

AVID

Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees

Registered Charity No. 1156709

In Touch

136 (Aug/Sep 15)

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News from AVID

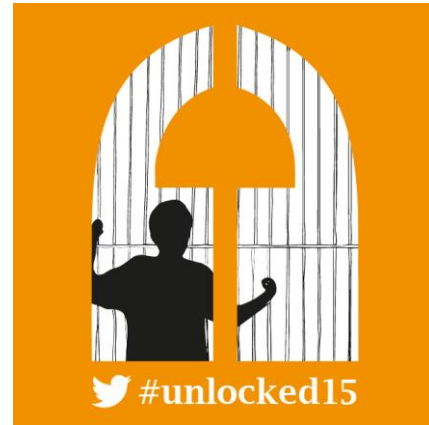
Recruiting: Treasurer and Trustee Vacancies

AVID is looking to recruit a Treasurer and Trustee, both voluntary roles on our Board.

The closing date is the 7th October. For both posts we are seeking someone experienced in governance and/or charity law and strategic planning. For the Treasurer role, financial planning and basic accounting skills are needed. We are particularly interested in hearing from people with experience of detention.

To find out more [visit our website here](#), or call our Director Ali McGinley for an informal chat about either role (0207 281 0533).

Unlocking Detention Tour 2015: #Unlocked15



The Detention Forum has kicked off its 2015 social media tour of the detention estate this week. This year we are looking at the impact of detention on communities, as well as ‘opening’ the virtual door on detention centres. We’d encourage you all to take part and make this year even more successful than last year’s.

It is easy to take part: just follow @DetentionForum to view the tweets, and use #unlocked15 if you want to participate. Retweet as many as you can, as we want to build the momentum and reach as many as possible. You can follow all the Unlocking Detention tweets at www.unlocked.org.uk.

There will also be several blogs published by DF members, and others, between now and mid-December when the tour finishes. You can read the **published blogs** so far [here](#). Also needed is visual material. [Find out more here](#).

Do you have any items for next month’s newsletter? If so contact avidnews321@gmail.com

News from Members

Samphire is recruiting! Be quick: closing date Friday 25th September

Samphire is recruiting a Detention Support Coordinator to provide emotional and practical support and casework assistance to immigration detainees held at Dover.

The role is for a fixed term of one year (with the possibility of extension contingent on funding) and involves directly assisting detainees at Dover IRC, recruiting and supervising volunteers and initiating policy and awareness-raising work aimed at minimising the use of detention and improving conditions for those detained.

Find out more [about Samphire here](#). You can access the [job description here](#) and the [application form here](#). Send completed application forms by email to recruitment@samphireproject.org.uk (subject line: Detention Support Coordinator) or by post to Samphire, 56 Castle Street, Dover, CT16 1PJ.

Deadline for applications is midday, Friday 25th September 2015

Congratulations to Detention Action: Liberty Human Rights Campaign of the Year

Huge congratulations to Detention Action who have won the [Liberty Human Rights Campaign](#) of the Year 2015 for their work to shut down the Detained Fast Track. Find out more about this work at www.detentionaction.org.uk

Yarl's Wood Befrienders on the BBC!

Following recent sell-out performances in London, Bedford and Colchester of Untold Theatre's new play, **The Scar Test**, exploring life inside Yarl's Wood detention centre, Yarl's Wood Befrienders' Jess Anslow and former coordinator, Heather Jones were interviewed for a feature on BBC 2's Victoria Derbyshire show about their experiences of supporting women detained at the centre. You can see the [footage here](#).

Scottish Detainee Visitors in the Daily Record

The Daily Record has published an article about the work of Scottish Detainee Visitors, inspired by the *Hidden Stories* film produced by AVID last year. The article interviews two volunteer visitors and describes the situation facing detainees in Dungavel and public attitudes to detention issues. [You can read the article here](#).

