

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

2015

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

Registered Charity No: 1124328

Patron: Lord Dholakia PC, OBE, DL

Annual Report

LLOYDS BANK FOUNDATION
England & Wales 

 
LOTTERY FUNDED

Detainees' Words

Some words from current detainees and those released

When I get a visitor from Gatwick I felt less stress, less depress and like a family.

Make me think that at least there are people out there who cares.

It helps a lot to know someone cares. I would have no one otherwise.

It is very good to have a visitor. My visitor is very kind and give me hope. Her visits are the best part of my week.

Lovely Katie makes you feel like someone actually care for you.

Build my confidence and empowered me to always hope for positive result in the near future.

Gatwick visitors are doing well they are helpful and they have good heart and they are very nice. I am happy I have a Gatwick visitor. They are my feel like my family.

God bless them, god bless them, god bless her, god bless him. Thanks for your help.

The Gatwick group is doing a wonderful job. May the Lord god reward everyone in this group in a million folds.

Seven star service and a charity I would love to help if possible in future time.

Very helpful and kind hearted individuals, every meeting brings me back to life and keeps you going in this nasty horrible place.

If there are things inside here that's affecting my being - automatically you become my vanguard – my outside voice.

Chair's Report

In the field in which we work the last year has been tumultuous, both locally and nationally. Sometimes, as the international picture unfolds, it can be difficult to hold our focus and to keep doing what we can do- but as always I am impressed as our staff, volunteers and trustees work indefatigably without apparent diversion to support those who we serve.

The national picture has changed fast. From ignorance to widespread sympathy for the plight of refugees escaping to Italy and Greece and then to a focus on control and border protection the media landscape has veered widely. 'Immigration' and 'refugee' issues are used in some quarters to build a climate of fear but this has generated action from those who want the world to be a better place for all. An army of volunteers (including significant numbers of people from Britain) are working in continental Europe whilst back at home there is a ground swell of pressure for our government to act and support displaced persons wherever they may be.

Locally GDWG has been at the forefront of drawing attention to the plight of those suffering immigration detention. Refugee Tales, the walk in solidarity with detainees and ex-detainees, was a resounding success, achieving coverage in the national media. On the day I arrived to walk I will not forget the welcome I was given by the ex-detainees involved and the pleasure they appeared to take in being able to offer support when they knew where everything was and I knew nothing. Our staff, volunteers, and friends are working hard to prepare the follow-up events for this year's Refugee Tales (3-8 July). Again there will be a central walk with accompanying literary and artistic endeavour which we expect to further highlight the plight of those in detention.

Our office continues as a hive of activity, co-ordinating our direct work with detainees, Refugee Tales, school talks, other outreach activity, and also in addition several research projects which are invaluable as an evidential basis for some of our awareness raising activities. All the staff, both current and former, have worked with enthusiasm beyond what is required. This has been ably led by Nic Eadie who has kept us all on an even keel, but is moving on to pastures new after almost 9 years of hard graft for us. We will be very sorry to see him go and wish him well in his new adventures. At our AGM we hope to be able to introduce you to our new director who will be taking up the reins in the summer.

Our financial footing has been a consideration which the Trustees have been considering in detail. However after a great deal of hard work by Felicity Dick and Nic Eadie we are extremely glad to have achieved a further lottery grant. This will stand us in good stead over the next period whilst we continue to diversify our sources of funding.

As always if you are reading this and wish to offer your time efforts or skills there are many ways in which you can join us; we do not all have to run the marathon (something I personally am saving for a long future date, maybe). Many of you visit detainees. This is the core of our work and the friendships you make are the foundation of our organisation, for this we, and those you visit, are grateful. If however this a step too far for you at present, or you wish to contribute in additional ways, do contact myself or the office staff and I am sure we can find you a niche.

As always, by trying to summarise what is done in our name, I am humbled by the number of people who put in so much time, effort and good will which allows us to continue our work. My special thanks to those who stepped down this year: staff members Lauren Cape-Davenhill and Sarah Pailthorpe, trustees Elaine Mitchell and Lisa Burroughes, as well as our wonderful, supportive long-serving patron Baroness Shirley Williams. Thank you all.

