



REVIEW INTO ENDING THE DETENTION OF CHILDREN FOR IMMIGRATION PURPOSES RESPONSES FROM INDIVIDUALS

SECURING OUR BORDER CONTROLLING MIGRATION

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1. ADLER, ANN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees)

I am grateful to be given the opportunity to express my opinion in connection with your review into ending the immigration detention of children.

Having worked with many asylum seekers and refugees, I am very aware of the many problems they face. Placing children in detention is an issue I feel particularly strongly about and I believe it is an indefensible procedure. All the evidence available from medical and other specialist practitioners shows that locking up children can cause serious and long-term harm.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families immediately, and release those families currently in immigration detention.

Furthermore, I think it is wrong and harmful to use procedures which separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

It is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for those seeking refuge in the UK. For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process, and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past.

The UK should uphold its tradition of treating all people fairly and with dignity. Those in need - and children in particular - deserve special care and protection.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

2. AHMAD, NADEEM SYED

I provide my personal and professional views on the above review concentrating on the three specific areas outlined in David Wood's letter dated the 10th June 2010. Before providing these, I must emphasise that the views exposed are my own and not those of the North East Strategic Migration Partnership. I am also aware that a number of our partners would have sent their respective individual comments.

The three specific areas and my thoughts/suggestions below:

1. How can we improve our engagement with families in dealing with asylum applications?

One area that the Agency needs to improve would be to ensure that engagement with family must be done with a 'trained interpreter' who also has an understanding of the UK Immigration system and processes.

Engagement must be with the family as a whole and not just the 'Head' in order that the family understands fully the processes that they have to go through.

I am not sure as to the thinking behind the link with 'contact' and 'their access to legal representation'. In my view these are two totally separate areas and roles are different.

Another area to look at would be the Agency's contractual relationship and requirements with the OSS providers. My experiences suggest that this is one of the 'weak' links in the asylum process and a difficult one to resolve under the current system. This can lead to a confusion amongst those applying for asylum in that on one hand there is that 'Authority' (UKBA) seen and or perceived as unsympathetic and on the other the 'supportive and the caring' (the OSS provider) seen as supporting the individual/family's case.

2. How can we promote and improve the current voluntary return process to increase the take up from families who have no legal right to remain in the UK?

What do you believe UK Border Agency's role is here and is there a role for others in engaging with families around this option?

I have strong views on this which I expressed during the discussions at the time when Accommodation 2005 was being debated and discussed (this culminated in what we now know as the target contacts).

The process must start from the very beginning when a family makes a claim for asylum. By this I do not mean providing them with information on voluntary returns, the role of IOM and or showing a DVD. But, the message needs to be re-enforced by all accommodation providers and to ensure that this does happen, why not make it a contractual requirement?

Alongside this, work needs to be done, in particular with the social accommodation providers (not just the asylum teams or the contract managers) that providing a total picture would save the local authorities money.

The current system fails on this and results in two things:

Firstly, post decision there is a panic as no one wants to see either families made homeless or living on the streets nor anyone wants to see families being split i.e. Children taken into care – Not that this is the norm in this situation; and secondly, there is the voluntary sector, who rightly

support their respective clients and as such do put pressure on local authorities to take appropriate action while using different pieces of UK and European legislation to represent the family – directly or through other routes.

The contact that individual contractors have with their respective clients must include the fact – which is that each case has a 50-50 chance; which then should lead to ‘what if you get the right to remain’? And the options available [RIES for example] if the claim for asylum is unsuccessful.

Repeating what I stated in answering 1, the options must be discussed with the family as a whole.

3. If a family chooses not to leave the country, with or without support from the UK Border agency, what might an alternative family returns model look like?

How should the UK Border Agency respond where a family refuses to comply with removal (recognizing the need to strike an appropriate balance between our s55 safeguarding duty and the enforcement of immigration rules)?

In my view, if all these are addressed during the asylum process, the numbers that do not choose to leave will reduce.

However, in such situations the use of ‘remote’ proper and suitable accommodation could be used. I believe similar to the one in Scotland.

In my view and experiences there is too much time and resources spend by a host of agencies during the asylum process with very little spent on putting forward the ‘facts’ and post decision.

To ensure that the whole process is fair, last and firm, all agencies involved must understand what this means and not go into the ‘blame’ culture when the right decision is not made.

Finally, the Border Agency must ensure that all its providers [not just those engaged in contract discussion or delivery] fully understand the ‘end to end’ process and in particular financial implications, in particular to the public sector agencies of the cost of not doing ‘nothing’.

I hope my thoughts/ideas are of some assistance and if you wish further clarification please do let me know.

Please do note that these are my views and not those of my Partnership.

3. ALFRED-KAMARA, MICHAELA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

4. ALI, MOHAMMED

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

5. ALLEN, GAVIN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

6. AMADI, PAULETTE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

7. ANTHONY, LISA

(amended version of campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees)

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children. I hope that you can end this soon.

I am personally very concerned about this issue. I believe it is indefensible to lock up children, especially when you consider all the evidence available from medical practitioners, The Children's Commissioner and others to show the serious harm that detention causes to children.

As a counsellor who works with asylum seeking children and young people I have heard first hand how traumatic their experience of detention can be and am very aware of the damage this does to the mental health and confidence of young people, already dealing with the very significant difficulties and experiences that have led to them seeking asylum.

I must also add that as a Mother, I feel huge sadness and concern that any child might be detained in this way, and am unable to understand that the experience could be anything other than traumatic and damaging to any child.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together.

I must also mention the experiences of unaccompanied and age-disputed young people who, in addition to the experiences that have caused them to leave their country of origin are also needing our support in dealing with the loss of their family. Even if a young person is over 18 they are still experiencing a stage in their development which requires adult support and we need to take account of this, as child development is a gradual process, not completed overnight on someone's 18th birthday.

It is vital that the Government stops locking up children as soon as possible, but it is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families seeking refuge in the UK. I am saddened to be a citizen in a country that allows traumatized children to experience further trauma within the process of asking for the safety and support that every child deserves. For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process, and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past.

It is clear that we need a fairer system that demonstrates our natural instinct to protect and care for all children in our society and our valuing of the family.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

8. ARMSTRONG, KATHERINE

Thank you for inviting the public to submit responses to this consultation. Please find below my opinions on the proposal to end child detention.

Child detention should be ended immediately for all children seeking sanctuary in the UK. Detention is extremely harmful to the physical, mental and emotional development of the child and contravenes basic human rights.

