



# Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

*Registered charity no: 1124328*

## VOLUNTEERS' HANDBOOK

Reviewed September 2020

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## Introduction to GDWG

### Welcome to GDWG!

Thank you for committing your time, skills and enthusiasm to visiting people in detention at Tinsley House & Brook House with GDWG. People held at the detention centres are often isolated and vulnerable. Our primary aim is to demonstrate there are people in the local community who care. A visitor can be a lifeline to someone who has come to Britain for shelter, and been met by suspicion and imprisonment.

So much of the immigration debate in Britain today draws on fear and xenophobia. Yet, as is clear from the numbers of people who are involved in community action to welcome and care for refugees, this is not the whole story. By volunteering with GDWG, you are giving a message that there are people in this country who believe that migrants enrich our society and that everyone should be treated with respect, compassion and generosity. People being detained comprise not only refugees and asylum seekers, but also those who have lived here for many years, some of whom are ex-foreign national prisoners who are detained at the end of their sentence before they are returned to their country of origin.

Over the years we have received letters which suggest the difference a visitor can make:

*I did not have anyone known to me there in London. It was an experience never to be forgotten when I got to know you in a foreign country.*

**Zambian former detainee**

*It has been very traumatic for me going through this kind of ordeal; you have made it less painful by sharing my sorrows.*

**Nigerian detainee**

*You came into my life when I needed you more than words can express. The comfort, understanding, care and most of all sacrificing your time to visit me is something I will live to cherish.*

**Rwandan detainee**

*I consider that I have a family and that family is you.*

**Algerian detainee**

*It's really pleasant when you know that someone cares about you and makes visits.*

**Ukrainian detainee**

*You and your group personify better than anybody else the generous spirit of English people.*

**Albanian detainee**

Visiting people in detention can be stressful. As a group, we wish to give you the best support and information we can. We hope this pack is a good introduction but that you will also refer to it throughout your time volunteering with us. You will also find many useful policies on the GDWG website. <https://www.gdwg.org.uk/get-involved/for-existing-volunteers/>

***You are not alone!***

Do not hesitate to ring the staff on **01293 657070** or your local group co-ordinator if you have any queries or problems.

## The background and structure of GDWG

The Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group started with five visitors in **1995**, when the local Catholic diocese of Arundel and Brighton discovered that there were 40 people held in immigration detention at Gatwick Airport. Tinsley House was built the following year and now holds around 178 men, and occasionally women and children in a family unit. Brook House opened in March 2009, and holds up to 508 single men. Both Brook House and Tinsley House are run by Serco. The visitors group has between 60-70 volunteers who come from a wide range of faiths and backgrounds.

We became a **registered charity** in January 1996. Our patrons are Baroness Helena Kennedy and Lord Dholakia OBE.

Refugee Tales began in 2015 and shares the stories of people with lived experience of detention and those who work with them in three volumes of tales published by Comma Press. Patrons of Refugee Tales are Ali Smith and Abdulrazak Gurnah.

Our self-advocacy parliamentary group began in 2019 to enable people with lived experience of detention to call for change to the UK immigration system.

When Covid-19 began to disrupt our lives, the office team began working from home and our visitors began offering phone support to people in detention and also to those released from detention during the pandemic. Some visitors have recently resumed visiting in person, with proper health and safety measures in place.

The staff team is made up of three full-time and three part-time paid staff plus one intern and our office is at **The Orchard, Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6AD, tel: 01293 657070; fax: 01293 544916**. Staff work on weekdays, between 9.00am and 5.30pm. A map is included in the final section of this pack.

The Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees which meets at least four times a year. They are nominated by members at the Annual General Meeting, which is normally held in the spring each year. A copy of the group's constitution is available from the office or to download from the website.

The members of the Board are currently:

Marie Dewson, *Chair*  
George Fitzsimons, *Treasurer*  
Felicity Dick, *Fundraising Trustee*  
Jamie Macpherson, *Trustee*  
Louise Williamson, *Trustee*  
Avril Loveless, *Trustee*  
Joseph Osho, *Trustee*  
Michael Berkeley, *Trustee*  
Greg Clough, *Trustee*  
Pious Keku, *Trustee*

GDWG offers membership to volunteers, though this is optional. There is no cost to be a member. Only members have voting rights at the AGM. Membership is indefinite until such point that the member resigns from the group. If you would like to be a member of GDWG, or would like more information on this, please inform a member of staff.

The group is linked to other visiting groups throughout the UK by **AVID** (the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees), which acts as an umbrella organisation. You can access a range of useful information through their website: <http://www.aviddetention.org.uk/>.

## Meet the team



**Anna Pincus, Director**  
**[anna@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:anna@gdwg.org.uk)**

Anna worked for the British Council before joining Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group as a volunteer. She has worked in the GDWG office for over ten years and became Director in March 2019. Anna founded 'Refugees Welcome - Crawley' and is co-editor of Refugee Tales, published by Comma Press.



**Karris Hamilton, Senior Detainee Advocacy Coordinator**  
**[karris@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:karris@gdwg.org.uk)**

Karris joined the GDWG team in February 2019. Karris has volunteered with migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum for around 5 years, with a number of organisations including; the British Red Cross, L'Auberge des Migrants and SOAS Detainee Support as a volunteer visitor.



**Ishiaba Kasonga, Advocacy & Administration Support Officer**  
**[kasonga@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:kasonga@gdwg.org.uk)**

Kasonga joined the team in February 2020. He has both a refugee background and lived experience of immigration detention in the UK. Kasonga is also a senior member of the experts-by-experience group, Freed Voices and he has been heavily involved with the group since 2016. He believes that people with lived experience should play a central part in the debate around immigration detention.



**Mana Shamshiri, Advocacy Coordinator**  
**[mana@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:mana@gdwg.org.uk)**

Mana joined the GDWG team in November 2020, having volunteered with Barnet Refugee Service as a youth support worker and as a legal caseworker at Kesar & Co's Intervene Project. She also set up the London branch of Guiti News, a migrant-focused media outlet. She speaks Farsi, French, Dari and English, and believes strongly in the goal of ending detention.



**Marygold Lewis, Administrator**  
**[marygold@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:marygold@gdwg.org.uk)**

Marygold started work as GDWG's administrator in October 2017. Prior to this, Marygold volunteered with the organisation for two years, assisting with office support and visiting detainees. Marygold has travelled and worked in approximately 68 countries throughout her career. This has included work with the UN in Somalia and Niger, as well as independently in Senegal, the West Indies and in the UK as a librarian, editor, translator, and records manager.



**Josie Wade, Project Officer**  
**[josie@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:josie@gdwg.org.uk)**

Josie joined the GDWG team in August 2020, having previously volunteered in the GDWG office. She has also volunteered with organisations including; Student Action for Refugees, Pathways to Independence and Nightline. Having recently completed an MA in Human Rights, Josie is looking forward to working with GDWG to advocate for an end to indefinite detention and supporting the Refugee Tales community.



**Frances Bell, Operations Manager**  
**[frances@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:frances@gdwg.org.uk)**

Frances joined the GDWG team in January 2021. She first walked with the Refugee Tales community in 2019, later joining the organising group as a volunteer. In 2020, she fundraised for GDWG as a Birthday Ambassador, walking 250 miles to mark the charity's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. Frances has also volunteered with Good Chance Theatre, where she copyedited the Change the Word collective's *An Orchestra of Unexpected Sounds*. The anthology was written by poets from over 20 countries who have made the UK their home.



## Our Values

We are committed to improving life for asylum seekers and migrants. Our staff team of six people work ethically and we seek to build best possible working practice. The UK is the only country in western Europe that detains people indefinitely for administrative purposes and at GDWG, we believe that detention is expensive, a waste of human life and we call for an end to indefinite immigration detention for all. We believe that we learn better together with a diverse team. Our culture is one that prioritises listening and we strive to express hospitality and welcome in all we do.