Gemma Stockford
April 2016

Director's Report

2015 was a year like no other since I've been at GDWG. The political landscape around the issue of migration shifted seismically, often from week to week, as news from the Mediterranean and the troubled countries beyond grabbed the headlines and affected and informed the public debate more than ever. The terrible pictures from Calais and the Mediterranean coast seemed to sway public opinion back and forth like never before, while in the office we had a surge of clothing donations and media enquiries as a result. I remember the week that Alan Kurdi tragically died on that beach in Turkey, and the sudden and astonishing shift in public perceptions around the issue of people putting their lives at risk by crossing the Mediterranean in such huge numbers. Up to that point the narrative had very much been around the dangers that lorry drivers and British tourists were facing driving through Calais, and pictures of menacing-looking hooded men running along motorways were the dominant ones. But the terrible photographs of Alan Kurdi's lifeless body seemed to flick a switch in the minds of many people in this country who previously had perhaps not grasped the full scope of the situation, and the fact that these were fellow human beings who were dying on the beaches of Europe trying to find a safe place.

With these awful events came both opportunities and threats. While at first public opinion seemed to turn dramatically to a position of greater compassion and willingness to help, it was not long before the backlash began and the debate became muddled with one about security and terrorism. The terrorist atrocities in Tunisia, Paris, Egypt and Turkey, not to mention the scores more further afield that often went pretty much unreported, brought about a hardening of attitudes among many people and many governments, and it seemed to be that a general perception abounded that every refugee was a potential terrorist, ignoring the fact that these were exactly the people who were escaping from the terrorist groups who were destroying their homelands. It was hard not to become angry and frustrated by the failure of many to see the issue through a lens of shared humanity, but rather to do exactly what the terrorists want – to create division and divide people. In the GDWG office we saw a significant number of people who had come to Europe on the rickety boats, who were now facing removal back to Italy and other Southern and Eastern European countries, who, on the whole, had made it very clear that they were not welcome their first time round. Most were terrified of the thought of being sent back to these places, where they feared they would be rejected and left to fend for themselves in destitution. While being in detention is no place to spend a life, for some this was better than the alternatives.

The year also saw some encouraging signs politically that the issue of detention was at last receiving the scrutiny that we have long argued it should, despite the setback of the new Conservative government initially saying that they had no intention of instigating reform. The Parliamentary Inquiry into the use of detention in the UK had reported very early in the year, arguing for a series of wide-ranging reforms, including the imposition of a 28 day time limit. While this was rejected by the government, yet another scandal concerning the treatment of women at Yarl's Wood, as well growing criticism from all corners, forced them into announcing a review of the welfare of people in detention, led by Stephen Shaw MBE, a former Prisons and Probation Ombudsman. His report, submitted in the Autumn to the Home Secretary but not released until early 2016, was again highly critical and recommended a reduction in numbers detained and periods of detention.

So it is with a heavy heart that I sign off from my final Director's Report. After almost nine years at GDWG it is time to say farewell to all the good people who make up this fantastic charity. I will miss you all, and remember you always. I hope that I leave GDWG in a better state than when I arrived, and I know I leave it in good hands with the wonderful office staff, volunteers and board of trustees. My sincere thanks go to you all.

Nic Eadie
April 2016

Facts and Figures

In 2015 we were in contact with 954 detainees in total.

Assistance

Below are some of the measurable ways in which GDWG assisted detainees in 2014.

Number of Detainees Requesting	Total 2015	Total 2014
Agency Liaison/referral	109	155
Clothing	330	411
Drop-in	375	335
Information/signposting legal advice	287	337
Phone cards	887	908
Removal Money	125 (£3170)	227 (£5760)
Section 4 Assistance	83	80
Transport Money for families to visit	14 (£503)	7 (£283.39)
Visitor	231	239

Demand for our services remained at a similar level as the previous few years, though the total number of people contacting was almost 200 fewer than the previous year. However, we visited almost the same number of people and saw more people at our Brook House drop-in, indicating that demand for more intensive casework remained consistent.

