



association of **visitors** to
immigration detainees

Annual Report 2013



30,036

people left detention in 2013. While 56% of them were removed from the UK, 44% were released, begging the question—why were they held in the first place?

AVID Mission Statement

AVID upholds the human dignity and well-being of immigration detainees. We do this by voicing the concerns of those detained, our member groups and the nationwide network of visitors, and by supporting and coordinating visiting nationally.

"Here in prison it's hard to communicate and make phone calls when I tried to call ... embassy no answer or response to make my deportation easier to the Home Office. I have no family ties in the UK or even a solicitor to help my case. I need help and advice"

Detainee in prison, 2013

What is immigration detention?

Immigration detention is the use of custody to hold someone under immigration control, either while a decision on permission to enter the country is awaited, or prior to deportation or removal from the country.

In the UK it takes place in one of ten immigration removal centres (IRCs), in short term holding facilities (STHFs) or in prisons. Unlike many European countries, the UK has no time limit on detention. Decisions to detain are made by case owners rather than authorised by a court, and there is no automatic access to bail hearings.



What is AVID?

The Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID) is the national membership network of volunteer visitors to those held under immigration acts in the UK.

Since 1994 we have sought to ensure detainees' rights are upheld and to promote volunteer visiting. With our 20 member groups across the country, we work to promote the welfare and human dignity of all immigration detainees.

We provide information, training and support to visitors, as well as advice and guidance in setting up new groups. We also research and raise awareness of the day-to-day realities of detention for immigration detainees, collating evidence on conditions across the detention estate, voicing the concerns of those detained and our membership at the national level, and lobbying for positive change in the detention system.

Throughout 2013

around 1,000 immigration detainees were held in mainstream UK prisons, despite international criticism of the use of prison for this purpose. This is around an extra 25% of the detained population that doesn't come under the official statistics.



Asylum Welcome

Campsfield House IRC

Bristol Visitors to International Detainees

HMP Bristol

Detention Action

Harmondsworth IRC, Colnbrook IRC and London prisons

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

Brook and Tinsley IRCS, and Cedars Pre-Departure Accommodation

Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Asylum and Refugee Network

Detention issues in the local community

Haslar Visitors Group

Haslar IRC

Jesuit Refugee Service

Harmondsworth IRC, Colnbrook IRC

Lewes Group in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Lewes Prison

Liverpool Prisons Visiting Group

Liverpool prisons

Manchester Immigration Detainee Support Team

Pennine House STHF and Manchester Prison

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group

Morton Hall IRC

NI Law Centre

Detention in Northern Ireland

Sapphire (formerly Dover Detainee Visitors Group)

Dover IRC

Scottish Detainee Visitors

Dungavel IRC

SOAS Detainee Support

Harmondsworth, Colnbrook and Yarl's Wood IRCS

Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group

Community Support

Sudanese Visitors Group

Supporting Sudanese detainees

Wandsworth Refugee Network

Wandsworth Prison

Yarl's Wood Befrienders

Yarl's Wood IRC

Zimbabwe Association

Supporting Zimbabweans in the community and in detention

List of members 2013

Chair's Report

I am delighted to report that AVID ends 2013 in very good heart. Thanks to the Tudor Trust, we finally have funding for a second full-time member of staff, a Training and Membership Coordinator.

The person appointed will start in early January 2014, enabling more time and energy to be spent on supporting the various visitor groups. This is very timely for the year has seen a continued expansion in the use of detention, with ever increasing numbers of detainees being held in prisons, existing detention centres being expanded and the planned opening of a new 580 bed centre in February 2014.

The new appointment will take some of the load off our Director, Ali McGinley, who has continued to astound all of us with her ability to juggle numerous balls at once. I for one am very grateful for all that she does for AVID and for immigration detainees.

We are also fortunate to have a highly skilled and strongly-motivated Board who have formed a very strong team this year. We were joined at the last AGM by Andrew Wilson, who is a visitor with the Morton Hall Visitors Group and an experienced trustee. Shortly afterwards, we were pleased to be able to co-opt Suko Fricke, who has brought us the benefit of her experience as a visitor, as well as broader knowledge of the sector, particularly in the area of fundraising. During the year trustees attended two training sessions, which have helped us ensure that we focus our efforts on the things that really matter as we work towards fulfilling our strategic objectives.

I should like to thank all our trustees, especially our Secretary Jane Ryan and our Treasurer Madeline Church, for their enthusiasm and hard work.

It has been a pleasure to welcome a new member to AVID this year: Article 1 who work with Sudanese refugees. As always, I have enjoyed attending members' AGMs and hearing about the excellent work that they are doing locally.