## Support and Training for Volunteers

### Support Groups

Volunteers are divided into five **area support groups**, which meet every six weeks. We ask that you attend these sessions as a core part of your role with us. The main function of these meetings is peer support: visitors sharing their experiences and providing mutual support. The area facilitators are experienced visitors, who can give advice when the office is closed. Their numbers and contact details will be shared in the individual support group meetings. Groups use Whatsapp and email to organise meetings and share information. A GDWG staff member attends each local meeting.

<b>Brighton</b>	<b>Dorothy Sheridan</b>
<b>Reigate</b>	<b>Mary and John Barrett</b>
<b>Crawley</b>	<b>Penny O'Connor</b>
<b>Horsham</b>	<b>Michael Berkeley</b>
<b>Oxted</b>	<b>Martin Powys-Lybbe</b>

### Buddy System

GDWG offers a 'Buddy System' to connect new visitors to those with more experience for advice and support. Please contact the office if you would like a 'buddy'.

### Updates and Bulletins

To supplement this handbook, the office produces an email **newsletter** three times a year. The Director sends regular updates by email to let volunteers know what's happening within the group and further afield. Our websites are also frequently updated to include news and information that can help you, including GDWG's policies relating to visiting – [www.gdwg.org.uk](http://www.gdwg.org.uk). [www.refugeetales.org](http://www.refugeetales.org). [www.28for28.org](http://www.28for28.org)

### Training

GDWG provides a mandatory core training session that all visitors attend a few weeks after their induction and visiting on their own at the detention centres. This three-hour session covers listening skills, cultural awareness, psychological issues, self-care, and touches on some of the legal issues of detention. In addition, we request that our visitors complete online West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) adult safeguarding training. This takes approximately 35 minutes online and the link is here: <https://www.westsussexcpd.co.uk/courses/bookings/default.asp?keyword=safeguarding%20adults&ds=1&sdate=today&isModule=99&town=0>

We run at least three other sessions of ongoing training per year, which **are announced several weeks before they are due to be held. Ideas for future training topics are always welcome! Please contact the GDWG staff team.**

**Volunteer Insurance cover**

Our insurance policy covers our volunteers' involvement with the work of GDWG. However, it does not cover car travel undertaken as part of your volunteering with us. Please declare these journeys to your motor insurance providers to ensure you are fully covered.

**Advice, information and moral support are always available.**

**Our training, local groups and staff are all here to assist you to support people in detention**

**Just ask!**



## Tips on visiting

### Before you visit

When the person in detention you are allocated first asked for a visitor, the GDWG office staff will have talked to them on the phone or visited them, and may have provided clothes or helped them to find a legal representative. They will have explained the purpose of GDWG to them and what to expect from their visitor. When you are asked to visit someone please call the person you will be supporting before you visit to introduce yourself and arrange a mutually convenient time for the visit.

It is also important to check that the person you are visiting is still in the centre just prior to setting off for a visit. People can be suddenly taken from the centre without much warning and ringing in advance can save you a wasted journey. The switchboard receptionist will be able to give you this information (Tinsley House tel: 01293 434 800, Brook House tel: 01293 566 500/559).

### When to visit

Visiting hours at Brook House are **from 2 – 5.30 pm and 6 – 9 pm** every day. If the person you are visiting is religious or keen on sport, they may prefer you to avoid set prayer times or sports sessions. You will need to provide your name, your address and the name of the person you wish to visit. Please note, you must book your visit at least 24 hours in advance. Tinsley House is currently closed due to Covid-19.

To book a visit to Brook House, call 01293 566559 or email [gatwickirc.visitsbooking@serco.com](mailto:gatwickirc.visitsbooking@serco.com).

### Admission to Tinsley/Brook House

There are instructions on how to get to Tinsley House and Brook House and a map in the final section of this pack.

In normal times:

- You will need to take in some photo ID, such as a passport or photo driving license, and a utility or other bill from the past 3 months with your address on it.
- Make sure you note down your booking reference number and bring it with you.
- You will also be asked to fill out a form (giving details of who you are visiting and who you are) and have your picture taken. The reception staff will process this and give you an identification card. When you leave the visitors' room you will have to sign this form again and hand in your ID card.
- On entry you will be subject to a pat-down search and have to empty your pockets. You can take up to £5 into the visits room to purchase a drink and snacks. All other belongings must be left in a locker.
- To enter Brook House you will then go through to another building and through some sliding doors where someone will search you – you might be asked to open your mouth for inspection and take off your shoes.

During Covid-19:

- You will still need to take photo ID, but additional proof of address is no longer required. Your photograph will be taken, although this is likely to happen only at the first visit. There may also be fingerprinting.
- You will be issued a face mask and gloves by reception, which will be compulsory throughout the visit. Hand sanitiser is also provided.
- Locker keys are disinfected and are not handled by visitors.
- Visitor wristbands will be used rather than lanyards.
- There are no physical searches, instead you will be asked to show that your pockets are empty.

- Social distancing is observed. The visits room is reduced to two visits at a time, and there are two metres between the visitor and the person being visited.
- Serco staff generally wear face masks and gloves, although it is not compulsory for them.
- Vending machines are not in use during COVID-19.
- Visits are limited to one-hour slots and the timing of available slots varies for each wing.

This procedure can take a while, depending on how busy things are and on the experience of the staff on duty, so please **allow time**.

## The visit

Some people held in detention are forthcoming and talkative, others more withdrawn. It is sometimes difficult to find things to talk about, especially when the person you are visiting is feeling angry, depressed, and frustrated or speaks little English.

- Do not interrogate the person you are visiting, leave it up to him to tell you what he wants to. Don't be afraid of **silence**. Even if the person in detention does not say much, your visit may still be important to him, and it is a sign that someone cares.
- Make sure that the person you are visiting realises that you have little **power** to affect his case: don't raise their expectations too high. He may unconsciously try to push you into a position of knowledge and power: be honest with him about how little you can do. They should already be aware of what we can or cannot do.
- Your **primary role** is to befriend, not give advice. Since April 2001 it has been illegal for unauthorised people to give advice on immigration law: this includes us.
- Some people spend a short period in detention. Some will have already been issued with removal directions (i.e. have been told the date when immigration intend to forcibly remove them from the UK) by the time you visit. This means that you may not have many visits in which to get to know the person you are visiting and that he may be very distressed (see the advice below on 'Short traumatic visiting relationships').
- Occasionally you will visit someone for an extended period of time; some visitors find this difficult because conversation becomes exhausted and you can see the person you are visiting deteriorate. It might also become harder to keep clear boundaries and be firm if asked to stand as surety – something GDWG strongly advises against. It may also become tricky to offer practical advice as opportunities become limited. You must try not to feel responsible or guilty if you need a break from visiting but please inform the office.
- It occasionally happens that a visitor and the person you've been asked to visit do not get along, or the visitor feels uncomfortable with him. Please inform the office if this happens.

## Working with interpreters

*If the person you are visiting does not speak English, we will try to find them a visitor who speaks their language. If this is not possible, you may find yourself using someone in detention as an interpreter though this is not always allowed.*

- Remember that the interpreter may not have a perfect command of English themselves. Use **simple English** - both for their sake and for that of the person you are visiting, who probably understands at least some English.
- Sit in a position that allows direct **eye contact** with the person you are visiting.
- Ask the interpreter to **translate everything** for you, even he thinks it is irrelevant.
- If you find the interpreter is coming between you and the person you are visiting you may decide to try visiting him on his own, using basic English, signs and drawings.
- Your interpreter will have **needs of his own**. If he has a visitor from the group, you may like to make contact with them, with the interpreter's permission. If he has no visitor, you may need to respond to his needs as well as to those of the person you are visiting – you can suggest he asks for a visitor himself.

