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| Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group | 2017 | |
|  | | Annual Report |

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

Registered Charity No: 1124328

Patrons: Lord Dholakia PC, OBE, DL,

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

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Words from people detained

# Some words from those we have visited

*Having a visitor really helps with giving you a lift from being stressed out and not knowing what path to take.*

*[My visitor is] very caring and makes me feel someone cares. They are legend.*

*{My visitor] talks to me that only makes me feel I still got hope, am not alone.*

*Someone listens to me.*

*It makes me believe again in human rights and justice. I feel very secure with a visitor.*

*All I want is to thank you for making this organisation. It really makes a big impact on detainees’ lives.*

*[My visitor] is God sent to me. She has been a sister, mother and a friend to me. Can’t mention all the things she has done for me.*

*I have someone to visit me and someone who want something good to me. [My visitor] came into my life as an angel.*

*I don’t feel lonely or stressed no more.*

*My family live in Sheffield. No one visits me as I don’t have friends in London.*

*I was amazed that someone would come to see me and be friendly if they didn't know me.*

*I would have killed myself if I hadn't had my visitor in detention.*

*She helped me to understand that they are good people out there to me.*

*Help you to be positive and there is life after detention, not the end of the world.*

*[GDWG] is not only a group but also a support network, who generates hope when there is no hope.*

Chair’s Report

It has been a great privilege to be Chair of GDWG since August 2017. I followed someone whom I must thank on our behalf, Dr Gemma Stockford, who gave us dedicated service. It is quite awesome to take on the role performed so well by so many, and at times I have felt somewhat daunted. This thought is tempered by the knowledge that you, our supporters and friends, are right behind us all at GDWG which is blessed by having wonderful staff, volunteers and trustees whose care and compassion for detained asylum seekers is unparalleled. We lose two of our trustees, Paul Houston and Giles Montagnon, as they stand down; I will miss their wise counsel greatly. Fortunately, we have new trustees who show great commitment and enthusiasm.

There is a Chinese saying, “May you live in interesting times”. It has been very interesting and, at times, horrid - the Panorama programme highlighted serious concerns at Brook, hopefully being addressed. Thanks to our volunteer Hannah Chambers supported by our staff, we delivered valuable research for inclusion in the Shaw Review on Immigration Detention in our country (due out in the next few months). Another of our researchers, Dan Godshaw, published “Don’t Dump Me in a Foreign Land” which addresses the situation of young arrivers into the country who are faced with immigration detention. Our Director’s contacts with other organisations have also enhanced our reputation as an organisation of integrity and influence.

All the while, the intense work of helping our detainees through visiting and advocacy, where possible, goes on, thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and dedicated staff. As an erstwhile visitor myself, I know how committed our visitors are, to listen non-judgmentally, often to dreadful stories of escape from torture and war, and to offer the hand of welcome and unequivocal friendship.

I read recently an interview by Edmund de Waal, author and famous potter, in which he described the refugee crisis as one of the greatest challenges of our time. When one sees the flood of people fleeing war and tragedy, pitiful, homeless, or crowded into refugee camps, one wonders what an individual can do to help. Refugees can easily become numbers, not people who had families and friends and lives. We can feel helpless in the face of it. This is where our charity, GDWG, steps in. We meet the individual, not the mass. We are no longer rendered helpless by the magnitude of it all but can welcome face to face people who have more stories to tell than we could ever dream of, endured more nightmares than we could ever imagine.

Refugee Tales, our inspirational outreach programme (though not the only one), encourages our detainees to tell their stories and, in so doing, helps with the healing process as well as informing the wider, untutored public. This year in July we walk on our 4th pilgrimage, from St Albans to Westminster and thence to a reception at the British Library. The Refugee Tales team is another group of people I wish to thank.

I would like to end this short report with a quote from David Miliband’s book “Rescue: Refugees and the Political Crisis of our Time”. He wrote, “People often say charity should begin at home. I understand that feeling. But that doesn’t mean charity should end at home…. Show empathy for those we do not know and turn that empathy into action and we live out the most basic value of humankind. Fail and we have no moral compass at all.”