Children seeking sanctuary should be allowed to live with their families or, in the absence of their family, with dedicated and properly trained carers who are responsive to their particular needs.

Families seeking asylum should not be separated. This would further harm the emotional wellbeing of children who have already tolerated significant stress, fear and discomfort. Families should be supported to live together in the community, both financially and otherwise. Families seeking sanctuary have a very low risk of absconding while waiting for a decision on their asylum status.

Families should not be subjected to curfews or other restrictions on their freedom of movement such as tagging, and should receive sufficient financial support to allow them to choose sufficient healthy food for the whole family and the facilities to prepare and eat food as they choose.

The human and children's rights to privacy, family life, education, and health should be upheld by the UK government for all those seeking sanctuary in this country because it is a human right to seek asylum. Beyond ending child detention the UK government should ensure that all children seeking sanctuary in this country have access to education and healthcare services.

So far the UK government has failed to meet these obligations. The pledge to end child detention is laudable, but must be followed by swift action to ensure this happens now and in a way that supports children's wellbeing.

Thank you for your attention.

9. ARUNDEL, RACHEL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

10. ASH, MARTIN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

11. ASHTON, REV. LESLEY

I would support legislation that prevents children being held in detention.

I sent a comment yesterday stating that I wholeheartedly support the ending of the detention of children. I should have also stated that what I would not want to see is a situation where parents are interned and children taken into care. Removing children from their family when they are not being harmed by a member of their family is a gross injustice of their human rights and must be resisted.

Children have the right to experience family life free from detention and in any humane society this should be given paramount importance.

12. ATKINSON, DANIELLE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

13. AYECH, VICKY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

14. AYNESLEY-GREEN, SIR AL

I write as the former Children's Commissioner for England and in the context of the several reports on Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre that I produced in that role. These reports documented incontrovertibly the harm done to children by the process of early morning arrest, transportation to Yarl's Wood, imprisonment and removal. I welcome, therefore, the Review that has been set up, and offer the following series of broad principles for consideration.

1. The detention of children and families is but one, albeit potentially penultimate, milestone in their journeys in seeking refuge whilst in the UK.

Many of the difficulties caused by detention arise from upstream inefficiencies and delays in processing claims for refuge. There must be more efficient and accelerated systems in place to process applications.

2. Not everyone who seeks refuge can be allowed to stay, and many will have to be returned. This should be made explicit at first point of contact with immigration authorities, and a personal and trustworthy relationship must be established with dedicated case-workers to work with the families including early exploration of incentives for voluntary return.

3. Yarl's Wood IRC should be closed immediately. The overwhelming body of evidence supports my publicly stated contention that it is no place for a child.

This view has been reinforced by the recent publication of the Bedfordshire LSCB into allegations of harmful sexual behaviour by children whilst there.

This documented major criticisms of the UKBA and its agents that are symptomatic of broader concerns over their ability to manage effectively and humanely the families and children while being detained.

4. The view that families will abscond is not grounded in robust evidence.

5. Families to be returned should remain in their places of residence or in their local communities under Family Supervision Orders with additional surveillance conditions such as tagging or telephone voice verification.

6. The responsibility for making decisions on restriction of liberty and/or community supervision must be transferred from Home Office officials and ministers to local Family Courts.
7. There should be appropriate legal representation and welfare support.
8. All services and resources should be subject to the full regulation and inspection framework for vulnerable children.
9. Detention may rarely be necessary for a small number of families, but this must be as a last resort and under the supervision of the Family Courts when all else has failed, and never because alternatives may not be available at any given time. It must be for the shortest possible time
10. The Home Office must accept responsibility for knowing more of what happens to children and families who are removed. As Children's Commissioner I received anecdotal evidence of substantial differences in standards, support and processes even within EU member states that expose children to risk of harm.
11. Developing 'integration centres' to help and safeguard families resettling in countries they are being removed to should be piloted and subjected to rigorous evaluation

15. BAILEY, ELIZABETH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

16. BALDRY MP, TONY

I thought you might like to see a copy of this email I have received from Dr. Rebecca Mitchell-Farmer as a contribution to the consultation on the detention of children.

Dr. Mitchell-Farmer has been an active campaigner against detention centres, and I would be grateful if attention could be given to what her thoughts.

17. BALDWIN, RICHARD

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

18. BALLANTINE, CHRISTINE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

19. BALLIN, FRANCES

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

20. BARLOW, LISA MARIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

21. BARNES, DIANE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

22. BARNETT, CRAIG

I have had personal experience of knowing several families who have been held in immigration detention, and have seen the devastating effects of arrest and indefinite imprisonment on young children.

I urge you to recommend an immediate halt to immigration detention of families with children, as an unacceptable and harmful practice. Please be mindful that to separate children from their parents by continuing to detain adult family members would be a completely unacceptable course of action, with further deeply harmful consequences for young people.

Instead we should have a reasonable regime of contact with families pending deportation, that takes into account the low risk of absconding for people in this situation, who cannot easily 'disappear' with young children.

Thanks you for this opportunity and I look forward to hearing from you with the results of your review.

23. BARRATT, ALEX

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

24. BATCHELOR, JO

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

25. BELGEONNE, CLIVE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

26. BELLINO, SUSANNA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

27. BENITO, FERNANDO

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

28. BENYON, ANNE

I wish to support very strongly the ending of child detention. I have worked with asylum seekers and refugees for nearly 3 years and have witnessed the difficulties caused to families by this practice which seems to be totally non humane. There are certainly alternatives to this.

29. BIELENKY, DR. MARINA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

30. BILL, SYD

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

31. THE BISHOP OF BEDFORD, THE RT. REVD. RICHARD INWOOD

As the area Anglican Bishop of the Diocese in which Yarl's Wood is situated, I have a close interest in this issue. I have visited the centre a number of times and our chaplain there has also kept me abreast of developments. I was delighted to hear that the new government is considering ending the detention of children as however humane the conditions may or may not be, it is still imprisonment. I would encourage the Home Office to press ahead with this as soon as possible as the chance of whole families disappearing is fairly slight as most people will want their children to be in school and to be part of their local community.

It would also be my hope that the whole procedure for processing applications might be streamlined and made more efficient and more equitable. From an outsider's point of view the whole system appears entirely arbitrary.

I wait with interest the outcome of your review.