- If you need to give information to the person you are visiting **between visits**, you can always ring the interpreter and ask them to pass on a message.
- There are basic English teaching materials and activities held in the visits room for use during visits except during the period of Covid-19.

## Gifts to people in detention

People being held in detention can buy toiletries, sweets, tobacco etc. at the shop in Tinsley and Brook House but many people in detention have no money, and they may ask you to bring them items. Under the Home Office's Detention Centre Rules, the security company should provide all people arriving in detention with toiletries, a phonecard upon arrival, basic clothing and underwear. However, the statutory provision is minimal and for this reason many people will ask for assistance with small material items.

GDWG will refund all minimal and reasonable expenses but please remember that we are a small charity, without large funds, and that - even if you do not claim - what you give to the person you are visiting will raise expectations among others in detention, who may then put pressure on their visitors. *See the 'Guidelines on material support' at the end of this section and note that there is a maximum of £3 per visit for refunded expenses.*

## Expenses

In addition to refunding money you give to a detainee or spend on items for them, the group will cover travel costs up to a certain amount. Rail fares can be reclaimed, and drivers can claim petrol expenses at 45p a mile.

Please note, the reimbursement limit for any visit to a detention centre or meeting at the office is £25 for any mode of travel. Expenses forms are included at the back of this pack. They must be signed and submitted within six months of the last expense claim, including date of travel or purchase.

Please provide all receipts for public transport and items purchased. Failure to do so may mean we are unable to refund you these costs. Please claim the expenses you are entitled to even if you feel you don't need to. You can always donate this sum back to the group afterwards. This will help us to get a clear picture of our costs for our funding applications.

If you want to donate back your travel expenses, it is best to do it separately and if you are a UK taxpayer, please sign a Gift Aid form (available in this pack), which will enable GDWG to claim back tax on your gift.

## Boundaries

Visiting can be extremely stressful. It is important to be realistic about the effect it is having on you, and the limits to what you can do - not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of the vulnerable person you are visiting.

- You can help by listening, accompanying and caring, without feeling guilty about leaving these problems at the detention centre.
- **Acknowledge your feelings** and talk about them at your area group meetings.
- Think out issues before they arise: we strongly advise against giving the person you are visiting your **home phone number or home address**.
- Attend your area group meeting regularly, and talk about the things you are finding hard (and good!). Between meetings the GDWG staff and your area coordinator are always happy to talk.
- Think about how much personal information you want to give the person you are visiting. You are likely to forge different relationships with each person you visit.
- *See the 'Policy on people being held in detention who pose a safety risk' at the end of this section.*

## Medical issues

- If you are concerned about the health of the person you are visiting, encourage them to speak to the centre's **medical staff** if they have not done so already. If they are still having problems accessing health care, they can contact our office staff.
- If the person you are visiting has been **tortured**, make sure they have informed the doctor.
- If you are concerned about their **mental health**, contact the office.
- If their health problems are **severe**, this may be grounds for their release.

*Some of our training courses will devote time to medical issues, and cover such subjects as how to tell when a person being held in detention needs psychiatric help or may be suicidal. See the 'Guidelines on visiting suicidal people in detention' at the end of this section.*

## When a person leaves detention

People being held in detention do not always know in advance when they are going to be released, transferred or removed. This can be hard to cope with, particularly if they have been removed.

If a person in detention tells you that they are being released, removed or transferred, there are ways in which you may be able to help.

Release on TA (Temporary Admission) or bail:

- After the person you are visiting has been released, it is to an extent up to you – and of course them – **how much you keep in touch**. As a group, we are unable to cover your expenses for further contact. We will provide you with more detailed guidelines on staying in touch if you want to do this. However, this is not an expectation from GDWG.

Transfer to a different IRC:

- Please see details of local visitors' groups to refer to above (page 7)

Removal may be very sudden. If, however, you know in advance:

- We can offer £25 to assist with initial resettlement, depending on their shop account balance
- It can be useful to give the person your email address so they can contact you should they wish to.
- If you receive news that someone has been **badly treated** on their return, please inform the office, who will pass the information on to human rights groups such as Amnesty.

When someone you are visiting leaves Tinsley House or Brook House please:

- **Inform** the office immediately and take a break from visiting if you need to.
- **Complete** an online volunteer feedback form, found here: <http://www.gdwg.org.uk/feedback.php> Until this has been completed, you will not be allocated another person to visit.
- Please also note that GDWG runs a walking project "Walk With Us", with monthly walks in Surrey, Sussex, London, Kent and around the country. If you think the person you have been visiting would like to join a walk please give them a copy of the Walk with Us leaflet when they are in detention and pass their details to the office if they are keen. On release, if you maintain contact with the person you are visiting, please mention the walking project and we will pay travel for him to join walks with us. There is also a much longer annual Refugee Tales walk over several days in the summer. You can find more about Refugee Tales by looking at the website [www.refugeetales.org.uk](http://www.refugeetales.org.uk)

## **Contact the GDWG staff about the person you are visiting if they are:**

- **Suicidal**
- Have been **tortured**
- Are receiving poor **legal representation**
- Tell you they are **under 18** (unaccompanied minors should not be detained and the Refugee Council has a special team to help them)
- Tell you someone is at risk of abuse or harm
- Making you feel uncomfortable or behaving inappropriately
- Aware of **someone else** who would like a visitor

## **Funding and Monitoring**

Funders who support the work of GDWG often ask for specific information and evidence that goals have been achieved with the funding they have granted. In order for us to satisfy this requirement, we ask that visitors complete feedback forms once they have finished visiting someone in detention, so that we can offer proof of the excellent work of visitors, and continue to apply for funding. Feedback forms are incredibly important for continuing the work of GDWG and we really appreciate visitors taking the time to fill them out.

## **Public Speaking**

We request that visitors contact the Director to discuss public speaking opportunities as they arise. Our communications policy is essential reading before any public speaking is undertaken on behalf of GDWG. It is essential that the group is portrayed in a manner consistent with our own approaches.

## Volunteer Self-care

It is very important as a visitor to look after yourself, you will probably hear a lot of traumatic stories during your time visiting with us and it is important for you to look after yourself and be able to spot the signs of burn out ( compassion fatigue) and vicarious trauma.

### **Burn Out**

It is a process not an event - it is a type of cumulative stress reaction that occurs after prolonged exposure to occupational stressors such as prolonged exposure to emotionally demanding situations with inadequate support which gradually depletes an individual's own natural resources for dealing with stress or strain.

### **What factors contribute to burn out that may come up through visiting?**

- Sense of having no control over outcome – limitations of role
- Exposure to traumatic material
- Individual; experience 0- sense of isolation

### **Spotting the signs**

- **Physical:** exhaustion, headaches, high blood pressure insomnia, dreams, back pain, stomach complaints, hyper arousal
- **Emotional:** self-doubt, blame, negativity, disillusionment, feeling of appreciation, foggy thinking, mental apathy, lack of insight, into reduced capacity to function well.
- **Mental:** emotional exhaustion, overwhelmed, helpless, hopelessness, mistrust, depression, anxiety.
- **Spiritual:** apathy, inability to engage, wounded ideals, cynicism
- **Behavioural:** decline in performance, apathy, boredom, irritability, increased addiction to dependencies, recklessness, neglecting one's own safety of physical needs.

### **VICARIOUS/ SECONDARY TRAUMA**

Vicarious trauma occurs when an individual who was not an immediate witness to the trauma absorbs and integrated disturbing aspects of the traumatic experience into his/her own functioning. Symptoms are often similar to someone who experience the trauma first-hand.