## Marie Dewson

### April 2018

Director’s Report

It has been another highly eventful year for GDWG. In May 2017, Tinsley House reopened having been closed for 8 months, with 40 further beds added to increase the centre’s capacity for single male detainees, and with the new pre-departure accommodation opening to facilitate the detention of families at Tinsley once more. This has meant, sadly, that the capacity of Brook and Tinsley Houses combined is higher than ever before – the centres can now hold nearly 700 people between them. The need for our work has never been greater, and we have been building our services and recruiting more visitors to ensure we can reach as many of those who need as we can, and extend the hand to friendship to those facing the horrors of indefinite detention in our local area. In 2017 we visited more people, saw more people at our drop-ins, and provided casework support for more people. The necessary and vital expansion of our work continues into 2018. This March, we were finally able to begin a drop-in surgery in Tinsley House.

Despite the expansion of detention at the Gatwick centres, I continue to believe we are at a time of perhaps of unprecedented hope for ending indefinite detention and for achieving wider detention reform. As Marie rightly notes above, 2017 was a notably eventful year in terms of wider developments in detention. The challenges remain considerable, but detention has received more public attention than perhaps at any other time. The general election saw a number of political parties make manifesto commitments to set a time limit for detention, and the parliamentary situation following the election result means an amendment or a bill to end indefinite detention is currently a serious possibility. The horrible scenes captured by Panorama last September were shocking even to those of us who have been going into detention centres for years. Along with increased public awareness and outrage, the programme led to a Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry, whose remit is still broadening and to whom we gave oral and written evidence. In addition, Stephen Shaw carried out his review into progress made on the recommendations he made in his 2016 report, and G4S have commissioned an independent investigation into their own handling of the allegations of abuse uncovered by Panorama. We made detailed submissions of evidence to both. We continue to await the outcomes of all of these processes at the time of writing. I am proud of our voice growing louder at this important time, of the fact that we are playing an increasingly key role in the calls for change. Much of this is thanks to the extraordinary work of the Refugee Tales project, as described by Anna below.

As ever, I have many more thanks to give than I have room to include. I would like to thank my fantastic staff team, past and present (Anna, Naomi, Anne, Marygold, Katie, Ana and Izzie), and our hugely dedicated trustees. Anna, Katie, David, Mary, Christina, John and all involved in Refugee Tales have once more shown enormous dedication, ingenuity and passion. Dan Godshaw produced a wonderful report and provided invaluable additional help in the office during 2017. Hannah Chambers has been working on detailed research into the detention of vulnerable people at Brook and Tinsley Houses; her work formed our submissions to Stephen Shaw and I believe will have a significant impact on his findings. Aidan, Sandra and Mariam have provided excellent support in the office. Our funders have made all of our activities possible. And – as ever – our volunteer visitors remain the heart of our work, giving extraordinary amounts of time and support and remaining a light in the dark.

Thank you to everyone who helped us in any way in 2017.

## James Wilson

### May 2018

Facts and Figures

In 2017 we provided a form of assistance to 1071 detainees in total.

# Assistance

Below are some of the measurable ways in which GDWG assisted detainees in 2017.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number of Detainees Requesting |  | Total  2017 | Total  2016 |
| Agency Liaison/referral |  | 450 | 360 |
| Clothing |  | 313 | 369 |
| Drop-in |  | 375 | 181 |
| Information/signposting for legal advice |  | 500 | 327 |
| Phone cards |  | 446 | 873 |
| Removal Money |  | 242 | 181 |
| Section 4 Assistance |  | 49 | 47 |
| Transport Money for families to visit |  | 11 | 22 |
| Visitor |  | 174 | 121 |

# Length of Detention

When HMIP inspected Brook House between 31st October and 11th November 2016, they recorded 87 people who had held at Brook for over 2 months, with one detainee having completed 545 nights at the centre. They also found that – since their previous report – the average length of detention had actually increased from 28 to 48 days. It should be noted that some of those detained will have previously been held at a different IRC, so the actual overall length of detention will be even longer. The most recent Home Office statistics show that the proportion of people being eventually released back in to UK society after being in detention is around 51%. There seem no clear signs of reduction of length of detention. However, the closure of The Verne IRC in December 2017 has led to the lowest numbers of people being held in detention, currently, for a number of years.