32. BLACK, STEVE

The Review will consider:

1. the UK Border Agency's current approach to dealing with asylum applications from families, including the contact arrangements with those families and the families' access to legal representation;
Surely all children should be living with their families when they've arrived together unless there are safeguarding issues arising from the relationships within the family context? When we insist that at almost all costs children stay with their own family within our own child safeguarding procedures implemented as part of 'Every Child Matters' than to treat 'foreigners' (sic), or fellow human beings as we call them in my house, is plainly an attack on their not being British.
2. the current circumstances in which children are detained;
Criminals are detained, children who have committed no offence should under no circumstance be 'detained'. Allowing families to live together and providing them support within the community is a far more humane way to treat people - even if they're not 'British' (sic).
3. how the current voluntary return process may be improved to increase the take-up from families who have no legal right to remain in the UK;
I think the clue is in the 'voluntary' and 'improved take-up'? If families do not wish to return home - and I'm not naive enough to believe that many asylum claims are not purely economic migration, then due process should take place whilst the families are afforded full human rights, not 'locked up' and detained. To split families as a way of making staying less attractive and 'volunteering' to go home is an abhorrent practice that the government should be ashamed of, and the UKBA equally so for implementing without dissent.
Afghan teenagers awaiting deportation are the largest single group among the 4,200 unaccompanied children under 18 seeking asylum in Britain after long journeys by plane, boat and truck.

The UKBA's proposed contract would we're told see 12 a month, the 16- and 17-year-olds, flown back to Kabul. They are better off 'at home' we're told. Really? Then why are we losing troops there every single day trying to 'better' the conditions of the Afghan people and as David Cameron said yesterday, the country wasn't ready for troop withdrawal? And as you are aware Afghan fatalities put troop casualties in the shadows.

David Wood, Strategic Director, Criminology and Detention Group, heads the review. I wonder how David Wood regards his job title? The fact that every migrant is overseen by a director who 'sees' them as part of his 'criminology and detention group' remit is surely why there is hostility from many who are seeking asylum, and many who believe that fundamental human rights should be afforded to all, regardless of their place of birth.

33. BATT, REV. JOE

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children. I work as a volunteer with two support groups for asylum seekers in Bradford and know from people I have met and tried to help what a traumatic experience it is for children, who have already had brutalising experiences, to be taken (often roughly and with little consideration of basic needs and emotions) and locked up in a prison type centre and deprived of regular schooling and the links they have built with school friends and local communities.

As a result I am personally very concerned about this issue. I believe it is indefensible to lock up children, especially when you consider all the evidence available from medical practitioners, The Children's Commissioner and others to show the serious harm that detention causes to children. I believe we are the only country in Europe to detain children in this way and it is just not true to say there is no alternative. An examination of practices in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Germany would show that these countries, which are much more successful in dealing with failed asylum seekers than we are, have developed non-custodial ways of monitoring failed asylum seekers.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together. There is no evidence that mothers with children are likely to disappear into the community if they are not detained - they are the least able to move about and the vast majority report regularly and as required.

It is vital that the Government stops locking up children as soon as possible, but it is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families seeking refuge in the UK. For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process, and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past. From working as a McKenzie Friend helping non-represented asylum seekers to present their appeals, I know how vital it is for them to have legal representation in order to have a fair hearing and believe that all should have some legal representation at Appeal Tribunals.

It is clear that we need a fairer system that demonstrates our natural instinct to protect and care for all children in our society.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

34. BONUAH, HENRY

The decision to end child detention in the United Kingdom is a very good idea for children and families who find themselves in such situation.

However, it is important to recognise that while many of these people live roughly because they do not have the support they need and also go through a lot at the hands of the Immigration centre officers, there are other groups of children who suffer the same even though they are in the country by no faults of their own. These are children born in the country to overstayed parents.

Before the Labour government abolished the 7 year child concession policy, children born and or have lived in the country continuously for 7 years were given the opportunity to attain British citizenship. Now the policy does not exist anymore meaning many of these children are in the same situation as asylum seeking children lacking all the necessary supports and opportunity other normal British children enjoy . In some situation these children are equally issued threatening letters when there parent have tried to regularise their status. It would be important for the current coalition government to find a solution to children born in the United Kingdom to illegal parents so that they do not miss out on the coalition.

It is believed that abolishing child detention in the UK would not only help asylum seeking children and their family but also help other overstayed families. It must be realised that when we talk of children, no one knows the future of another person.

For example President Obama and the current Prime Minister of the Australia are all linked to parents of foreign lands yet they are the one ruling the country and doing all that they can to put their countries in good order only because their parents were given the opportunities to take good care of them when they were children.

I am grateful for the opportunity given me to share my view and hope the consultation would be successful.

35. BOSS, DR. JEFFREY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

36. BRETT, CHRISTINE

I think the detention of children for immigration purposes should be ceased forthwith.

It is inhumane and totally against the The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that applies to all children and young people aged 17 and under.

There is no excuse for us to treat any child or young person in this way.

37. BROWN, MARGOT

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

38. BROWN, SHAUN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

39. BRYDEN, PAT

(letter to Mark Lazarowicz MP)

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June enclosing a response from Damien Green MP, Minister for Immigration.

While I'm very confident that the agencies which have submitted views will have covered the points I'd wish to make, I still like to make a few further comments.

1. Asylum is and should be dealt with quite separately from general immigration issues. Asylum from situations of war, terror, destruction of home and habitat is a fundamental human right. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'everyone has the right to LIFE, LIBERTY and SECURITY of person' (my capitals). Article 14. The right to asylum.....
2. Detention, children's and adults, is tantamount to criminalising a person. Asylum seekers are surely no less – and arguably more – entitled to a presumption of innocence until or unless proved guilty of a crime under law.
3. Legal assistance. All asylum seekers need the help of a professional lawyer from the start of their arrival and application. Without this, any decision would be inadequate and unfair.
4. Finance. Asylum has/should have nothing to do with a countries' financial priorities. See Article 14 UDHR on the right 'to seek and enjoy.....asylum'

Moreover poorer countries generally bear the brunt of influxes of refugees from disaster/emergency/conflict, e.g. Jordan, Syria and Lebanon – and Palestine itself host the majority of Palestinian refugees; Tanzania took thousands from the Rwandan tragedy; Malawi took thousands from the Mozambique Civil War. Pakistan currently gives refuge to many many more than the UK (which has 3% of the worlds refugees and asylum seekers, according to Refugee Action.)

5. Detention particularly affects children:-

- they are removed from a situation in which they have already had to make major life adjustments, in many cases;
- the family as a whole are disempowered in such a situation, and cause grave insecurity as the adults they have trusted to look after them are seen as unable to do so.
- Children on their own in adult places will be vulnerable and lack protection.
- On release – which may be arbitrary – the individual child or family as a whole may be destitute – with the resulting detriment to health, welfare and psychological well-being.