- Intrusions - flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts
- Avoidance of situations people or places that bring in the intrusions Hyper arousal, including hyper vigilance, sleepiness, increased startle response (jumpiness)

**The following extracts are comments from visitors that took part in a recent training session on self-care - you might find their observations helpful:**

**What led you to become a volunteer?**

- 'A friend told me about the detainees held at Gatwick and I decided to try it out. Twenty + years later, I am still visiting'
- 'Desire to help, even just a little bit, to ameliorate the awful experience of detention by befriending people in detention and to show people that they are welcome and respected'
- 'Positive feedback from people I visit and from the staff of GDWG who are wonderfully supportive and well-informed. And just knowing that I am realising some of the hopes and aims'
- 'Feeling useful sometimes. Being part of a team fighting for something you believe in'

**What makes it stressful?**

- 'The awareness that – regardless of the temporary joy or distraction a visit might bring – we cannot change the reality of the detainee's situation'; 'Sometimes being the focus of a detainee's hopes which you are unable to fulfil'
- 'Anger over the whole system – I have to ensure it doesn't make me hopeless'
- 'Frustration over the inefficiency of Home Office staff'; 'Sometimes I simply can't find anything to chat about!'

**What are your particular ways of caring for yourself physically, mentally and emotionally?**

- 'Taking what actions in the case I usefully can, and trying not to beat myself up about things I can't do'
- 'Putting in a buffer zone between visiting and home'; 'I probably treat myself to nice food (chocolate etc)'
- 'Meeting fellow volunteers and those who have experienced detention to walk and talk'
- 'Talking to members of my support group – people who understand because they are Visitors too'
- 'Reading escapist novels, watching TV, listening to music, gardening, relaxing activities, walking'
- 'I keep a diary and keep records- so writing is another outlet for me'

**What gets in the way of doing this (externally and internally)?**

- 'Guilt that I should be miserable, when compared to detainees my life is so privileged'
- 'Pressures in your own life, e.g. family problems, which mean you have less energy (physically and emotionally) and time to manage your visiting strategies'
- 'Just taking on too much and so not giving oneself time and space to analyse and debrief'

**What for you are the warning signs that stress is becoming unmanageable?**

- 'Feeling like crying, irritability and a longing to just cut everyone out and sleep.'
- 'Irritability; tearfulness; sometimes becoming callous about detainee's plight'
- 'Getting very insecure and losing my confidence.'

**What do you need to do at this point?**

- 'Make a conscious effort to address and deal with the issue(s) in question. Make time for doing things I really enjoy.'
- 'Take a break from visiting for a while'; 'Focus on the possible'; 'Have a holiday; talk about the stress to someone'

**What, in reality, do you do at this point**

- 'Not enough of the above; tendency to withdraw a little'; 'Shout a little more than I should'
- 'Just keep on going, because with experience you know it will sort itself out in the end'

**Do you have any thoughts on how GDWG could further support volunteers with self-care?**

- 'It is important to debrief after a long visiting relationship; I know that people can feel a real sense of loss and sometimes failure when a detainee is removed or is released and then decides to sever ties'
- 'Maybe a marker can be put against a long term visiting relationship and then a phone call with some careful questions about state of mind and self-care'
- 'Encouraging the volunteer cohort to form, and contribute to, informal social connections amongst themselves, thereby adding an element of peer support to GDWG's efforts to help with self-care'
- 'I'm thinking of social media connections – WhatsApp groups being by far the easiest and friendliest – according to personal interests / hobbies (could be anything – walking, gardening, cooking, reading, TV shows)'
- 'Ensure that visitors are contacted proactively and regularly by a mentor (staff or volunteer) to check out how things are going'; 'Include a self-care slot regularly in group meetings'



## Guidelines on Material Support

**Purpose of these guidelines:** Each year GDWG allocates a specific amount of money towards detainee welfare, which may include giving them certain items. Because this finance is limited, some restrictions are needed.

***Please bear in mind that we cannot afford to give people all the items listed below each week!***

### Clothing

We receive regular donations of clothes, and usually have a supply in the office. Costs can therefore be reduced considerably if visitors check with the office before buying things themselves. Visitors are also welcome to drop by the office to collect items on their way to Tinsley/Brook House.

- GDWG can only reimburse inexpensive clothes, bought at second-hand or discount shops.
- We have a policy of only giving detainees new underwear.
- In general, GDWG is only able to reimburse visitors for clothes amounting to £5 per detainee per month.

### Phonecards

GDWG buys phonecards (local and international) at a discounted rate. The office can call or fax the detainee with the details, or give the details to the visitor, to then be passed on to the detainee personally. We can supply a regular amount of phone credit to each detainee every month.

### 'Luxury' Items

- GDWG is occasionally donated 'luxury' items (mobiles, books, new trainers, etc.). These are kept in the office.
- Please check with the office before you buy any such items for your detainee.

### Cash donation

- You may sometimes want to buy the detainee you're visiting a drink or snack from the vending machine or if necessary help with a small cash donation.
- £3 per visit can be reimbursed by the office.

### Removal money (see above, p. 15, "When a person leaves detention")

- The office has a limited supply of 'removal money' for destitute detainees facing removal, available in pounds.
- GDWG can only provide removal money to detainees who have been issued removal directions, and only if they have less than £20 of their own money in their IRC account.
- We can help with up to £25 for single detainees.

### NOTE ON GIFT AID

**If you are a UK taxpayer, do not normally claim expenses and would like to help GDWG, you may choose to claim expenses, and then make a donation to the group, on which GDWG can claim Gift Aid. GDWG 'Gift Aid Declaration' forms are available from the office on request or you may make a donation via the GDWG website.**

## Coping with short traumatic visiting relationships

### Preparing for removal

You may be able to help the person you are visiting by preparing him for the possibility of removal by encouraging him to think through what he might do. Removal notices can be served at very short notice; people may only be told a couple of days prior to their flight and, in some cases the day before.

### Being Realistic and Practical

There may be nothing more that a legal representative can do and you may be able to help the person you are visiting by exploring their resources for when they return. In some cases they may not be thinking clearly and you could be helping them by ordering things in their mind:

- **Who do they have back home?** – Friends, family, religious or faith community member, local Amnesty group (ask office for details).
- **Is someone able to meet them at the airport?** The group is able to fund an international phonecard, which could be used to contact someone at home.
- **Where will they go when they arrive in the country?** Check if the office has information about support organisations in their country.

There will be occasions when the person you are visiting is not prepared to acknowledge his imminent removal and simply finds discussing it too distressing. At these times it may be best to be a supportive presence and to respect his views.

### Emotional Support

We can do little to stop a removal. However, we can give emotional support at a time of great stress and difficulty. Here are some ways in which we can help and support someone:

- **Listen attentively.** If the person you are visiting wishes to tell you his personal story, he may wish to leave documentation of his case with you.
- You can help him to **vent his frustrations and allow him space to be angry.** However, don't forget that you too need support (see below).
- In knowing his circumstances, you can affirm to the person you are visiting that he is a powerful and resourceful person. **Remind him of the strength and the determination in his character** that has brought them to the UK from his homeland, and will no doubt take him further!

### Taking Care of Yourself

- Understand that **you cannot perform miracles** and have realistic expectations of yourself. On our first contact with a person being held in detention from the office, we will have explained that their visitor is unable to affect the outcome of their case.
- When you have finished visiting someone for good, do not feel that you have to visit again straight away. **Feel free to take a break** for as long as you need and think about visiting a mixture of severe and non-severe cases.
- You may want to ask the person you've been visiting to try and contact you to let you know that he has arrived home safely, although understand this may not always be possible. If you have not heard from him it doesn't mean that he is not safe. You can also give him the office contact details.
- **Do not feel that you are alone.** Other volunteers are facing the same difficulties and challenges and sharing experiences at the group support meetings will be beneficial to everyone. You can also call the office or your local group co-ordinator for support at any time.
- Although we may **feel powerless** in this situation, this does not mean that the experience has not been **empowering for the detainee.** If visiting makes you feel angry

or frustrated, you may find an outlet in becoming involved with other activities that work for political or social change.