Our own, very well attended AGM took as its subject the continued expansion of immigration detention in prisons in the UK and included excellent talks by Dr Mary Bosworth and Francesca Cooney. Sadly its title, '4000 and Rising' has proved too low a prediction, as the number of beds will shortly exceed 5,000.

With the aid of a grant from Lankelly Chase, we have been able this year to employ a consultant to review our fundraising practices. We are of course very grateful for all our current funders, large and small.

The trustees are currently working upon the conversion of AVID into a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation). This will give us the benefits of being a company, safeguarding trustees against personal financial liability and making it easier to recruit board members. Members and supporters can be assured that this is a purely technical alteration; we do not propose in any way altering what AVID does or reducing the rights of its members.

Next year will be AVID's 20th birthday. While I would much prefer there to be no detainees and our work to be unnecessary, I am very proud of all that AVID has achieved in that time and am determined that we will continue our highly important work in the years to come.

Kathleen English

2 Years

The longer someone is held the less likely they are to be removed. In 2013, 50 people were held for over two years, 74% of whom were eventually released from detention back into the UK community.

Director's Report

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2013 was a year of growth for AVID. We've worked hard throughout 2013, the first year of our new set of strategic directions, to ensure a solid footing for the work we do in supporting visitors groups. This effort paid off when we were awarded a grant from the Tudor Trust for a second full time staff member to work solely on training and support for groups, and we were delighted to make this appointment before Christmas. We will therefore commence our 20th anniversary year with a staff complement of two, which will genuinely make a world of difference to the support AVID can offer.

Our activities report details in full the breadth of work that we continue to be involved in. Demand for our training and other supports continued to grow this year as awareness of detention rose and more people sought to be involved in visiting detainees. This interest and enthusiasm in bringing friendship and support to those detained indefinitely across the country is always inspiring, and is something positive to remember in a year that was otherwise particularly bleak. Beginning with the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act at the end of 2012 - which changed legal aid as we know it - and ending with the deportation of desperately ill hunger striker Isa Muazu, 2013 left AVID and many NGO colleagues collectively reeling. We also saw a huge increase in the use of prisons for immigration detention purposes, further proposed changes to Legal Aid, an incredibly hostile Immigration Bill, and a hardened stance towards migrants generally and detainees specifically, the sharp end of which led to further breaches of the human rights of detainees with mental health needs. There is a massive protection gap in detention and we are worried at the numbers left at risk.

We continue to work on both systemic failings in the detention system and the small, day to day changes so necessary to improve detainees' lives. Our collective strategic work this year has included co-convening a working group of the Detention Forum focusing on vulnerable groups in detention, an issue which, as 2013 closes with the government's hardened stance on hunger strikers, seems ever more pertinent.

It is this combination of ensuring that individual detainees are supported while continuing to challenge injustice in the system that is at the heart of AVID's work. I feel lucky to work with so many people who care and give so much to a cause that can often feel like a constant uphill struggle: visitors groups, colleague NGOs, lawyers, funders and volunteers. As always the Trustees and volunteers of AVID have ensured that I'm never short of advice and good humour when needed. I'm often struck by how fortunate we are to have a Board that works so well together, and special thanks are due to Kathy English for her understated wisdom and guidance in this regard. And to all visitors up and down the country, thank you. The individual contribution you make to those you visit makes it easier to face the challenges of 2014 with a fresh resolve and enthusiasm.

Ali McGinley

Strategic Directions

- 1 Building a skilled, confident, supported and knowledgeable visitors network**
- 2 Raising awareness of the realities of immigration detention, presenting a national voice for change to decision makers**
- 3 Ensuring authoritative and high quality information on the realities of immigration detention is available to all**

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Building a skilled, confident, supported and knowledgeable visitors group network ...

Coordinators' Conference, Birmingham

The annual Coordinator's Conference is the central event in AVID's calendar, and 2013's Coordinators' Conference was no exception, seeing 15 representatives from visitors groups from across the UK come together for two days of learning, sharing experiences and networking.

Groups had the opportunity to hear the latest updates on the legal aid changes from Alison Harvey, General Secretary of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA); to share experiences and coping strategies for volunteers visiting and supporting traumatised detainees with practitioners from Freedom from Torture in a workshop on 'Vicarious trauma and self-care'; learn top tips on balancing engagement with the media on sensitive issues such as detention with the need to maintain relationships with IRC and prison management in 'Working with the media' from the British Red Cross; and hear about findings from the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's joint inspection with HMIP of detained immigration casework, as well as plans for future inspections.

