

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group 2008

Facts and Figures

In 2008 we have been able to **assist 780 detainees** held at Tinsley House which is an **increase of almost 40%** on the previous year. While the figures are similar in terms of the proportion of asylum/non-asylum cases, and men to women, there is **a very significant increase in the numbers of both children held with their parents, and those who were unaccompanied** and claiming to be under 18, but whose ages the Home Office disputed. By far the highest proportion of those detained at Tinsley House continues to be from Nigeria, followed by Afghanistan. High on the list also were Eritrea, Algeria, Iraq and Iran. It is well established that the latter are countries where forced returns are extremely difficult to enact, either due to difficulties in obtaining travel documents, or because it is considered too dangerous to forcibly return failed asylum seekers. The number of Zimbabweans who came into contact with us was relatively low, particularly during the later months of the year, when the government agreed to stop making forced returns there.

The increased demand for our services also saw some changes in what we were being asked for, and consequently what we focused our attention on. In particular, **demands for clothing and toiletries increased dramatically** this last year, as did requests for phonecards. There was a large increase in the money we gave to destitute detainees about to be removed. We also assisted 11 detainees' families by paying their travel costs so that they could visit Tinsley House. All of this meant that **the financial outlay, spent directly on detainee welfare, has increased considerably**. Our success rate in finding detainees new legal representatives fell again, as we found it more and more difficult to find good solicitors able to take on new cases. However, we have **continued to liaise with legal representatives whenever requested**, and gave many detainees advice on where they may be able to find a good lawyer.

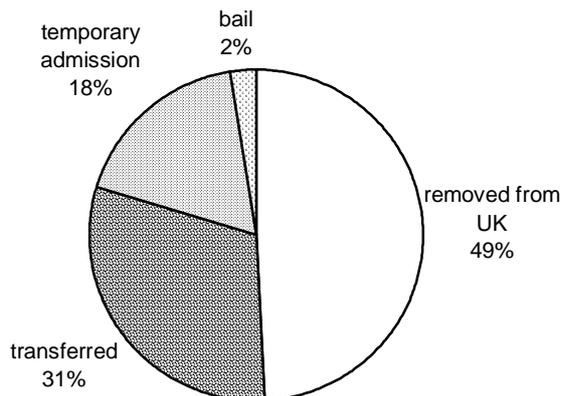
Type of assistance	Detainees assisted in 2005	Detainees assisted in 2006	Detainees assisted in 2007	Detainees assisted in 2008
Telephone card	339	466	343	568
New solicitor	16	20	22	11
Legal liaison / signposting of legal advice	276	223	236	217
Clothing	179	252	268	481
Toiletries	204	198	231	322
Liaison with friends or family	33	34	28	23
Referral / liaison with other agencies	122	140	70	60
Removal money for destitute detainees	39 (£1120)	50 (£1560)	30 (£650)	84 (£1695)
Transport costs for family visits	N/A	N/A	N/A	11 (£508)

The length of time that detainees spent in Tinsley House, is similar to 2007. **Three quarters of the detainees we supported stayed for less than a month**, but **one in seven stayed for two months or more**. While we still do not see the long-term detention widespread in other Immigration Removal Centres such as Colnbrook, we did have **a significant minority who spent 6 months or more in detention**, including one detainee, who at time of writing has been in Tinsley for almost eighteen months and previously has spent periods totalling another three and a half years in other centres.

Length of detention:

Period of detention	Number of detainees held	Percentage of total
0-7 days	249	33%
1 week - 1 month	322	41%
1 - 2 months	101	13%
2 - 4 months	75	10%
4 - 6 months	15	2%
Over 6 months	14	2%

Where detainees went after Tinsley House:



The chart shows what happened to 629 detainees who were in contact with us, after they left Tinsley House. Almost **half were removed from the country, 20% were released**, either on temporary admission or bail, while the **remainder were transferred** to another detention centre.

Around **40% of those in contact with us were visited by one of our volunteers**, with a further 15% requesting a visitor, but leaving the centre before we were able to get someone to see them. The remaining 45% told us that they did not require a visit. We **recruited and trained 12 new visitors during the year**, so that we have **today just under 60 active volunteers**.

Immigration status: 73% of the detainees in contact with GDWG were asylum seekers.

Gender: 88% were male, 12% female.

Children in detention: We supported **50 children** who were detained with their parents in 2008, as well as **28 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children**, whose ages the Home Office disputed.

Nationality: Our clients came from 73 different countries:

Afghanistan (85), Albania (4), Algeria (27), Angola (7), Argentina (1), Armenia (4), Bangladesh (17), Barbados (1), Belarus (1), Benin (2), Bolivia (10), Brazil (5), Burkina Faso (1), Burundi (4), Cameroon (12), Canada (1), China (19), Congo Brazzaville (1), Czech Republic (1), Dominica (1), Dominican Republic (1), Democratic Republic of Congo (11), Ecuador (1), Egypt (3), Equatorial Guinea (1), **Eritrea (45)**, Ethiopia (2), France (1), Gambia (7), Georgia (3), Ghana (18), Guinea (2), India (22), Iran (21), **Iraq (40)**, Ivory Coast (6), Jamaica (34), Kazakhstan (1), Kenya (10), Kosovo (5), Lebanon (1), Liberia (8), Libya (8), Malawi (2), Malaysia (2), Moldova (3), Morocco (2), Namibia (8), Nepal (3), Nicaragua (1), **Nigeria (136)**, Pakistan (34), Palestine (6), Russia (2), Rwanda (3), Senegal (3), Sierra Leone (7), Somalia (11), South Africa (2), Sri Lanka (24), Sudan (3), Tajikistan (3), Tanzania (2), Togo (1), Tunisia (3), Turkey (21), Uganda (7), Ukraine (2), USA (1), Vietnam (5), Yemen (6), Zambia (4), Zimbabwe (9)