- We also have a **buddy system** for new visitors where we will offer to pair you with a more experienced visitor during your initial months in the role.
- Theresa MacIntyre, a psychotherapist who has worked with GDWG for many years and assists with our training, is also available for consultation by volunteers if appropriate.
- GDWG is committed to being an organisation which is free from harassment and bullying. We want to ensure that all volunteers are treated with dignity and respect. If you are not happy about the way another volunteer or a staff member treats you, this will be taken seriously – please see section below on “Resolving Concerns” for further advice.

## Resolving concerns

We want GDWG to operate at all times according to good practice, acting in the best interests of all those we work with and for. This is in line with our diversity & equality policy and our commitment to a work and volunteering environment which is free from harassment or bullying, and where volunteers are treated fairly and with respect.

We will work to ensure that any concerns that you have about a member of staff, or volunteer from GDWG, or concerns about the work of the charity are resolved as quickly as possible.

Most concerns can be resolved by raising the matter with one of the advocacy workers or the Director who will decide with you what is the best course of action. If you refer to an advocacy worker and do not receive a resolution to your concern, the Director will discuss the matter with you. If you raise an issue with the Director and are unsatisfied with the discussion, the chair of Trustees will discuss with you. We will look into the matter as confidentially and sensitively as possible, ensuring that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

If you think your concern is serious in nature and has not been taken seriously, you may wish to use the Charity Commission’s whistleblowing helpline via email - [whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk) – or telephone 08000 557214

## Compliments & Comments

We love to know if we’re providing a good service to people, and are always interested to hear their ideas about how we might do things better. If you, or someone you are working with, have a compliment or a comment about GDWG’s work, please let one of the advocacy workers or the Director know! We record these as this sort of feedback is often very useful for funders to know about.

## Tinsley House



**Tinsley House Immigration Removal  
Centre  
Perimeter Rd South  
Gatwick  
RH6 0PQ  
Tel: 01293 434800  
Fax for detainees: 01293 434862**

Tinsley House and Pre-Departure Accommodation (PDA) are located on the perimeter of Gatwick airport. Tinsley House opened in May 1996. The PDA, which holds families, opened in May 2017, but it is not currently in use. In total the site has the capacity to hold 178 people at any one time. The private security firm Serco, which has taken over from G4S, is contracted by the immigration service to run the centre. They manage the day-to-day running of the centre and, as such, do not have any say on who is detained or for how long they stay in detention.

In 1999, the Government introduced the Immigration and Asylum Act, which had significant consequences for immigration detention in the UK. From being a detention centre with a relatively stable population, Tinsley House was re-designated a 'Removal Centre'. Although the population of people being held in detention has become more transient, not everyone we visit is on their way out of the country. Only 49% of people detained in the UK are removed from the country upon departure from the detention centre.

### Facilities

People being held in detention are not allowed out of Tinsley House and personal possessions within the Centre are restricted. Although visits are allowed daily, they are confined to a communal room, and are not held in private. Under Government rules, detention centres have to provide some meaningful activity. Tinsley House has a library and exercise facilities, optional English lessons and arts and crafts sessions, as well as the use of television and video. In reality, however, boredom and frustration often set in for people in detention. GDWG has established a working relationship with the security company, which helps us to press for better conditions and facilities in the detention centre. If you have any subjects that you feel should be addressed, please contact the Director.

Each detention centre also has an **Independent Monitoring Board (IMB)**, which performs a similar role to IMBs in prison. They consist of independent volunteers from the local community, authorised by the Home Office to act as a watchdog over conditions in detention. They have access to the detention centre 24 hours a day, can go anywhere and talk to anyone they want to, and people in detention can make complaints through them. If you have issues you would like the chair of the IMB to take up, please channel them through the GDWG office.

## Brook House

**Brook House Immigration Detention Centre  
Perimeter Road South  
Gatwick  
RH6 0PQ  
Tel: 01293 566500  
Visits: 01293 566559  
Fax: 01293 566580**

Brook House is located about half a mile from Tinsley House. There are 508 bed spaces for single males only.

## Facilities

The centre is built on the model of Colnbrook IRC, close to Heathrow Airport, which is essentially along the lines of a category B prison. As such, it is considerably different to Tinsley, with much less freedom of movement. Brook House is more likely to take former prisoners who have served their sentence in the UK before being deported to their home country.

The building is composed of four accommodation wings, with a central activities area, to which the people being held have restricted access. The vast majority of the men are held in two-man cells. There is also a small seclusion unit with some single cells, for those who have been removed from the wings and from the association areas.

People held in detention are locked into their cells all night, and locked onto the wings for most of the day. Meals are served on the wings, and there are a few facilities such as pool tables and computer games. The central activities area contains a library, computer rooms, gym, prayer rooms and classrooms. There is also a visits room for social visitors.

## Medical provision

Medical care at Tinsley House and Brook House is contracted out to G4S. A GP holds a surgery at the detention centre every weekday.

Under the Detention Centre Rules (see AVID Handbook part 8 for more details), the doctors must inform the manager about anyone they examine who appears to either have been the victim of torture, suicidal or unfit for detention.

If you are **worried** about the health of someone you are visiting, contact a member of the GDWG staff. The doctors' consultations with detainees are confidential, so, although they may not be prepared to give medical details to lawyers, Immigration or us, it can still be helpful to express our concern.

Tinsley House is also covered by a **mental health** team, who are available via direct referral from the medical staff. If you have concerns about someone's **mental health**, advise them to speak to a doctor. If you continue to be concerned, please contact the GDWG office.

Please keep the office informed of any medical problems, as we are trying to keep a record of them. If someone you know of has been **tortured** or is **suicidal**, please inform the office immediately.

## The Detention Centre Rules

Since 2001, the Home Office have had a set of rules (Detention Services Orders - DSOs) to regulate the running of detention centres. The DSOs are frequently amended. They include:

- provision for people being held in detention without funds to be given phonecards, stamps, writing materials and toiletries
- the requirement that visits should take place out of the hearing of detention centre officers
- the requirement that the doctor should report to the detention centre manager if s/he thinks anyone is a victim of torture, is suicidal or that their health is likely to be 'injuriously affected' by continued detention.

***Please inform the GDWG office if you feel these rules are not being observed.***

## Visitor Role Description

The visiting service that is offered to detainees through its volunteer visitors is central to work of GDWG. As such, GDWG takes a keen interest in training and supporting their volunteer visitors. The role of the volunteer visitor and GDWG's expectations of a volunteer visitor are detailed below, as well as the qualities we are looking for in a visitor.

### The role of the volunteer visitor

- To support and offer friendship to the detainee allocated to you throughout the duration of his/her detention at Gatwick.
- To commit to a minimum of one visit each week at the detention centre and feedback any concerns you may have about that person's welfare back to the office staff.

### How detainees are typically supported

Below is a sample of ways in which detainees have been supported by their volunteer visitors. Depending on a volunteer's confidence and experience similar support may be offered by the visitor or in conjunction with the GDWG office staff. GDWG endeavours to provide volunteers with regular training opportunities for development.

### A volunteer visitor can support a detainee by

- Making telephone calls between visits
- Signposting sources of help, such as
  - refugee community organisations, campaign groups, providing MPs contact details
  - further sources of help if a detainee is transferred to another detention centre
  - legal help eg the contracted legal firms at each centre
- Empowering the detainee to understand his/her rights whilst in detention
- Supporting and empowering the detainee to understand the legal process they are a part of. This may involve
  - telephone calls to the detainee's legal representative, or other organisations such as BID, Medical Justice, etc
- Providing assistance with small practical items (see GDWG's 'Guidelines on Material Support')
- Attending bail and appeal hearings
- Liaising with friends and family.