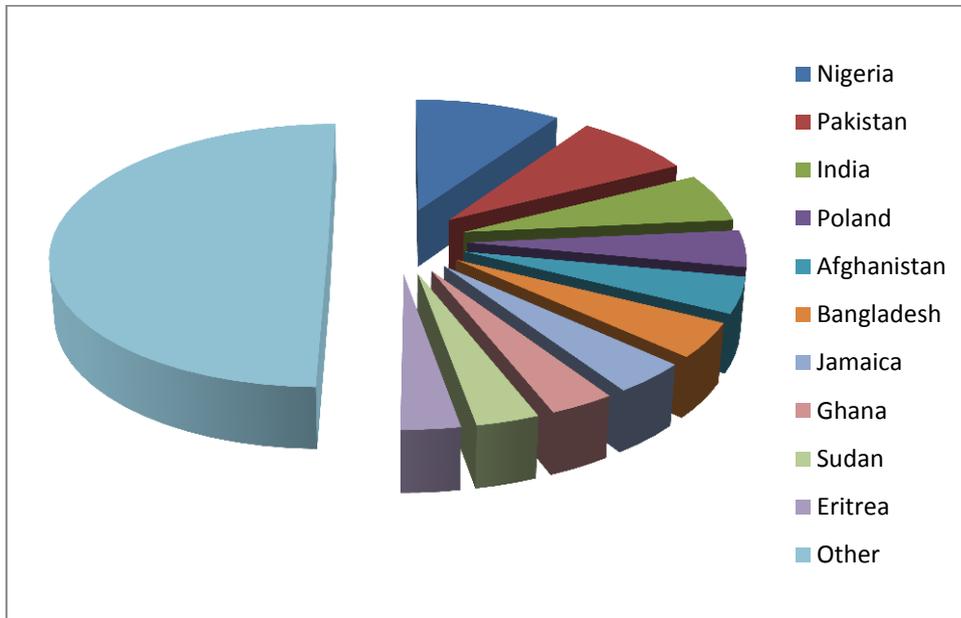
Length of Detention

Below is a ‘snapshot’ of how long each of the detainees we were in touch with on 31st December 2015 had spent in the Gatwick IRCs. Looking at these figures in conjunction with the immigration statistics that the Home Office release each quarter it is clear that the number of people being held for very long periods is decreasing. In 2011, for example, we supported 48 people who had been detained for longer than 6 months, including 29 who had been detained for over a year. This year those figures had come down to 14 and 3 respectively. The most recent official statistics also show that the proportion of people being released back in to UK society after being in detention has again risen, this time to an extraordinary 55%.

Period of Detention	Number Detainees (2015)			Number Detainees (2014)		
	BH	TH	Total	BH	TH	Total
0-30 days	36	14	50	27	16	43
1-3 months	57	12	69	63	23	86
3-6 months	19	4	23	18	1	19
6-12 months	11	0	11	14	1	15
Over 12 months	3	0	3	4	0	4

Countries of Origin

We had a much more even spread of people contacting us from different countries this year. We supported more Nigerians (92) than any other single nationality, representing a fraction under 10% of the total number we supported. The most significant change was the huge increase in European nationals we came into contact with, which doubled from 94 in 2014 to 187 in 2015, with Polish detainees (43) being fourth on the list.



Visiting

Below is a ‘snapshot’ of the people we were visiting on 31st December, 2015. We were visiting a total of 48 detainees on that date, with two people having been there for over a year, and three more for between 6 and 12 months.

At year-end we had approximately 65 visitors, and during the year we had taken on 21 of these as new volunteers. We also have a small number of volunteers who are involved in other ways, most notably our Refugee Tales project. Many of our volunteers stay with the Group for long periods, with 9 people achieving between 5 and 10 years’ service, and an incredible 17 people having been working with the Group for 10 years or more.