I also have a question or two:

- Is the UKBA review taking seriously the Independent Asylum Commission Report? I hope so.
- Do you know what the Glasgow pilot, referred to on page 1 (point 4) of Mr Greens letter, is?

40. BURMAN-DAY, RHYANNON

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

41. BURROWS, GLEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

42. BURT, MARLENE

Having taken part in the Sanctuary Pledge Campaign recently, I was very pleased to learn that the government has agreed to end the detention of children for immigration purposes and is currently conducting a review into alternatives.

When, last week, I attended the CITIZENS for Sanctuary Garden Party in Westminster Abbey hosted by Canon Nick Sagovsky, I was delighted to hear the new Immigration Minister Damian Green, in his speech to us, promising to end child detention 'within weeks' of the ongoing review - and at the latest by Christmas. I also met a charming lady from the UK Border Agency - I think her name was Sharon - and we had a good discussion.

With regard to looking at alternatives, there is an easy solution - not to arrest families in the first place - they are the very people who will **not** abscond, for the very reason that they do have children, who are going to school etc. and living in the local community. Families usually comply with all the regulations about going to reporting centres on a regular basis, and are model citizens.

I am part of the Justice group of the VMP (Vincentian Millennium Partnership - the Vincentian Family in the UK) and I have heard horrendous stories about children who have been detained and have suffered nightmares and all other kinds of trauma as a result. Also, there often appears to be no rhyme or reason as to why certain people are picked up and sent to detention centres and not other people. Recently I heard about one family who have been arrested in dawn raids on **three** occasions in recent years - and they have never tried to abscond and have complied totally with everything.

As I said, the solution is not to put families in detention centres in the first place.

I look forward to hearing the results of your review.

43. BUTLER, MAUREEN

As part of the review process to end the detention of children in prisons (or detention centres run by the prison service), it was pleasing that the instinctive responses from the new dual government leaders was positive. "Yes", they said straight away, and it filled my heart with hope of a down to earth, no fuss, common sense and humane approach. These men are after all fathers themselves.

Of course beuraucracy will get in the way; metal bars and doors, clanging keys from uniformed prison officers, restriction on visitors and time schedules for every aspect of the day, will not just end. Meetings, talks, letters, phonecalls, diaries, timescales, faxes, pens, pencils, post, emails - - cut the cr-p please sirs and make descions in alternative provisions.

For example, homeless provisions may offer a solution in part. Families are in priority need. Temporary accommodation can be found until a stautory descion is made; but train local council

officers in immigration or work in partnership with the UK Border Agency officers. There is no need to keep innocent kids locked up.

44. BYSOUTH, ROGER

I understand you are reviewing your practice of detaining children for immigration reasons. I think the practice should cease straight away. And because it is harmful for children to be taken away from their parents, this should mean that parents or main carers with responsibility for and care of children should not be detained - where the issues is clearly about their immigration status. There are plenty of other ways of keeping tabs on individuals. It is much less likely that a family with children will "just disappear" from official scrutiny, compared to single adults.

I know that the Children's Commissioner, various medical practitioners, and other professionals have testified as to the harm that detention is very likely to have on children.

Your review will be adequate if it looks at some of the wider issues: in particular how can:

- children's welfare be ensured throughout the system?.
- children and their families get good quality legal advice and health and other support throughout the process,
- failed asylum claimants get a meaningful chance to consider voluntary return before you apply enforcement measures.

Can you please let me know the findings of this consultation and review when they're complete.

45. CAMPBELL, YVONNE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

46. CANTRELL, BETH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

47. CARMICHAEL, RACHEL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

48. CARNALL, CHRIS

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

49. CALLAGHER, EMMA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

50. CARROLL, FELICITY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

51. CARROLL, JEAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

52. CHADWICK, PHIL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

53. CLARK, CHRISTINE

I am most concerned for the children detained/imprisoned and the physical and psychological damage that this unjust asylum system perpetrates.

Mothers/families should not have to experience this debilitating effect on their children from a cruel and now shown to be unnecessary incarceration. Main care-givers with children will not disappear or absconded until their case has been thoroughly investigated and case proven.

A fast track removal system is unfair and unjust and denies people the time and resources they need to fully present their case to the authorities.

Children must not be separated from their Mothers or their families. And rape officially recognised as torture and persecution entitling protection and the right to asylum.

I am a Mother and Grandmother and in reading the issues raised by the All African Women's Group and the Black Women's Rape Action Project, I support all fifteen of their demands.

54. CLARKE, DOMINIC

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

55. CLARKE, NICOLA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

56. CLEGG, LAURIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

57. CLIFFORD, ANNE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

58. COLES, ANDY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

59. COLLINSON, EMMA

I strongly support the proposal to end the detention of children for immigration purposes as I believe that it is inhumane and unacceptable (you will also be aware of the reports that it does cause serious harm to the children concerned).

I would like to urge you to implement the policy as soon as possible and to release those families currently in immigration detention (I very much hope a system will not be implemented which would involve the separation of children from their parents).

I also hope that the government will make changes to the asylum system as a whole. For example, allowing asylum seekers to work so that they are not forced into destitution and ensuring the adequate legal advice is available to all.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

60. COOPER, REV. PAMELA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

61. COUSINS, SUE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

62. CRAWFURD, LEE

Please can we stop locking up children now”.

I mean, really? Thanks, Lee

63. CRAWFURD, JENNY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

64. CRUCHLEY, IAN

Despite pledging that :

"We will end the detention of children for immigration purposes," says the new coalition government (Asylum children will be kept out of 'distressing' detention centres, 14 May). You seem to not appreciate how depriving children of their mothers affects said children.

Psychologists and paediatricians testify to the physical and psychological harm inflicted by detention upon children. However, separating them from their primary care giver (mother) is much worse; it may bring about lifelong anxiety, insecurity, depression.

Many women detained inside Yarl's Wood removal centre, for example, are mothers whose children were taken by social services or other family members, as was brought to public attention by the recent six-week hunger strike there. Often after years of raising a family in the UK, some face permanent separation and deportation.

To protect her from the painful truth, one mother lied to her seven-year-old daughter, saying she's "working away from home". Many others, whose children may already be traumatised by violence in their home country, speak constantly of their anxiety at not being allowed to care for their children, and experience depression, while their children wet their beds with fear.

Many of these children, while in care, suffer abuse: an estimated 1.5 million youngsters each year in the United Kingdom. By separating yet more children from the mothers whom they love and who love them you only add to this terrifying reality. Ending the detention of families must be entailed within ending the detention of children.