### The volunteer visitor's minimum commitment

- To do what you can to help the person to whom you are allocated and to visit at least once a week throughout his or her detention at Gatwick. [Please bear in mind that detention can vary from a few hours to many months].
- To attend support group meetings near to your home every six to eight weeks, as a means of sharing experiences and mutual support.
- To attend our initial mandatory training session, one legal training session and one psychological issues session within the first 12 months of visiting

In summary, the visitor's role is to act in place of a family, that is in the same way as a concerned and moderately well-informed relative. It is against the law to give unregulated immigration advice and to do so can have disastrous consequences for the people GDWG is seeking to help.



## **Person Specification**

No formal qualifications or experience are required to apply to become a volunteer with the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group. However, because of the stressful nature of the work and the vulnerability of the people that we befriend, there are some personal qualities that we feel are essential for a visitor to possess:

- **Concern** - for the welfare of asylum seekers and Immigration Act detainees.
- **Emotional Strength** – an ability to cope with difficult and sometimes distressing situations and to spend time with someone who may be confused, angry or frightened. A willingness to accompany someone whose problems you may not be able to solve.
- **Empathy** – an ability to understand things from the detainee’s point of view. Integrity - an understanding of the importance of confidentiality and trust and a commitment to always acting in the best interest of the detainee.
- **Listening-skills** – an ability to listen actively and non-judgementally and to allow detainees the space to fully express how they are feeling.
- **Sensitivity** – to different points of view, other cultures and religions.
- **Boundaries** – a realistic understanding of your limitations, both emotionally and practically.
- **Readiness to learn** - a willingness to undertake training as required by the group.
- **Supportiveness** – both towards detainees and other members of GDWG. You must be willing to attend support group meetings and share your experiences with other visitors.
- **Good oral communication skills** – ability to communicate with people whose first language is not English.
- **Reliability** – it is important that a detainee should be able to rely on his or her visitor to visit regularly, and to keep to any promises that he or she has made.
- **Commitment** – we ask for a minimum commitment of a year



## Visitor Code of Conduct

- 1. I will read and work within the guidelines, policies and procedures contained in the Visitors' Handbook.**
- 2. I will respect the confidences of the person in detention, keeping what they tell me within GDWG, unless they ask me to talk to someone on their behalf or a safeguarding issue is concerned.**

Many people in detention have reason to fear what might happen to them or their families if the wrong people discover where they are. They may also have things they want to hide from the authorities or they may simply not like the idea of other people discussing their private lives. It is vital to respect their confidence, and not to discuss or relate their business with anybody outside GDWG without their permission. This includes interpreters, other people in detention, people from their own country, staff at the detention centre and their legal representative. If you are talking through an interpreter, remember that there may be things the person in detention does not want their interpreter to know.

It is a good idea, if possible, to explain to the person in detention that you will not talk about them to anyone outside the group without discussing this with them first. Sometimes people in detention may tell you things which make you feel uneasy, and it is important that you feel free to talk about this in your local support group or with one of GDWG's staff. If a person in detention tells you something that you feel that you need to pass on beyond the group - for instance, that they are under 18, or that they are suicidal or unwell - discuss this with them, and if in doubt consult a member of staff before doing anything. Please also refer to the GDWG's Guidelines for Visiting Suicidal People and the policies on Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children. If you are concerned that the person in detention is in danger of harming themselves or others, you must immediately contact those listed in these Guidelines.

All information held by volunteers on people in detention must be stored safely and securely. It should be deleted from personal email accounts, phones, and computers when the volunteer stops visiting them. When deleting information, volunteers must ensure that all files are deleted from cloud storage and backup devices. If a file is deleted locally but backed up elsewhere, the information has not been successfully removed. If the volunteer feels that the information, they have may be useful in the future then they should send this information to the office for secure filing. On no account should any data be held more than 6 years.

- 3. I will be non-judgmental towards the person I am visiting, and all that they tell me.**

Those in detention have come to UK for a wide variety of reasons and have had a wide variety of experiences since they came here. Fascinating though their stories are, it is not our role to decide the merits of their cases, nor to probe or sort out what really happened to them. It is up to them to decide what they want to tell us. Whatever they do or don't tell us, we are there to offer support, care and acceptance. This is not always easy: talk to the office staff or other volunteers in your area group.

- 4. I will treat any person in detention I visit with dignity and respect at all times and try to empower them.**

People in detention have very little control over their lives: they do not even know how long they will be detained. Ways of empowering them include: ringing before you visit, so they can say if the time is not convenient; asking them to teach you about their country, culture or language; keeping your promises to them. You may be able to help by liaising with their lawyer, or with community groups, but respect the

fact that they may not want you to. Always ask them before you do anything for them, and don't take anything out of their hands that they want to do for themselves.

**5. I will respect people's religious beliefs, and will not try to convert them to my own.**

The person in detention who you are visiting may hold different religious beliefs from you. They are extremely vulnerable, and may feel beholden to you, so it is not appropriate to try to convert them. Please respect their beliefs. Please do not take unsolicited religious literature into the detention centre.

**6. When allocated a person in detention I will visit them every week that they are in the detention centre. However, if I am unable to visit one week I will let them know and contact the office if they would like someone else to visit in my place.**

The person in detention who you are visiting needs to be able to rely on your visit, and on you. Please let the office know if you are not able to visit one week, and check with the person in detention if they would like someone else to visit them, or they may prefer to have a phone call with you instead.

**7. I will let a member of staff know when the person in detention who I am visiting leaves the centre, and I will inform the office quickly if I am having problems visiting on a regular basis or if I have to stop visiting altogether. I will also complete an online feedback form once I have stopped visiting each person in detention.**

Please inform the office as soon as a person in detention has been released, transferred or removed. You may well feel you need a break at this point. If so, please inform a member of staff when you might be ready to take on a new person in detention. If something happens which means you have to stop visiting a person in detention while they are still at Gatwick, please make sure that the office knows, so that they can reallocate the person you are visiting. Please complete an online feedback form for each person you visit, once your visits to that person have ended.

**8. I will attend both the training sessions provided by GDWG and my area support group meetings. On any occasion that I cannot attend I will let a member of staff know beforehand, and undertake to read the notes of the meeting sent to me subsequently.**

Part of your commitment as a visitor is to make use of the support the group offers you through training sessions and area group meetings. We provide training in issues related to visiting, the legal process, medical and psychiatric issues and in other relevant subjects. You are also asked to complete the WSCC online training about adult safeguarding. It is also highly recommended that volunteers attend area group meetings: they provide mutual support, a chance to talk over boundaries issues which may arise and are a channel for information on changes at the detention centres and in immigration law. Even if you do not feel particularly in need of support, you may have experience and information which would be useful to other visitors.

**9. I understand that I must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when visiting a person in detention or when I am undertaking any other activities on behalf of GDWG.**

**10. I will maintain the good relations that have been built up between GDWG and the detention centre, acting in a courteous and polite manner at all times when I am visiting.**

Please be courteous towards the detention centre staff. Your behaviour towards

them can affect their relationship both with GDWG as an organisation and with the person in detention. If you have any problems, report back to the Director or Chair of Trustees.

**11. I will adhere to the Diversity & Equality Policy and positively act upon it.**

**12. I understand that GDWG's campaigning activities are limited and carefully planned to be consistent with its welfare objectives and that those are the only campaigns in which my participation would be under GDWG's auspices. If I take part in any other campaigns it will be in my personal capacity. I will not get involved in any capacity in any campaign to close down Tinsley House or Brook House or demonstrate outside the centres.**

Please respect the fact that we are not a party political group, and that our lobbying and campaigning work is carefully planned by the staff and trustees. If visitors become involved in campaigns to close down Tinsley House or Brook House this could jeopardise our access to people in detention. Please do not take the media or public figures into the detention centre, or seek publicity of any kind, without consulting with the Chair of Trustees or Director. Please do not take political or campaigning literature into the detention centre.