Detention Update

Detention Statistics Published

Figures analysed and rounded by AVID

The Home Office has published its latest quarterly statistics on detention for the second quarter of 2015 (April May and June). In this period, 8,146 people entered detention. Other statistics of note include:

- At the end of June 2015 there were 3,418 people in detention, 11% higher than the same time last year.
- Between April and June 2015, 8,146 people entered detention and 8,718 people left.
- Of those leaving in that quarter, 48% (3,966) were removed from the UK. 52% were released back into the community.
- 40% (3,273) were granted temporary admission or release, less than 1% (64) were given leave to enter/remain and 10% (792) were bailed, and just over 1% (83) left for 'other' reasons
- 46% of those leaving detention in the period were asylum detainees
- Of those leaving detention in the period, 80% (6,530) were detained for less than two months, 15% (1,272) for between two and six months and 4% (296) for between six and 12 months. 80 detainees were held for more than a year.
- As at 29 June 2015 there were 373 detainees held in prison establishments in England and Wales solely under immigration powers.

You can view the full statistics on the [Home Office website here](#).

Children in Detention Statistics published April – June 2015

The statistics on children in detention are now published as part of the quarterly immigration statistics (rather than monthly as previously).

In the second quarter of 2015, 38 children entered detention. Of those 38, 17 were initially detained at Tinsley House (Family Unit) IRC, 15 at Cedars PDA and 6 at other IRCs and STHFs. 39 children left detention, only 4 of whom were removed and 35 were released back into the community. [You can view the data tables here.](#)

Tragic death at the Verne

AVID was saddened to hear of the death in detention of a young Ugandan man at the Verne in Dorset. It is reported that the man committed suicide. Our thoughts are with the family and all who knew him, particularly those who were detained alongside him at the time of his death. We hope that they have been able to access support and help at this difficult time. You can read an article in the [Dorset Echo here](#). It is not clear why there was not more media coverage of this tragedy.

HMIP report on the Verne IRC



HMIP has published their first inspection report into conditions and treatment at the Verne IRC. The Verne – in Portland, Dorset - holds 580 male detainees, and converted to an IRC last year. The inspection took place in March 2015 with the report published in August. Around half of those held at the time of inspection and previously

been in prison. The report outcomes were described as 'mixed', with concerns such as:

- levels of violence were too high, some of the violence was serious and strategies to tackle violence lacked sophistication;
- arrangements to support those at risk of self-harm required improvement;
- unusually for an IRC, there was clear evidence of the availability of new psychoactive substances and illicit alcohol;
- some legitimate restrictions had temporarily been put in place to deal with these problems, but others were less justified;
- The Verne remained too prison-like in character for an IRC, with too much inner fencing and razor wire and a high use of separation;
- the quality of Rule 35 reports, which assess the fitness of possible victims of torture for detention, was variable;
- many detainees struggled to obtain representation to fight their cases; and
- the remoteness of The Verne made visits very difficult for many families, though visits facilities were good.

You can read the [report in full here](#).

IMB report on the Verne

The Independent Monitoring Board for the Verne has published its first report since the prison became an IRC in 2014. In it, the IMB highlight the difficult transition from prison to IRC. It reports that the centre is 'well run', with the following concerns noted:

- The unexpectedly large number of men with mental health problems;
- The time taken to move such patients to a more appropriate facility;
- The unsuitability of the ex-segregation unit as a Care and Separation Unit (CSU) for those seriously ill with mental health problems, or awaiting Tuberculosis test results;
- The inadequacy of the Reception facilities, especially with increasing numbers of detainees at the Centre;

- Lack of late evening dispensing of medications.