I demand that you will stand by your pledge by making sure not families are ever detained in the country ever again and all current family detainees are released in this country. .

65. DANSO, REV. JOHN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

66. DARBY, JOY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

67. DAVE, BHAVESH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

68. DAVIDGE, MICHELLE

When I tell my friends that we (the UK) are locking up the children of asylum seekers they don't believe me at first. They say it is not possible. They say that children here are protected unlike in the countries they are fleeing. When I show them evidence they say they never knew this was going on. They ask how it is possible that a country that is so far advanced in it's protection of children (in comparison with other developping and many developed countries) can do this. My friends and I agree that it makes us feel ashamed that our country does this to innocent and defenceless families.

Please can you put a stop to children being detained for immigration purposes as soon as possible. It is such a traumatic thing for a child to have to experience and such trauma can cause long lasting damage to their emotional wellbeing. I want to be proud of my country for saying "we don't do this here, we take every care to protect the children that come here for sanctuary".

69. DAVIES, ROWAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

70. DAVIS, XENIA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

71. DICK, SALLY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

72. DRAKE, BEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

73. DRENNAN LOUISE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

74. DUNCAN, LAURA

I am relieved that the government is looking into ending the detention of child asylum seekers.

I believe the mark of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. I think locking up children who have not committed a crime and are here seeking protection reflects very poorly on our society. As I am sure you are aware, there is a significant amount of medical evidence (in addition to common sense), showing that this is extremely damaging to children. I hope this, and the general public consensus on this issue, will result in rapid action to end this system.

Whilst the ending of child detention would be a huge improvement in itself, I hope that my government will not stop short in being compassionate. In particular, I hope that ending detention for children will not mean they have to be separated from their parents. I hope this review gives to opportunity to adopt a system to be proud of by thinking of what is best for the families and remembering these people are human too!

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

75. EARPS, AMANDA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

76. ELLIOTT, ULA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

77. ELLIS, SUSAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

78. EPLETT, KAREN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

79. ESSALO, PATRICK

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

80. FARRIER, DR. DAVID

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

81. FELLSTROM, TINA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

82. FIRMIN, PETE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

83. FIRTH, COLIN

1. We welcome the government's commitment to bring the detention of children to an end this Summer.
2. We especially welcome Damian Green's affirmation at the Citizens for Sanctuary meeting in London on 14 June, that he believes many asylum seekers are genuine refugees deserving of our help, that the system should be humane and that the question of asylum should be treated separately from the general question of immigration — rejecting the views of extremist politicians. We hope and expect that these principles will inform his decisions about alternatives to child detention.
3. However, this Review is taking place while attempts are being made to remove asylum seekers to war zones in Iraq, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia.
4. Most will have been denied the opportunity to obtain the necessary proofs of their case. The initial interviews (17 pages in English) are based on a series of questions eliciting the narrative in a non-consecutive way that may confuse the applicant. Interpretation is often inadequate. Dialects may differ. Several cases have been delayed because the individuals making the decision could not read the writing of the initial interviewer. (One such example was reported to the Southampton MP Alan Whitehead).

The previous government cut legal aid provision to 5 hours: lawyers insist that a proper case requires a minimum of 18 hours to process. In hearings the presumption is often made that the person(s) concerned are lying. Attempts are made to trip them up by reference to the first interview, when they were bewildered and frightened.

Many women seeking asylum have been raped and subjected to gender based violence. There is strong evidence that women do not disclose sexual violence to a male stranger, especially in front of male relatives, yet this is frequently the situation they find themselves in at their initial asylum interview. They are then disbelieved when they disclose rape and sexual violence at a later stage in the asylum process.¹

Adjudicators rarely treat the appellant with respect.

Decisions are made under the pressure of unachievable government targets by people who may lack any understanding of in-country conditions.

The system has become obsessed with bureaucratic reasoning, 'efficiency' and arbitrary measures of success.

5. It is hard to see the government's logic in sending vulnerable Somalis to Mogadishu, the capital of a failed state, the world's most violent city and a place too unsafe to have a working British Embassy.

Returning asylum seekers to some of the most volatile and dangerous places on earth raises the question: how might the British government monitor the safety of asylum-seekers forcibly returned to countries where there is no effective British presence?

¹ Gender issues in assessing asylum claims: spreading good practice across the European Union, Briefing by the Refugee Women's Resource Project at Asylum Aid - This briefing was tabled by the UK Government at the Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugees and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia held in Geneva on 15/16 November 2005

Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights (Council of Europe) has said that he, 'strongly opposes the UK practice of aliens' forced returns on the basis of diplomatic assurances which are inherently flawed since they are usually sought from countries with long-standing, proven records of torture and ill-treatment.'²

Chris Mullin, the former Member of Parliament for Sunderland South, who for many years sought to highlight the plight of vulnerable asylum seekers, has said:

'If we must return families to such countries, we should take some interest in what happens to them after they have disembarked. That might involve putting some money in their pockets, employing an NGO to see them safely through the airport and back to where they came from, and perhaps a little help with reintegrating.'³

Reintegration was not an issue for Adam Osman Mohammed, 32, gunned down outside his home in front of his wife and four-year-old son just days after arriving in his village in south Darfur. Adam, a failed asylum-seeker who returned to Darfur under a UK government repatriation scheme, was murdered by Sudanese security officers who had followed him home from the airport in Khartoum.⁴

It is both tragic and shameful that Adam's return was not a unique and terrible mistake. In April of this year Amnesty International accused Britain (along with a number of other European countries) of forcibly repatriating Iraqis to 'extremely dangerous' parts of the country — in breach of United Nations guidelines.⁵

It is hardly surprising that families who have fled from these highly dangerous countries will endure loss of freedom and the hardships of detention rather than agree to return voluntarily to potentially life threatening situations.

6. The Minister rightly recognised there is a need for:

'a general review of the asylum system ... to ensure that decisions are right first time'.⁶

But the government's recent decision to let Refugee and Migrant Justice fail makes 'right first time' decisions far less likely, asylum seekers finding it harder than ever to secure legal representation.

