with us. Ali Smith and Abdulrazak Gurnah, Refugee Tales patrons.

**Our thanks to:**

All churches, individuals and organisations who have donated money, clothing and other items to us

**Our wonderful volunteers, who do such great work with those we support in detention**