[You can read the report in full on the AVID website here.](#)

HMIP report on Yarl's Wood IRC

The center in Bedfordshire is well known as 'the detention centre for women', but it also holds families with adult children, and there is a unit for single men ('lorry drop cases'). The inspection took place in April 2015 and the report was published on 12th August, to much media attention. The report is one of the most critical yet, calling Yarl's Wood a 'place of national concern' and highlighting a range of failings, including a 'failure to meet the needs of the most vulnerable women' and flagging up that the centre had deteriorated since its last inspection. For the first time, the HM Chief Inspector also joined the calls from the recent Parliamentary Inquiry in recommending that 'a strict time limit must now be introduced on the length of time that anyone can be administratively detained'. The report notes:

- The centre had become more 'complex and challenging' to manage since the last inspection
- 54% of women said they felt suicidal or depressed when they first arrived
- 45% of women said they felt unsafe
- Reduced staffing levels were insufficient
- There was no counselling service
- Health care screening, including intimate questions, was sometimes carried out by a male nurse.
- Most use of force was well managed, but inspectors were concerned about an incident of excessive force
- Some women were detained for long periods and some of the most vulnerable women were detained without clear reason
- 99 pregnant women had been detained in 2014, despite the Home Office's policy stating pregnant women should not normally be detained
- Rule 35 reports, which should protect detainees who have been tortured, lacked detail and were perfunctory

- there were still too many male staff and it was unacceptable that staff still entered women's rooms without knocking
- health care had declined most severely, with severe staff shortages and poor local governance
- care planning for women with complex needs was so poor it put them at risk;
- the available mental health care did not meet women's needs; and
- pharmacy services were chaotic.

The Inspector noted that the issues at Yarl's Wood should be dealt with at a strategic management and policy level. He also said that 'decisive action is needed to ensure that women are only detained as a last resort'. You can read the report in full here and media coverage by the [Huffington Post](#), [Freemovement Blog](#), [ITV](#). Several detention NGOs and civil society organisations, including AVID, responded to the report and [you can read them here](#).

In other Yarl's Wood news, Catherine West MP was denied access to the detention centre earlier this month. She writes for the Justice Gap on her call for a time limit on detention and her concerns about being denied access to the centre, and [you can read it here](#).

AVID: FOI on immigration detainees in prison

AVID has been submitting regular *freedom of information requests* on the numbers of immigration detainees held in prisons, and their locations. Our latest response gives the figures for April 2015 (368), May (364) and June (368). You can [access the figures here](#).

FOI on Rule 35 in second quarter 2015

With thanks to No Deportations

An FOI on the number of Rule 35 reports made by a Medical Practitioner to the Home Office in the 2nd quarter of 2015 has been published. In total, between April and June 2015, 20 reports were

made, relating to 18 individuals. As a consequence of these reports 4 people were released from detention (22%).

Self-Harm Figures released for Q2 2015

With thanks to No Deportations

Home Office data collated by No Deportations under a Freedom of Information request is detailed below. There was one death in the period, in Yarl's Wood.

Number of incidents of Self-Harm requiring medical treatment Q2/2015

	Total	April	May	June
Brook House	13	1	4	8
Campsfield	0	0	0	0
Colnbrook	21	4	7	10
Dover	14	8	4	2
Dungavel	0	0	0	0
H/worth	15	4	8	3
Morton Hall	3	2	1	0
The Verne	20	7	7	6
Tinsley House	12	10	1	1
Yarl's Wood	13	6	2	5
Larne	0	0	0	0
Pennine House	0	0	0	0
Cedars	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	111	33	34	44

Individuals on Formal Self-Harm at Risk (ACDT) Q2/2015

	Total	April	May	June
Brook House	75	21	27	27
Campsfield	22	22	6	4
Colnbrook	66	26	24	16
Dover	30	14	7	9
Dungavel	27	9	9	9
H/worth	83	24	31	28
Morton Hall	33	21	6	6
The Verne	81	27	25	29
Tinsley House	17	5	5	7
Yarl's Wood	102	34	31	37
Larne	3	0	2	1
Pennine House	2	0	1	1
Cedars	3	0	2	1
TOTAL	544	203	176	175

News, Publications, Reports

New Report from *Freedom From Torture: Tainted Peace – Torture in Sri Lanka since 2009*

This new report from FFT shows that torture by the military and police is deeply entrenched and has 'tainted the country's peace since 2009'. It states that one of the most pressing tasks for the country's new leadership is to eradicate torture. The FFT team's medico-legal reports of the physical and psychological impacts of torture show that torture did not end when the fighting stopped. The findings are based on 148 of these reports. You can read the [report in full here](#).