As the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, warned just before RMJ's collapse:

'Lives will be put at risk and there are likely to be many more miscarriages of justice - which are already common in our asylum system.'⁷

Since RMJ went into administration Bishop John Packer has said:

² Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe in a Memorandum following his visits to the United Kingdom on 5-8 February and 31 March-2 April 2008. <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1339037&Site=CM>

³ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060110/halltext/60110h02.htm> House of Commons Hansard Debates 10 January 2006

⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/sudan/5003439/Failed-asylum-seeker-murdered-after-returning-to-Darfur.html> and <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/sent-back-by-britain-executed-in-darfur-1646507.html>

⁵ http://www.advocate.com/News/Daily_News/2010/04/27/Report_Gay_Iraqi_Asylum_Seekers_Returned/

⁶ Damian Green speaking at Westminster Abbey at an event organised by Citizens for Sanctuary, 14 June 2010.

⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/10208666.stm> <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/10208666.stm>>

‘RMJ is among the few organisations fighting for the legal rights of asylum seekers. It is hard to see how any government or society with a concern for justice could allow it to cease its work.’

Lord McNally’s reassurances that the government was ‘giving high priority’ to minimising the ‘disruption’ in allocating the 10,000-plus cases previously managed by RMJ, is not borne out by reports from the field, where chaos rules.

The UK Border Agency should give an immediate commitment to put on hold all RMJ cases where an appeal is pending or removal instructions have been issued.⁸

7. We hope and expect that the separation of parents and children will be specifically prohibited in the new arrangements. Separation would be contrary both to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 22 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as Section 55 of the Border, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

From the 1950s, when John Bowlby began to examine the impact of maternal separation on young children, to the present day, there has grown an extensive evidence base identifying the long term harm caused to a child when s/he is separated from her parents, and particularly her mother. Our society’s whole approach to the needs of the child is predicated on the importance of avoiding maternal / parental separation especially at times of stress when children are more vulnerable to harm (for example when they are sick or in hospital).⁹

Yet, in spite of the clearly recorded vulnerability of child refugees and asylum seekers, (who as a consequence of being asylum seekers are likely to be experiencing material poverty, poor quality housing, discrimination, poor diets and problematic access to health and social care services¹⁰), the UK Border Agency has had few qualms about separating young asylum seekers and refugees from their parents.

The then Children’s Commissioner for England Sir Al Aynsley-Green remarked in his February 2010 follow up report to: *The arrest and detention of children subject to immigration control*:

‘We argue that separating young children from their parents – even for a short time during transportation (to detention centres) - is potentially extremely damaging and should only be used in the most extreme circumstances.’

He goes on:

‘We have received at least three reports in which children – even very young children – have been separated from their parent when initially taken from home to the local enforcement office.... This has the potential to be extremely damaging to the child who may not have the capacity to understand when or how they will be reunited with their parent. We have documentary evidence of the effects of this on one small child and it makes very uncomfortable reading.’

⁸ Hansard, House of Lords, 28 Jun 2010: Column 1507.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100628-0001.htm#1006282000487>

⁹ Hilary Wheeler The importance of parental support when caring for the acutely ill child, [Nursing in Critical Care Volume 10 Issue 2](#), Pages 56 – 62 Published Online: 11 Mar 2005.

¹⁰ Beirens, H. et al. (2007) ‘Preventing Social Exclusion of Refugee and Asylum seeking Children: Building New Networks’, *Social Policy and Society: A Journal of the Social Policy Association*, 6 (2): 219-229.

Given the evidence of the effects of even very limited separation on children and young people it is unconscionable that our government would choose as an alternative to detention the planned and deliberate separation of a baby, child or young person from his or her parents.

8. Regular reporting is a cheap and effective alternative to detention. Other options could include a close link with a social worker or with a member of an approved NGO. We welcome the pilot scheme that was launched in Glasgow and which saw asylum families housed in former council flats, under a partnership between the council, the Scottish government and the UKBA. But we remain concerned that evaluation of this scheme focuses on its ability to secure higher return rates and not on the well being of the children and families concerned. Mr David Wood of the UKBA admitted to the Home Affairs Select Committee that families are very unlikely to abscond:

‘Whilst issues are raised about absconding, that is not our biggest issue. It does happen but it is not terribly easy for a family unit to abscond.’¹¹

All the evidence points to the fact that higher rates of compliance with voluntary returns will be achieved only if families who have fled danger to seek sanctuary here dwell in the community while their cases are being considered, and are supported and kept informed of the progress of their case by dedicated case managers.¹²

9. We agree with the report produced by Ian Duncan Smith's Centre for Social Justice that excellent, available legal advice, the trustworthiness of the workers they have contact with, and support—not destitution, are the conditions most likely to achieve the voluntary returns the government is seeking.¹³

These conditions are also those that a civilized nation can and should employ when responding to the needs of those who have come to seek sanctuary. Those families who are to be returned should be treated with dignity and respect; they are, in the words of the Bishop of Southwark, not worthless migrants to be despised but:

‘men and women who are anxious and frightened and trying to keep body and soul together in a strange land.’¹⁴

We call on the government to end the immigration detention of children and to adopt more humane alternatives that recognise the rights of all children to be treated with dignity and respect. Families should never be left destitute. Central to any fair and just alternative would be community-based access to housing, food, clothing, health and social care, alongside good quality legal representation.

The lack of understanding around asylum seekers, and the climate of suspicion so easily stirred up by media and politicians, has seeped into the culture of the legal system and the enforcement process.

We need to elevate the human and civil rights status of innocent asylum seekers to at least the level we accord our criminals.

¹¹ Oral evidence submitted to the Home Affairs Committee, 16 September 2009, available www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/970/09091604.htm Accessed 02.03.2010

¹² International Detention Coalition (2009) *Case Management as an Alternative to Immigration Detention: The Australian Experience* available at www.idcolalition.org Accessed 07.10.09

¹³ <http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageref=266>

¹⁴ Hansard, House of Lords Debate, 15 March 2004

I would like to acknowledge contributions from Clare Sambrook, Esme Madill, Simon Parker, Professor John Mellor, Dennis Cook and Dr Shirley Firth.

84. FLETCHER, CLLR SUZANNE

I am writing to call for an immediate end to the practice of detaining children in detentions centres such as Yarlswood. I want to emphasise that they must not be separated from parents either, and ways must be found of the whole family being able to be in decent accommodation whilst waiting for deportation with facilities necessary in a civilised country for family use. Also with facilities for access to legal help. The children and their families are not criminals and must be treated as we treat our own children.

Ways of looking at how families are arrested and transported to any centres needs to be urgently reviewed too.

85. FOLEY, MARY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

86. FREEDMAN, CARRIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

87. FRENCH, BELINDA

I am wish to state my case that I am so pleased that this review is going on, thank you so much, i am very concerned that children are not recriminated and are treated as totally innocent.