Period of Visiting	Number of detainees being visited on 31/12/15	Number of detainees being visited on 31/12/14
0-30 days	15	12
1-3 months	18	21
3-6 months	10	5
6-12 months	3	2
Over 12 months	2	1

Outreach, Research and work with other organisations

The GDWG quilt reached an audience of 42,000 as part of the Adopting Britain exhibition at the South Bank in London from 17 April to 6 September and visitors to the exhibition included schools, colleges, community groups and youth groups. Following this, the quilt began a six month residence in the Clifford Whitworth Library at the University of Salford, in an exhibition curated by Scots Makar, Jackie Kay. GDWG has formed a close link with Salford University through its Chancellor and has also worked with local schools in Crawley throughout the year. Local media students made a film on the work of the group, and drama students devised ‘A’ level course work from the inspiration of a GDWG talk. The outreach committee continued to demonstrate the work of the group inviting local leaders for visits to GDWG to meet volunteer visitors and former detainees. In 2015 such visits were made by Steve Reed MP and Crawley Borough and County Councillors.

2015 was the year that Ali Smith became patron of Refugee Tales, an outreach project that raised awareness of indefinite detention across the counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex on a walk from Dover to Crawley. Ali Smith’s ‘Detainee’s Tale’ was printed in the Guardian reaching a nationwide audience. Refugee Tales was the result of a collaboration with the University of Kent and David Herd, Professor of Modern Literature in the English Department in particular, 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 during Refugee Week in June 2015 ending with a performance in the Hawth Theatre to an audience of 500 people with Yasmin Alibhai-Brown as

host. A large team including catering crew, drivers, walk team with walk leaders and back markers, cake bakers, first aiders, a press and publicity team, artistic manifestations team, and support crew came together in a tremendous feat of co-operation. Hosts such as Shobu Kapoor and Niamh Cusack joined writers Abdulrazak Gurnah, Chris Cleave, Marina Lewycka, Patience Agbabi and musicians including The Young'uns to raise awareness of indefinite detention. Special thanks to David Herd, Christina Fitzsimons - Chair of the Walk Committee, Sarah Pailthorpe who managed the catering team, and Mary Barrett - Chair of the Publicity Committee for their dedication to the project and thanks to Bridges Arts Group for their drama workshops with former detainees. Refugee Tales events have taken place at the New North London Synagogue, Refugee Tales was the subject of a Vice-Chancellor's Lecture by David Herd at the University of Kent, and talks have been given in Suffolk, Shropshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and London (at the Utopia Conference at the ICA). Refugee Tales has been the subject of films by Frances Freeman and Shanshan Chen and inspired journal articles in the UK, Australia, South America and Canada. In 2015 Comma Press undertook to publish the 2015 tales with the launch due in June 2016.

In May 2015 we launched our research on the impact of the legal aid cuts on detainees, researched and written by Lauren Cape-Davenhill, 'Cutting Justice'. The message from this was loud and clear, that the cuts to funding had meant that the majority of the people we work with, most of whom had very limited financial resources, were no longer able to access free legal representation by way of legal aid for some or all of their cases, no matter how strong their case was, and that the hardest hit were those with private and family lives in the UK and EEA nationals. We also found that the alternatives to legal aid representation, most notably private representation, self-representation, pro bono organisations and Exceptional Case Funding, were all problematic, and none bridged the significant gap left by the cuts. We hope that this report adds to the mounting body of evidence that suggests strongly that the cuts to legal aid have led to greatly restricted access to justice for the poorest and most marginalised, meaning that we are now facing the terrible truth that in many instances only those who have money can have justice.

In our work with other organisations, we continued to work closely with the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID) and many of the other visitors' groups. We attended the AVID conference in June and we were pleased to meet members of some of the new groups at The Verne and the Larne short-term holding facility. GDWG Director Nic Eadie co-authored a report with Ali McGinley from AVID, published in 2015, as a project of the Detention Forum. The report, 'Rethinking Vulnerability in Detention: a Crisis of Harm', added to the material already published by the Parliamentary Inquiry on vulnerability, and proved very timely in relation to the Shaw Review which took place during the year. We assisted Mr Shaw in visiting Tinsley House as part of his Review, and were able to feed our views on the detention of vulnerable people to him as part of this.