Providing one of the key opportunities that visitor group coordinators from across the country have to come together face to face to share ideas, challenges and good practice, the conference is at the very core of AVID's work to support its membership.



"the opportunities for networking and sharing information were particularly useful this year. I also now have a much better idea of how to use ongoing support on offer from AVID"
Conference participant

"(the session was) very informative and clear. I now have a great overview of the issues in detention"

Training participant

Training

2013 also saw AVID deliver training to over 25 volunteer visitors from across the country, including Wandsworth Refugee Network, Manchester Immigration Detainee Support Team, Sudanese Visitors Group and the newly established Bristol prison Detainee Support group. 15 further volunteer visitors from various groups including Morton Hall Visitors attended a McKenzie Friends training session in May.

The sessions addressed a wide range of topics from current policy and practice in detention, visitor roles and skills, mental health awareness, and in introduction to visiting in prisons, providing volunteers with valuable opportunities to build their knowledge of key issues in immigration detention, develop understanding of the broader context of detention across the UK, and share and discuss personal experiences of visiting.

"I really valued the opportunity for questions and discussion as we went along"

Training participant



Supporting our members

As well as the formal training and conference events, AVID continued its one-to-one support and development of visitors groups in a range of ways – negotiating access to detention centres and prisons being one of them. In 2013 we worked to establish access for members to visit in Bristol prison, and to deliver workshops in Pentonville prison in London. We also helped our Scottish member group, Scottish Detainee Visitors, establish a programme of workshops to support detainees in Dungavel detention centre. This type of support significantly increases the number of detainees that groups can reach, and is a useful addition to visiting that many groups now provide. Alongside this we continued to provide development support and advice for new groups including Bristol VOID and the Sudanese Visitors Group, both setting up new visiting schemes.

"AVID were really helpful to SDV in setting up our new drop-in service. When negotiations with Dungavel management and UKBA stalled, Ali was always on hand to intercede on our behalf. Her involvement was crucial to the service finally being agreed"

Scottish Detainee Visitor Group



In 2013

over 670 volunteer visitors made up the 20 groups that are part of AVID, visiting around 2,000 detainees a year.

Yarl's Wood IRC

Detention Forum

We continue to play a leading role in the development of the Detention Forum on both its Coordination Group and as co-convenor of the working group on Vulnerable Adults in Detention (along with Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group). This year our work centred on a period of systemic research into the issues of vulnerability, utilising two volunteer researchers and working with partner NGOs across the Forum. A report of our findings will be available in 2014. Critically, the Forum continues to ensure there is a space for groups to work together on long term advocacy goals, with over 30 NGO members from across different sectors working collaboratively to challenge the use of detention.

"I have been detained for 5 months and nobody has even thought of me or visited me"

Detainee in prison, 2013

Raising awareness and advocating for change ...

In 2013 we noticed a steep rise in the number of detainees in prison asking for help and support, a result of the increasing use of prison detention which expanded from 600 places to 1,000. This issue has been a key concern for AVID for many years and in 2013 became the central topic at our AGM: '4000 and rising: immigration detention in prison'. Guest speakers Dr Mary Bosworth (Oxford University) and Francesca Cooney (Prison Reform Trust) spoke of the differences between prison and detention in terms of access to information, conditions, and access to justice. Sadly the year ended with around 1,100 held in prison, and with demand for support far outweighing the availability of visitors and groups to meet the need.

We work with our membership of visitors groups to collate data and evidence on the realities of detention. This is both reactive, when issues arise for our visitors groups, and proactive, when opportunities arise to take forward our groups' concerns. We primarily do this through our work with individual visitors groups and regular collective meetings of the ARC Detention Sub Group, of which AVID is the Secretariat. Issues are then taken forward by AVID to present national evidence for change to the Home Office. This year has seen, for example, the development of policy equality statements for the most vulnerable in detention, interventions made on broadening access to the internet, input on welfare operating standards, advocacy for detainees in prison, and input on detainees' property, paid work, and induction/screening, amongst others. We are pleased to report that we've had considerable input into a range of operational policies on these issues, and also that we have been successful after over ten years of lobbying in getting commitment to a welfare Detention Service Order which will become policy in all centres in 2014. This has been a long standing concern for AVID, HMIP and many others and is testimony to the longer term commitment required for policy change to be effected.

This year we also submitted evidence to the Ministry of Justice consultation on Transforming Legal Aid and the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into Asylum. Through AVID, our member visitors groups were consulted as part of six inspections carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons into detention centres including Colnbrook and Brook House.