# Countries of Origin

64 different countries of origins were represented by those who we provided support to over the year. We supported more people from Nigeria that any other single nationality. The most significant development continued to be the rising numbers of detained EU nationals we came into contact with, with Polish detainees remaining the second most supported nationality by GDWG.

# Refugee Tales

The second volume of Refugee Tales was published in 2017 by Comma Press and gained considerable publicity, including Kamila Shamsie highlighting the publication on Channel Four News. Anna was interviewed on BBC Northern Ireland live radio in a prime lunchtime slot and Shami Chakrabarti featured the book in The Guardian. Olivia Laing wrote on Refugee Tales in Wasifiri. The project was featured in the Yorkshire Post, the Scottish Review of Books, the Huffington Post, the Irish Times, on the BBC Asian Network, in Counsel Magazine and in The Tablet. Book events with Kamila Shamsie, Ian Duhig, Marina Warner, David Herd and Neel Mukherjee took place at Charleston Small Wonder Festival, Birmingham Literature Festival, Manchester Literature Festival, Ilkley Literature Festival, Poetry at Aldeburgh and in Rochdale and Hampstead Synagogue. Parliamentary work by Refugee Tales developed this year gaining cross-party support for an end to indefinite detention and key successes included Andrew Mitchell writing in support of a time limit in Conservative Home and Diane Abbott acknowledging in her Labour Party Conference speech that indefinite detention should end. Refugee Tales had a presence at Labour Party Conference in Brighton with over 500 visitors to our stand and Labour MPs voting the stand second best third sector stand. Our thanks to the team who hosted our stand and gained the GDWG many new supporters.

Refugee Tales developed partnerships with organisations such as Liberty, the Detention Forum and the Bar Council. In November 2017 the Bar Council and Refugee Tales hosted an event at the Temple Church with a reading of ‘The Student’s Tale’ by Niamh Cusack. The walk of 2017 from Runnymede to Westminster featured lunchtime talks on Due Process reflecting on Magna Carta and the rule of law. Talks were given by Ali Smith, Sarah Wood, Steve Collis, David Herd, Angie Hobbs, Jonathan Wittenberg, Ayesha Christie, and Shami Chakrabarti. A finale event at the ICA hosted by Hugh Muir included tales by Abdulrazak Gurnah and Helen MacDonald and the film ‘Azure’ by Sarah Wood with music from Ian Shaw. There was considerable parliamentary support at the event and reception afterwards with GDWG trustees.

Thanks to the large team, including website manager, catering crew, drivers, walk team, cake bakers, first aiders, press and publicity team, fire marshall, arts team, and support crew who came together in a tremendous feat of co-operation. Special thanks to Chairs of the Arts Committee, Walk Committee, and Publicity Committee. Thank you to the team who used the book as a tool to have conversations with parliamentarians and to Katie who led them and has now started in post as Refugee Tales Parliamentary Officer and support. Thank you to everyone who helped with our office move and to everyone who has made our new Refugee Tales space such a calm, creative, ethical and inspiring place to be. We are grateful to the Arts Council, Sussex Community Foundation and everyone who has kindly donated to Refugee Tales to enable us to hold day walks throughout the year that are a lifeline for many.