As you are well aware there is evidence that children are very frightened in detention centres and suffer weight loss, sleeping difficulties and many illnesses. Children need fresh air sunshine, wind , rain and play and love and life and hope and attention from relaxed loving parents. Some of the children have already undergone a trauma of leaving friends and family we owe it to them to welcome them into a peaceful civilised society.

We have a duty as a great British Nation to look after everyone like we get treated when we go to other peoples countries with love and civiltiy. separation from parents is also a great problem.

I have heard reports of parents who have there cases legally placed with the home office being harassed and taken as a familt to detention centres before a verdict has been made on their case. this has created feelings that the British justice system is lacking whereas before we had a world reputation it is now being doubted.

Lets be a kind nation, one that cares about everyone, citizens, nieghbours, friends, families, and visitors for what ever reason, asylum seeking or economic. we have a chance now with change of administration to claim the greatness of our nation and be a fine example of good over evil, of openness and fairness and courage to do the kindest thing.

88. GIBBENS, ABI

Detention of children has shown time and time again that the only result is a very damaged child. There can be no justification in locking up children - to do so for 'immigration purposes' is to use a child as a tool to force their parents to comply with a situation. Using children this way is condemned as morally reprehensible in divorce and child custody cases, it is no different here.

From pre-schoolers to teenagers, children should not be put in prison when they have committed no crime. The UK is a signatory of the UN convention on the rights of the child, if we have no intention of sticking to the promises made therein, we should say so. And then hang our heads in shame.

Yours, in hope you actually read peoples opinions, and act on the recommendations of trained professionals

89. GOLDSMITH, JANE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

90. GOWDIE, HENRIETTA

In response to your review into ending the detention of children for immigration purposes, my plea is that under no circumstances should you reconsider the detention of families with children. Over the past two years I have been involved with a number of families who have been detained, some more than once. I have also found it distressing witnessing families not only having the experience of detention but for some then having to live with the constant fear of being re-detained when signing at the UKBA.

I am a retired children's worker who has worked with children and their families in a variety of settings for over 25 years, including working with children who have experienced violence within the home, however, nothing prepared me for the barbaric and totally unnecessary treatment of families deemed to be 'failed asylum seekers'

Yes engage with families, stop immediately the constant intimidation of families. From my experience, many of the families seeking asylum are terrified about returning due to their experiences - this needs to be worked with and understood. You also need to listen to the families, including the children and young people about their experiences of the system and what would make it less traumatic.

I continue to be inspired by the families seeking asylum whom I have met over the years who want nothing more than for themselves and their children, to live in this country, free from persecution.

I hope that you are truly committed to permanently ending the detention of families with children, there is no justification for it.

91. GREEN, JUDY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

92. GREEN, SHAREN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

93. GROLL, NICK

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

94. HACKETT, MAUREEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

95. HALL, WENDY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

96. HALE, TED

I would like to make one very simple point:

Whatever else you may decide about the treatment of people held in detention with regard to immigration matters, the practice of keeping children in prison, or in detention centres, should be stopped. I believe it is contrary to international law, highly immoral, and a slur on the reputation of this country.

97. HARPHAM, ALAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

98. HASAN, ERKAN

Regarding the ending of immigration detention of children - thank you for providing the opportunity for members of the public to voice our views.

I believe it is a terrible practice to lock up children - it does serious harm both medically and socially; all the evidence supports this. For children to be in a detention centre is an experience that scars - and is at odds in a nation which is developed and "civilised".

The new Government promised to end this detention so please could you action this promptly.

99. HEAD, RACHEL

my name is Rachel Head and I am writing with reference to the review on child detention which you are conducting. I would like to tell you that as a citizen I am shocked and disturbed when I consider that innocent children are legally detained in this country. We need to take special care of children, and children who come to the UK as asylum seekers are clearly vulnerable individuals. We need an asylum system which supports them throughout the process of seeking asylum, we need a system that WANTS THEM TO SUCCEED IN LIFE. This means trusting and helping these children from the start, as well as providing adequate translation services, legal support, and enabling their access to our education services. It is crazy to think that these children are a threat to the UK. There is no need for child detention. Our government needs to take a long and honest look at the damage it is doing to young families, and we need to change the way they are accommodated. Please - PUT PEOPLE FIRST! Not profits or irrational tabloid editors! Good luck with the review. I am very interested in the outcome, and look forward to hearing your decisions.

100. HEDGES, LESLEY

The detention of children must end. Families, whether one parent or two, are unlikely to disappear from their allotted accommodation. I have been working with asylum seekers for some time, in a public health role and then, after retirement, teaching ESOL and doing further health promotion work as a volunteer. I have never known anyone with children to go on the un. Children's mental health and education must be a prime consideration, whether they eventually stay in the UK or are sent back to their country of origin. If their parents are distressed, or just stressed, children will be affected.

101. HENSON, JANE

I wish to appeal in the strongest possible terms against the continuation of child detention. It is a matter which has been raised by many groups and individuals and as someone who has met with families who have been in detention and the effect that it has had on children, I know that it should not continue. It is crucial to take into account that many of the families who are taken into detention have already experienced enormous trauma - seen family and friends murdered, raped, tortured and abused in ways which are hard to eradicate from their memories.

Families should NOT be taken in the night by security firms who know and care little about their circumstances and who are very often treated in appalling ways which further adds to the abuse and ill treatment which they have experienced before coming to seek sanctuary in the UK.

As a country which has prided itself of the importance of human rights and the rights of children, we should be leading the way in setting high standards of care for vulnerable people and not adding to the pain that they have experienced.

102. HILL, PHILIPPA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above – plus the following text)

I have been appalled to learn of the conditions in which immigrant children are treated in our country. It is a shameful blot on our civilisation that immigrant families who flee from terrible persecution in their own countries and come to the UK in the expectation of being treated like human beings and hoping to find asylum should end up being treated in such an inhumane way. This applies particularly to children, who must be already terrified by all their experiences.

I hope that the UKBA consultation will put immigrant children's welfare at the very foremost position in the new system and that the new government will at least fulfil its pledges on this issue.

103. HINDAL, ELAINE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

104. HOMAYON-JONES, L. M.

as a parent i can only add the personal to the many responses you are receiving about child detainees. Children should not be held in secure accommodation unless they pose a risk to others and have been through the judicial process. Children who are in the UK as asylum seekers are surely the most vulnerable in society and locking them up away from the life they have made in the country is cruel arbitrary and something for which i as a British citizen am deeply depressed by.