"They can neither deport me nor respond to my application, it feels like a death sentence..."

Detainee in prison, 2013

"Staff carried batons inappropriately and detainees were handcuffed as a matter of course if they had to be taken out of the centre for any reason"

HMIP on Morton Hall IRC, 2013



UK Home Office

ACTIVITIES REPORT

Providing information on the realities of detention.....

Our regular monthly digest of all things detention related, 'In Touch', continues to go from strength to strength, and is read by over 700 people every month. It is the only immigration detention-focused newsletter of its kind, bringing together policy updates, legal cases, statistics, news and features on detention alongside visitors groups news and events. Along with our Twitter feed which now reaches over 1,000 people we are able to make sure accurate and timely information on detention is regularly distributed and discussed.

We continued to raise awareness of the increasing use of detention in the UK by providing our statistical bulletins, and through participating in discussions and events on detention. This includes external training such as an induction session on Visiting Detention to 20 British Red Cross Tracing and Messaging Service Volunteers, and providing external guest speakers at events such as an ESRC funded conference in London in January, at which our Director spoke to 120 attendees from the academic and NGO community on Supporting Immigration Detainees.

"Excellent newsletter, as always. Well done AVID for putting all this info together! It's so useful"
Northern Ireland Law Centre

A Trustee's Perspective

I joined the AVID board of trustees two years ago, and it has been a privilege to be involved during this time. In my day job I am a lawyer and my work to date has been primarily with migrants, often those detained under immigration powers. I had seen the importance to my clients of the volunteers who visited them, and this motivated me to become involved with AVID.

Becoming a trustee of AVID has given me an insight into the brilliant work done by local visitor groups, and the invaluable work done by AVID to protect the rights of detainees across the UK. AVID is uniquely placed to be able to gather information about the issues and challenges faced by detainees, and use this information to effect positive changes.

In the two years that I have been a trustee, it's been great to see how AVID has grown and, in its 20th year, it is flourishing. This is, of course, excellent news, but in the current climate it is also essential. As you will be aware, there has been a vast increase in the use of immigration detention powers in recent years, making the work of AVID and the visitor groups indispensable.

In addition, the last year has seen ongoing changes to legal aid and the Immigration Bill. The changes already made to legal aid affect the ability of many detainees to secure legal advice and representation. The changes to legal aid that have yet to come into effect and the proposals in the Immigration Bill could severely limit the ability of detainees to challenge government decision-making. In such circumstances, the work of AVID and the visitors groups both in supporting individual detainees and promoting the human rights of detainees will become even more vital.

Polly Brendon

Summary of Accounts

Financial Year January to December 2013

	Unrestricted Funds 2013	Restricted Funds 2013	Total funds 2013	Total funds 2012
INCOME				
GRANTS				
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	-	30,000	30,000	13,333
Allen Lane Foundation	5,000	-	5,000	10,000
Meadow House Trust	-	-	-	10,000
Awards for All	-	-	-	9,500
Lush Charity Pot	-	-	-	8,000
Helen Tetlow Memorial Fund	-	-	-	7,500
Lankelly Chase	-	18,000	18,000	6,667
Samuel Sebba Trust	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
John Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust	8,000	-	8,000	-
Marsh Christian Trust	400	-	400	-
The Armours and Brasiers Gauntlet Trust	500	-	500	-
Other Grants	500	-	500	500
Swan Mountain Trust	-	-	-	2,000
Edith Maud Ellis 1985 Charitable Trust	-	-	-	2,000
Noel Buxton Trust	-	-	-	2,000
Sir James Roll Trust	-	-	-	1,300
Oakdale Trust	-	-	-	1,000
Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust	-	-	-	1,000
Abel Trust	-	-	-	2,000
DONATIONS				
United Reformed Church (Eastern Province) Trust No 2	-	-	-	1,251
All Saint's Church Milton	600	-	600	600
Parish of Holy Trinity and St Mary's, Guildford	450	-	450	-
Gift Aid Receivable	860	-	860	2,749
Other donations	5,788	-	5,788	8,337
Subtotal	27,098	48,000	75,098	94,737
Bank interest receivable	101	-	101	74
INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES				
Membership income	1,913	-	1,913	1,555
Sponsored events	-	-	-	1,037
Handbook sales	175	-	175	333
Provision of training	1,006	-	1,006	258
Subtotal	3,094	Nil	3,094	3,183
TOTAL INCOME	30,293	48,000	78,293	97,994
EXPENDITURE				
Staff costs	112	45,000	45,112	42,225
Accounts	1,231	-	1,231	1,512
Fundraising Strategy Development	-	3,000	3,000	-
Governance (Trustees expenses, AGM)	1,255	-	1,255	140
Rent and Rates	6,408	-	6,408	5,607
Project costs: Visitors Group support, training and outreach; Information and Awareness Raising; and Advocacy project	4,635	-	4,635	6,731
Helen Tetlow small grant distribution (to visitors groups)	-	-	-	5,000
Coordinators Conference	3,414	-	3,414	3,118
Website Development	-	7,531	7,531	1,969
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	16,695	55,531	72,226	66,302

The full set of independently examined accounts for the year can be obtained on request from AVID.