## Anna Pincus

### May 2018

Treasurer’s Report

GDWG reported a deficit of £12,440 in 2017, with income of £217,397 and costs of £229,837. This compares to a surplus of £52,725 in 2016. The £65k difference between the results in 2017 and 2016 consists of a £13k reduction in income (mainly relating to donations from individuals, which were unusually large in 2016) and a £52k increase in costs, including a £23k increase in pay costs. The average number of staff in 2017 was higher than the previous year, although one new post was funded by a new grant. Other cost increases included a research grant of £3k and higher costs for detainee welfare (£4k), training (£4k) and website redevelopment (£6k). The website redevelopment was also grant-funded. The cost of awareness-raising events was £9k higher than in 2016 (mainly for Refugee Tales, whose non-staff costs were exceeded by related income). Trustees were conscious of the level of Charity reserves and of the surplus experienced in 2016, and therefore decided to increase expenditure in various areas during 2017.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Unrestricted**  **2017** | **Restricted**  **2017** | **Total**  **2017** | **Total**  **2016** |
|  | **£** | **£** | **£** | **£** |
| **Income from:** |  |  |  |  |
| Donations and legacies | 44,255 | 172,050 | 216,305 | 229,705 |
| Investment income | 587 | - | 587 | 671 |
| Other income | 505 | - | 505 | - |
| **Total** | **45,347** | **172,050** | **217,397** | **230,376** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Expenditure on:**  Charitable activities: |  |  |  |  |
| Refugee Tales | 17,129 | 12,420 | 29,549 | 23,212 |
| Other awareness raising events | 3,150 | - | 3,150 | 130 |
| Relief to immigrants and refugees | 20,350 | 176,788 | 197,138 | 154,309 |
| **Total** | **40,629** | **189,208** | **229,837** | **177,651** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net income** | **4,718** | **(17,158)** | **(12,440)** | **52,725** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Movements between funds | 1,951 | (1,951) | - | - |
| **Total funds brought forward** | **114,739** | **26,118** | **140,857** | **88,132** |
| **Total funds carried forward** | **121,408** | **7,009** | **128,417** | **140,857** |

The Charity’s free reserves (unrestricted funds) were £121,408 at 31 December 2017 (2016 £114,739). Cash at year end was £151k, compared to £184k at the end of 2016. Creditors reduced to £26k (2016 £45k), mainly as a result of lower deferred income balances.

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2017** | | **2016** | |
|  | **£** | **£** | **£** | **£** |
| **Fixed assets:** |  |  |  |  |
| Tangible assets |  | **2,421** |  | **1,428** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Current assets:** |  |  |  |  |
| Debtors | **492** |  | **459** |  |
| Cash at bank and in hand | **151,181** |  | **183,837** |  |
|  | **151,673** |  | **184,296** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Creditors falling due within one year** | **(25,677)** |  | **(44,867)** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Net current assets |  | **125,996** |  | **139,429** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net assets** |  | **128,417** |  | **140,857** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Income funds:** |  |  |  |  |
| **Restricted funds** |  | **7,009** |  | **26,118** |
| **Unrestricted funds** |  | **121,408** |  | **114,739** |
| **Fund balances at end of year** |  | **128,417** |  | **140,857** |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## George Fitzsimons

### May 2018

Support

# We are grateful for the support of:

**Major funders:**

The AB Charitable Trust

Awards for All

Arts Council

Bernadette Trust

The Big Lottery Fund

Bromley Trust

Crawley Borough Council

Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust

The Henry Smith Charity

The Hillcote Trust

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales

The Longley Trust

Souter Charitable Trust

Sussex Community Foundation

The Tudor Trust

Three Oaks Trust

**Our patrons:**

Lord Dholakia PC, OBE, DL

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

**Our Refugee Tales patrons:**

Ali Smith

Abdulrazak Gurnah

**Our friends and colleagues:**

Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees

Bail for Immigration Detainees

Bhatt Murphy Solicitors

Birnberg Pierce

Brighton Against Detention

British Red Cross

Crawley Community and Voluntary Service

Councillor Chris Cheshire, Mayor of Crawley

Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors

Detention Action

Detention Forum

Doughty Street Chambers

Duncan Lewis Solicitors

Freedom from Torture

Garden Court Chambers

Greg O Ceallaigh

Helen Bamber Foundation

Henry Smith MP

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons

Immigration Law Practitioners Association

Lawrence Lupin solicitors

Leigh Day Solicitors

Lisa Davies

Leonora Corden and Eastside Primetimers

Lewes Organisation in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Lorraine Roberts

Medical Justice

Morton Hall Visitors Group

Mother’s Union

Public Law Project

Refugee Council

Rene Cassin

Richard Place Dobson

Samphire

Samaritans (Reigate branch)

Scottish Detainee Visitors

SOAS Detainee Support

University of Law

University of Kent

Verne Visitors Group

Women for Refugee Women

Yarls Wood Befrienders

**Our thanks to:**

All churches, individuals and organisations who have donated money, clothing and other items to us

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