**13. I accept that if I give my phone number or address to a person in detention, I do so at my own risk. I have had the potential risks explained to me.**

We advise you not to give out your address, as some visitors have had difficult experiences after people in detention have been released. However well you get to know the person you are visiting, you do not know everything about them and they may misunderstand your relationship with them. You can give the office address instead, and the staff will pass on mail to you. Please also think carefully before you give a person in detention your phone number. This can be helpful - as it means that they can reach you if they are particularly anxious and the office is closed - but it may lead to phone calls at inconvenient times, calls after they have left detention, or calls from strangers to whom they have given your number. As an alternative you can give them the office phone number, and ring them up between visits if you want to offer extra support. We also suggest you block your mobile phone number, and avoid sending texts.

**14. During my volunteering, I agree to raise any concerns with the Director or advocacy workers and to work to a resolution of the issues. For more details see the Resolving Concerns statement in the GDWG Volunteer's Handbook.**

**15. I accept that it is not GDWG's policy for visitors to stand bail for the people they visit in detention.**

The person you are visiting may ask you to stand bail for them. Please do not do this, for the following reasons:

- You risk losing your money if they abscond. The person in detention may be trustworthy, but they may feel absconding is the only option available to them. This has been the experience of members of GDWG in the past. You must ask yourself how well you really know the person in detention, and how much contact are you going to have with them after they are released.
- You are already contributing your time and energy: we do not want you to feel under pressure to risk your money as well. Nor do we want you to suffer the pain of having your trust broken if someone you have stood surety for absconds.
- Finally, and most importantly, if word gets round Tinsley House or Brook House that you are standing surety for the person you are visiting, this will encourage other people in detention to put pressure on their visitors to do the same.

- For similar reasons we **do not encourage, and advise against**, visitors offering **accommodation** to people in detention after their release.

**16. I have read and understood the implications of GDWG's Child Safeguarding and Adult Safeguarding Policies and consent to a DBS check. I undertake to inform the Director if I am subsequently arrested, charged or cautioned for any offence or there is a safeguarding investigation about me.**

Please note that not all convictions will exclude you from volunteering with GDWG. If you have any concerns, please speak to the Director.

**17. I understand that if there is any perceived breach of the code of conduct, GDWG will seek to understand and reach a resolution with me and that to facilitate this process, I undertake that in this event I shall discuss the circumstances of the perceived breach in confidence and in full with the Director or Chair of Trustees in a positive manner.**

**If you have any questions about any aspect of the Code of Conduct, please contact the Director.**

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

*See the Policies on Safeguarding Children and Adult. <https://www.gdwg.org.uk/get-involved/for-existing-volunteers/>*

## Advocacy & Support Office Volunteer Role Description

GDWG is a non-political voluntary organisation committed to helping people held at Tinsley House and Brook House Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) at Gatwick Airport. These two centres have the combined capacity to hold nearly 700 people. Our core work involves visiting people in detention one-to-one to provide emotional and practical support. Our Advocacy & Support volunteers provide vital support to detainees, assisting with new enquiries from people detained and helping with casework support. We put great emphasis on training and supporting our volunteers, who meet regularly in five local groups, coordinated by the volunteers. The organisation is run by a small staff team and a board of trustees. We also work/collaborate closely with other organisations who visit detention centres throughout the UK.

### Post

At least one half-day per week during normal office hours (approximately 10-4, Monday-Friday).

### Equal Opportunities

GDWG is committed to operating as an equal opportunities organisation. We welcome applications from refugees and in particular from former detainees to reflect the composition of those we seek to help.

### Purpose of the Job

To support and assist GDWG staff in providing a high standard of service to detainees

### Main Areas of Responsibility

Supporting the office staff team in:

- Responding to messages and answering faxes and telephone calls from detainees
  - Providing telephone support to detainees who need ongoing emotional support
  - Responding to initial needs and prioritising urgent cases
- This work typically includes:
- Providing telephone credit
  - Explaining the role of GDWG to new detainees who contact us and gaining their trust
  - Referring detainees to other organisations (e.g. Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID), community groups)
  - Liaising with solicitors and other professionals – such as doctors and social workers.
  - Assisting detainees to make complaints about mistreatment
- General administrative duties
  - Updating the database with relevant information
  - Contacting people who might have left detention and recording this information accordingly
  - Sorting clothes and responding to detainees' requests for items
  - Assisting staff in running drop-ins at the IRCs and with follow-up

### Place of work

The group's office is currently at The Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD. The office is a five-minute walk from Crawley train station and is easily accessible from the A23.

## **Person Specification**

No formal qualifications or experience are required to apply to become a volunteer with the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group. However, because of the stressful nature of the work and the vulnerability of the people who we befriend, there are some personal qualities that we feel are essential for a volunteer to possess:

- **Concern** - for the welfare of asylum seekers and Immigration Act detainees.
- **Emotional Strength** – an ability to cope with difficult and sometimes distressing situations, and to speak with someone who may be confused, angry or frightened. A willingness to support someone whose problems you may not be able to solve.
- **Empathy** – an ability to understand things from a detained person’s point of view.
- **Integrity** - an understanding of the importance of confidentiality and trust and a commitment to acting always in the best interests of a detained person.
- **Listening skills** – an ability to listen actively and non-judgementally and to allow people in detention the space to fully express how they are feeling/how GDWG can help them.
- **Sensitivity** – to different points of view, other cultures and religions.
- **Boundaries** – a realistic understanding of your limitations, both emotionally and practically.
- **Readiness to learn** - a willingness to undertake training as required by the group.
- **Supportiveness** – both towards detainees and other members of GDWG. You are encouraged to attend support group meetings and share your experiences with other volunteers.
- **Good oral communication skills** – ability to communicate with people whose first language is not English.
- **Reliability** – it is important that GDWG should be able to rely on Volunteer Caseworkers to inform us of when they will be in the office.
- **Commitment** – we ask for a minimum commitment of a year.

**Please note: for at least the first three months of your role we ask that you also visit someone in detention on a one-to-one basis. This could be done within the same day as your office role, or outside of work hours, as the IRCs are open for visits afternoons and evenings, seven days a week. Please see Volunteer Visitor role description for more details.**

## Advocacy and Support Office Volunteer Code of Conduct

**1. I will read and work within the guidelines and procedures contained in the Volunteers' Handbook.**

**2. I will respect detainees' confidences, keeping what they tell me within GDWG, unless they ask me to talk to someone on their behalf.**

Many people in detention have reason to fear what might happen to them or their families if the wrong people discover where they are. They may also have things they want to hide from the authorities. Or they may simply not like the idea of other people discussing their private lives. So it is vital to respect their confidence, and not to discuss their business with anybody outside GDWG without their permission. This includes interpreters, other detainees, people from their own country, staff at the detention centre and their legal representative. If you are talking through an interpreter, remember that there may be things the detainee does not want their interpreter to know.

It is a good idea, if possible, to explain to the detainee that you will not talk about them to anyone outside the group without discussing this with them first. Sometimes detainees may tell you things which make you feel uneasy, and it is important that you feel free to talk about this in your local support group or with one of GDWG's staff or officers. If a detainee tells you something that you feel that you need to pass on beyond the group - for instance, that they are under 18, or that they are suicidal or unwell - discuss this with them, and if in doubt consult a member of staff before doing anything. Please also refer to the GDWG's Guidelines for Visiting Suicidal Detainees. If you are concerned that the detainee is in danger of harming themselves or others, you must immediately pass the phone over to one of the advocacy co-ordinators.

**3. I will be non-judgmental towards the person I am speaking with, and all that they tell me.**

Those in detention have come to Britain for a wide variety of reasons and have had a wide variety of experiences since they came here. Fascinating though their stories are, it is not our role to decide the merits of their cases, nor to probe or sort out what really happened to them. It is up to them to decide what they want to tell us. And whatever they do or don't tell us, we are there to offer support, care and acceptance. This is not always easy: talk to the office staff or other volunteers in your area group.