Shortest

period necessary?

904 people were held in detention for over six months in 2013. This included 50 detainees who were held for over two years.

Treasurer's Report

During 2013 we have had success with our fundraising and end the year with enough funds to staff our new Strategic Directions, employ our new Membership and Training Coordinator for three years, and support the development of the Verne Visitors Group.

We are extremely grateful to the Tudor Trust for making the second staff member a reality for us, and to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Lankelly Chase Foundation, who have put such faith in AVID that we can meet our core costs.

And for the rest of the funds, thanks go again to our dedicated Director, the commitment of our volunteers, the Trustees who put in the fundraising hours, and of course, our supporters, small trusts and individuals alike.

In 2014, our 20th year, we wish we could say that visitors were no longer needed across the UK to befriend detainees, and that AVID had done its job. Unfortunately, the demand for our support continues to grow, and we are lucky to have such loyal friends, members and contributors to help us meet that.

Madeline Church,
Treasurer

The financial statements have been prepared by accountants Jackson and Jackson, in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' published in 2005, applicable accounting standards, and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities

"I also found cases where it was questionable whether the length of detention was justified or necessary. I believe that an independent review mechanism is needed to assess the cases of individuals who have been detained for lengthy periods, as this would motivate change in the system"

John Vine, Independent Chief Inspector of UK Borders and Immigration, Annual Report 2012-13

About Us

Trustees:

The following Trustees served during the year January – December 2013:
Kathleen English (Chairperson)
Madeline Church (Treasurer)
Jane Ryan (Secretary)
Carolina Albuérne Rodriguez
Polly Brendon
Suko Fricke (from July 2013)
Neil Mulhern (to May 2013)
Juliette Stevenson
Andrew Wilson (from May 2013)

Staff:

Ali McGinley, Director

Volunteers:

Kayleigh Malone (to June 2013)
Rutger Birnie (to August 2013)
Ayaz Manji (August 2013)

Patrons:

Colin Firth
Lord David Ramsbotham
John Scampion

With Thanks

We are grateful for the support of our membership as listed on page 2, and the following:

Our Funders 2013

Allen Lane Foundation
The Armours and Brasiers Gauntlet Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
John Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust
Lankelly Chase Foundation
Marsh Christian Trust
Samuel Sebba Trust

Donations

All Saint's Church, Milton, Cambridge
Lewes Group in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Muswell Hill Friends
Parish of Holy Trinity and Saint Mary's, Guildford

Mareille Barclay
Madeline Church
Andrew Day
Kimmett Edgar
Kathleen English
Rebecca Graham
Sue Jones
Sylvia Platt
Martha Richardson
Sally Tarshish
Jennifer Turner
Jillian Wilkinson
Andrew Wilson
Lynda Wilson

And to those organisations and individuals who worked with and supported us in 2013:

ARC Detention Sub Group
Asylum Aid
Bhatt Murphy Solicitors
Bail for Immigration Detainees
Dr Mary Bosworth
British Red Cross Tracing and Messaging Service
Campaign to Close Campsfield IRC
Francesca Cooney
Detention Advice Service
Detention Forum
Freedom from Torture
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
John Vine, Independent Chief Inspector of UK Borders and Immigration
Immigration Law Practitioners Association
International Detention Coalition
Richard Lumley
Matrix Chambers
Medical Justice
Music in Detention
National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns
Prison Reform Trust
Lord David Ramsbotham
Refugee Council
Scottish Refugee Council
UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group



In 2013

we learned that HMP Verne would convert to a detention centre, holding 580 single male detainees on the Isle of Portland in Dorset. When it opens it will be the second largest detention centre in the UK.

30,423

people entered
detention in 2013

including 4,663
women and
203 children. 47%
were asylum
detainees.

*"Several obviously mentally ill women
had been detained before being sectioned
and released to a more appropriate
medical facility; it was difficult to
understand why they had been detained
in the first place"*
HMIP on Yarl's Wood, 2013



AVID

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Charity Number: 1063784