Law and Policy

Immigration Bill 2015

The Government introduced its new Immigration Bill to the Commons on 17th September.

The Bill will now progress through Parliament and you can follow the [progress here](#). The Bill seeks to extend the 'hostile environment' for those living without legal status. You can access the ILPA briefing on the [Immigration Bill 2015 here](#). The Bill seeks to create a new framework for bail from detention. The Secretary of State for the Home Department would have wide ranging powers to impose conditions such as electronic tagging. The Home Office has produced a factsheet on the provisions relating to bail which [you can access here](#). Colin Yeo of the Freemovement Blog has also written up a useful overview with links to all the key information, which [you can find here](#).

Parliamentary Monitoring

Parliamentary Questions now on our website!

We are delighted to let you know that we've moved our [parliamentary monitoring work to our new website!](#) From now on you will find the full list of PQs and debates on immigration detention on the site, which means you can

access them throughout the month as and when. Follow us on twitter (@AVIDdetention) and you'll get instant notification of when they are up.

We will continue to include a list in this newsletter, see below:

Parliamentary Questions August and September (for full breakdown, visit here)

- **21st September:** Detained Fast Track
- **18th September:** Deportation
- **18th September:** Mental Health
- **18th September:** Detained Fast Track
- **18th September:** Audit procedures/transfer of medical records
- **18th September:** Cost of detention at Dungavel
- **10th September:** Staffing at Dungavel
- **10th September:** Nationalities and lengths detained at Dungavel

Parliamentary Debate on Detention

On the 10th September, there was a backbench debate on Immigration Detention. The motion, put forward by MPs involved in the Parliamentary Inquiry, was:

That this House supports the recommendations of the report of the Joint Inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration, The Use of Immigration Detention in the United Kingdom; has considered the case for reform of immigration detention; and calls on the Government to respond positively to those recommendations.

In total, 25 MPs spoke during the debate, with a strong SNP contingent. MPs were strong in supporting the Inquiry's recommendations of a time limit and the use of alternatives, with many citing evidence of Women for Refugee Women and other detention NGOs. The work of volunteer visitors in bringing evidence to light was also mentioned by several MPs. Well done to all who worked to brief MPs in the run up to the debate. James Brokenshire's response was as expected: again, stating that the UK does not detain indefinitely, but hinting at the

consideration of community alternatives. [You can access the Hansard text in full here.](#)

Events

Giving Time: Can Volunteers be nudged?

Thursday 19th November
10.30 to 4pm
Birmingham, UK

This is a free event, from the research team behind the groundbreaking study *Giving Time*: randomized experiments in interventions to encourage volunteering. The event promises to offer a range of insight about promoting volunteering and time giving, scaling up volunteer led activities and managing and organising volunteers. Tickets are free and [can be accessed here.](#)

Jobs and Funding

Medical Justice is recruiting!

Office Support Manager - 1 year maternity cover, to be extended if additional funding is secured:

- **Salary** : £24,545
- **Reporting to** : The Co-ordinator / Acting Co-ordinator
- **Responsible for** : The Administrative Assistant
- **Job Purpose**: Ensure smooth running of the office, arrange detention visits for doctors, and manage finance tasks.
- **Closing date** : Monday 28th September
- **Further info** : [Job description and application form](#)

Administration Assistant - 1 year maternity cover, to be extended if addition funding is secured:

- **Salary** : £20,000
- **Reporting to** : The Office Support Manager
- **Job Purpose** : Support staff and volunteers
- **Closing date** : Friday 2nd October

- **Further info :** [Job description and application form](#)

AVID, September 2015