**4. I will treat any detainee I speak to with dignity and respect at all times and try to empower them.**

People in detention have very little control over their lives: they do not even know how long they will be detained. Ways of empowering them include: ringing before you visit, so they can say if the time is not convenient; asking them to teach you about their country, culture or language; keeping your promises to them. You may be able to help by liaising with their lawyer, or with community groups, but respect the fact that they may not want you to. Always ask them before you do anything for them, and don't take anything out of their hands that they want to do for themselves.

**5. I will access the GDWG database only in line with the needs of the role, and with the supervision of GDWG staff.**

If you are allocated a GDWG email address to access the database, you must not use this to send emails. Your GDWG email address will solely be used to log in to the database. If you are sending emails, please use the group volunteer email address and inbox provided.



**6. When available I will attend the training sessions provided by the group and my area support group meetings.**

Part of your commitment as a volunteer is to make use of the support the group offers you through training sessions and area group meetings. We provide training in issues related to visiting, the legal process, medical and psychiatric issues and in other relevant subjects. You are also asked to complete the WSCC online training about adult safeguarding. It is also essential to attend area group meetings: they provide mutual support, a chance to talk over boundaries issues which may arise and a channel for information on changes at the detention centres and in immigration law. Even if you do not feel particularly in need of support, you may have experience and information which would be useful to other volunteers.

**7. I will maintain the good relations that have been built up between our group and the detention centre, acting in a courteous and polite manner at all times when I am speaking to anyone from the centres.**

Please be courteous towards the detention centre staff. Your behaviour towards them can affect their relationship both with the rest of the group and with the detainee. If you have any problems, report back to the Director or Chair.

**8. I will adhere to the Diversity & Equality Policy and positively act upon it.**

**9. I understand that GDWG's campaigning activities are limited and carefully planned to be consistent with its welfare objectives; and that those are the only campaigns in which my participation would be under GDWG's auspices. If I take part in any other campaigns it will be in my personal capacity. I will not get involved in any capacity in any campaign to close down Tinsley House or Brook House or demonstrate outside the centres.**

Please respect the fact that we are not a party political group, and that our lobbying and campaigning work is carefully planned by the staff and trustees. If volunteers become involved in campaigns to close down Tinsley House or Brook House this could jeopardise our access to people in detention. Please do not take the media or public figures into the detention centre, or seek publicity of any kind, without consulting with the Chair or Director. Please do not take political or campaigning literature into the detention centre.

**10. I will not give my personal contact details to any detainee I speak with.**

**11. I have read and understood the implications of GDWG's Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Policies and consent to a DBS check.** Please note that not all convictions will exclude you from volunteering with GDWG. If you have any concerns, please speak to the Director.

**12. I understand that if there is any perceived breach of the code of conduct, GDWG will seek to understand and reach a resolution with me and that to facilitate this process, I undertake that in this event I shall discuss the circumstances of the perceived breach in confidence and in full with the Director or Chair of Trustees in a positive manner.**

If you have any questions about any aspect of the Code of Conduct, please contact the Director.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## Expenses Claim Form

*Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group is a charity and as such seeks to raise funds to cover the expenses of volunteers visiting detainees. It would, therefore, be greatly appreciated if expenses could be itemised, to enable us to continue to obtain funding for specific areas. Please provide receipts for all public transport.*

Please refer to our "Guidelines on Material Support", on providing gifts to people being held in detention and on claiming expenses. Please provide receipts for all public transport and items purchased. And please note: £25 limit on travel expenses for any visit. Sign and date the form prior to submitting. If you have any queries, please contact the Director on 01293 657070.

Name .....

Date .....

Address .....  
 .....

Postcode .....

**Bank account details:**

Sort code..... Account no.....

Name.....

Date	Travel – Description	Travel – Amount	Items for detainees – Description	Items - Amount	<u>Total</u>
				<b>Total Claimed:</b>	

**I confirm that the above claim is accurate and incurred in connection with the business of the charity**

**Signed:** .....

**Please attach all receipts and send to:**  
**GDWG**  
**The Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Ct**  
**Brighton Road**  
**Crawley**  
**RH10 6AD**

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Authorised by: .....  
Signature:  
Reimbursement method:  
Date:

**Charity Gift Aid Declaration**

**Name of Charity: Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (GDWG)**

**Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate**

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

**In order to Gift Aid your donation to GDWG, you must fill in one of options below:**

- 1) I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ (single donation)
- 2) I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years (multiple donations)

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

**My Details**

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

First name or initial(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Home address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please notify the charity if you:**

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

## Directions to Tinsley House and Brook Houses

### By Road

Leave the M23 at Junction 9 and at the slip road roundabout take the spur road towards Gatwick Airport. Go straight across at the next roundabout heading towards the North Terminal and take a right turning at the next roundabout onto the A23, heading north along a dual carriageway. At the next roundabout (called Longbridge Roundabout), drive all the way around the roundabout and head south along the same dual carriageway.

This road goes under the Gatwick South Terminal and past the runway on the right-hand side. At the next roundabout, turn right into Perimeter Road East and then take the first turning on the left into Perimeter Road South. Tinsley House is a half mile on the left, past aircraft hangars on the right-hand side. Brook House is approximately half a mile further, on the left-hand side.

### By Rail

Take the train to Gatwick Airport. The easiest way from there to the centres is by taxi but it is expensive. Make sure you use a local taxi firm, not the companies who do long distance airport runs. They have the taxi phone numbers in the receptions at both Tinsley and Brook House.

You can no longer walk. There is a reliable free minibus service run by Serco which runs hourly from Atlantic House (directions below) to both Brook House and Tinsley House. It leaves Brook House to return, via Tinsley House, also hourly to Atlantic House. The timetable for this service is posted in the receptions of both Brook and Tinsley House.

To find the minibus, follow the exit signs from the station platform into the South Terminal of the Airport. Bear right through the terminal building towards Arrivals. Then bear left. With the passenger Arrivals turnstiles on your left, and Costa Coffee behind you on your right, walk towards the double doors marked Exit. Through those doors, you will see 3 lifts to your right.

Take the lift (or stairs) to the ground floor (0) and bear immediately left out of the lift to exit the building. Turn left down the ramp and walk straight along for 50 yards into the open air. You will first pass a large building called Ashworth House, bear left around it and then cross the road towards Atlantic House. In front of Atlantic House there are three paved pick-up points in rows where buses, taxis and cars wait for passengers. Wait by the row furthest from Atlantic House. The Serco minibus has a small label in the window indicating the service. You do not have to book.

If you have any questions about this, either call us on 01293 657070 or out of hours, call Tinsley House on 01293 434800 or Brook House on 01293 566559.

## Detention (Immigration Removal) Centres and main visitors groups:

**Brook House:** Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group - 01293 657070

**Colnbrook:** Detention Action - 020 7226 3114; SOAS Detainee Support - 07438 407570

**Dungavel:** Scottish Detainee Visitors - 0141 248 9799

**Harmondsworth:** Detention Action - 020 7226 3114; SOAS Detainee Support

**Morton Hall:** Morton Hall Detainees Visitors Group - 07758 604293

**Tinsley House:** Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group - 01293 657070

**Yarl's Wood:** Yarl's Wood Befrienders - 01933 318378; SOAS Detainee Support

## Fire Procedure at Tinsley House and Brook House:

In the event of a fire at Tinsley House or Brook House, GDWG staff and volunteers will be led to the fire assembly point by a fire officer appointed by Serco. They will be escorted to the assembly point in the car park at the front of the centre. A register will be taken to ensure that everyone in the building at the time of the fire or fire alarm has exited the premises.

NB: Detainees will be led out of an exit at the back of the visits room and are taken to a separate fire assembly point.

All volunteers will be notified of these procedures when they join the organisation, and instructions will be included in the volunteer handbook.