Treasurer's Report

GDWG reported a surplus of £7,541 in 2015 compared to a deficit of £22,956 in 2014. The £31k improvement consists of a £12k surplus from the Refugee Tales (a walk in solidarity with refugees and detainees from Dover to Crawley via Canterbury in Refugee Week 2015), a £1k reduction in other income and a £20k reduction in other costs.

Total income was £200k in 2015 compared to £160k in 2014. Refugee Tales income was £42k, comprising £23k in grants, £3k from Patrons, £7k in collections and donations, £3k from walkers and £6k from the closing event at the Hawth Theatre. Other (non-Refugee-Tales) grant income was £142k, compared to £150k in 2014. Other donation and gift income of £14k was above the 2014 figure of £7k, with income of £410 from the new Friends scheme. Interest income of £760 was at a similar level to 2014.

Direct charitable expenditure of £161k reduced by £19k, with staff costs £11k lower because of one fewer member of staff. Detainee welfare costs (which are difficult to predict) reduced by £4k and rent by £3k, with other costs broadly neutral. Refugee Tales costs were £30k, including the costs of the walk, food and accommodation, theatre hire and authors' and performers' fees, while the costs of Refugee Tales and The Second Longest Day in 2014 were £2k.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER

	Unrestricted 2015 £	Restricted 2015 £	Total 2015 £	Total 2014 £
Incoming resources from generated funds:				
Grants received	14,298	150,846	165,144	149,626
Donations received	28,053	-	28,053	7,046
Other income	5,745	-	5,745	2,170
Interest received	760	-	760	868
Total incoming resources	48,856	150,846	199,702	159,710
Resources expended:				
Direct charitable expenditure	35,771	125,685	161,456	180,666
Refugee Tales and Second Longest Day	4,970	25,159	30,129	1,809
Raising funds	576	-	576	191
Total resources expended	41,317	150,844	192,161	182,666
Net incoming/ (outgoing) resources	7,541	-	7,541	(22,956)
Fund balances at beginning of year	80,591	-	80,591	103,547
Fund balances at end of year	88,132	-	88,132	80,591

Cash at year end was £108,210 compared to £107,552 at the end of 2014 and the Charity's financial position appears sound. Creditors reduced by £9k to £24k, mainly as a result of lower deferred income for the Big Lottery Fund. The Big Lottery Fund has awarded a new grant for four years from 2016, with the first year's grant £116k and subsequent years' grants reducing gradually to £70k in the final year.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets:				
Tangible assets		1,269		1,984
Current assets:				
Debtors	2,677		4,580	
Cash at bank and in hand	108,210		107,552	
	<u>110,887</u>		<u>112,132</u>	
Creditors falling due within one year	(24,024)		(33,525)	
Net current assets		86,863		78,607
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>88,132</u>		<u>80,591</u>
Income funds:				
Restricted funds		-		-
Unrestricted funds		88,132		80,591
Fund balances at end of year		<u>88,132</u>		<u>80,591</u>

George Fitzsimons
April 2016

Support

We are grateful for the support of:

Our funders:

The AB Charitable Trust
 Awards for All
 Arts Council
 Bernadette Trust
 The Big Lottery Fund
 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 Williams of Crosby (retired)

Our friends and colleagues:

Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees
 Bail for Immigration Detainees
 Bhatt Murphy Solicitors
 Birnberg Peirce
 Chris Oxlade
 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
 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
 Public Law Project
 Red Cross International Family Tracing
 Refugee Council
 Samphire
 Samaritans (Reigate branch)
 Steve Reed MP
 University of Law
 University of Kent
 Yarls Wood Befrienders

Refugee Tales contributors:

Anna Pincus, for coordinating the project
 Chairs of the committees, David Herd, Mary Barrett and Christina Fitzsimons, and to all the committee members.
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 Everyone who walked with us.
 Ali Smith, Refugee Tales patron.

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