105. HUDSON, LIN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

106. HYNE, PHILIP

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

107. IWANEJKO, DR. LESLEY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

108. JACKSON, ANDREW

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

109. JARRETT, MARILYN

Thank you for this opportunity to join in the public consultation on the subject of detention in immigration.

I urge the new government to end the detention of children in immigration and of their families immediately. We have evidence to show that the experience has proved to be seriously harmful to children. They are known to suffer in the most damaging way from:-

confusion: knowing they are in a prison situation without reason or explanation;

depression: missing their friends and the companionship of being in school;

ill-health: it is known that health-care in detention centres is grossly inefficient;

long-term mental harm: the experience will remain in their minds, causing lasting loss of trust in authority;

disruption to their education.

Families, who have been in the UK for some time, suffer from shock and trauma when sent (especially at first light and without warning) to a detention centre. To find themselves locked up in hostile circumstances must have a traumatic effect on mothers and their children.

Finally, I want to draw attention to recent reports of Prison Inspectors and the criticism of child-care experts.

Please find alternative, humane methods - by studying the alternatives in advanced countries like Sweden - to keep track of people who seek refuge in our country.

It is shameful that we who claim to value **justice and human rights**, should allow our standards to fall by putting innocent (and often persecuted) people in poor, dilapidated prisons, staffed by untrained, unsympathetic workers.

Thank you for your attention.

110. JOHNSTON, IAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

111. JOLLY, ANDREW

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

112. JONES, ALISON

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

113. JONES, DAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

114. JONES, HEATHER

Yarl's Wood Befrienders, who have visited many families in Yarl's Wood during the past few years, welcome the opportunity to express their concern on the detention of children and families for immigration purposes as part of the review currently being carried out by the present coalition government.

We believe that detention of children and their families should not wait until alternatives are available. We have visited families who have been detained and have seen for ourselves many examples of the kinds of problems that children suffer that have been highlighted by the numerous reports that have been produced.

There is irrefutable medical evidence that detention damages children both physically and psychologically, which is why we believe that it should stop immediately.

We have been very concerned about the treatment of families during arrests and transportation into detention and the long lasting effects this has.

We remain concerned that decision making is still poor and that there is a lack of competent legal representation. No one is likely to volunteer for return if a decision is wrong and they face persecution on return, particularly where this involves putting their children into danger. Many of the families we have visited have gone on to gain permission to remain here when they have finally been able to obtain competent representation.

Ending detention of children should not use the separation of families as an acceptable alternative as this is equally damaging to children. We see many women who are separated from their children after a prison sentence, we also believe that this is a practice that should cease. No child should be separated from their parents unless there are compelling welfare or safeguarding reasons to do so.

The cost of detaining children and their families is extremely high compared to supporting them in the communities, which, in our view, is another compelling reason why detention should end.

The welfare of children throughout the asylum process should be the primary concern of the UKBA and should always meet the articles laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the child.

Accurate and truthful information re voluntary return should be sensitively proposed at an appropriate time by someone the family can trust. Many families have seemed unaware of any information about return, a sentence in a refusal letter is not likely to be even noticed at that time. – there is a great deal of negative anecdotal feedback about the provisions actually made

for individuals or families. We believe it would be helpful if return schemes are better publicised and that clear reasons should be given for the Home Office refusing to approve an application.

Heather Jones
Coordinator
Yarl's Wood Befrienders

115. JONES, SUE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

116. KALETA, TSHIKAYA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

117. KEABLE, KEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

118. KEANE, PAULINE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

119. KENDAL, ANN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

120. KING, JANET

I should like the following points to be taken into consideration in the Home Office review of Child Detention for immigration purposes.

1 It is generally agreed that it is against individual human rights and natural justice to imprison anyone (of whatever age) who is innocent.

2 Unless it is deemed a crime to ask to become a UK citizen or to be granted sanctuary here most of those currently detained in IRCs and other places of detention are innocent.

3 The IRCs were first opened as holding centres for a few days/weeks at the most whilst travel was arranged for those whose deportation was imminent. Now immigrants are routinely sent to detention centres and often released with no explanation of why they were detained in the first place. This includes children and vulnerable adults for whom the prison experience has very harmful effects.

4 There is common agreement that children should not be imprisoned but there is equal agreement amongst professional case workers that it is detrimental to children's health and educational progress to be separated from their parents. Although a handful of old Etonians might disagree, children usually develop most successfully within a loving family where they are valued, loved and free from fear.

5 I would therefore suggest that neither children nor parents should be imprisoned unless and until all efforts to keep them in the UK have failed, there is no chance of a further judicial review, a flight has been arranged and the family is within three days of removal from the UK. This is not impossible.

6 Where a child has been born in this country and has had all its education here and especially where it is unable to speak the language of the country to which the Home Office wishes it to be deported, I am strongly of the opinion that the family should not be deported at all.

7 I have seen the love which little families of immigrants have for each other. It is a tragedy to separate them. Even disfunctional British families are encouraged to seek counselling and other help in order to keep them together if possible. The immigrant families I have met show no signs of disfunctionality but do live in fear of deportation, which our present cruel system inflicts upon them.

Additional point re. adult immigrants and asylum seekers.

8 Presently it seems that very little value is placed on the talents, skills and qualifications of asylum seekers in the consideration of their cases. May I suggest that the many useful asylum seekers eg qualified teachers, doctors, nurses, musicians, artists and other talented people should be allowed to use their considerable ability for the benefit of the UK and to be financially rewarded for their work.

121. KONE, KERETIGUY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

122. KURJI, FARAH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

123. LASISI, KAZEEM

I quite appreciate the effort of the present gov't in putting an end to the detention of children in various immigration centers accross the country, this children in detention are innocent individual who have committed no crime in the first place they are just victims.

Lets look at it from this perspective the detained children should be in school building a future career for themself, even united nation convention on human right is against the detention of children, i find it hard to belief that the most civilised nation on earth (UK) is committing this attrocitty thank God it has been reviewed.

What the Gov't needs to do from my own point of view is as follows:

- a) Any children born in the country under the age of sixteen should be allowed to stay freely in the country.
- b) The affected children should reside with their parents in the country because they already have strong ties with the country (UK) .Gov't should not break up families but should promote family ties.
- c) Their parents that enters the country illegally should pay fines or serve/do community service.
- d) families without criminal record should be considered because they've this children through hardship.
- e) The Uk borders should be tightened to prevent illegal entry.

124. LASK, PROFESSOR BRIAN

As a Professor of Child Psychiatry within the University of London I am extremely concerned about the detention and imprisonment of children, not least because these children are already traumatised and homeless. It is indefensible to separate these children from their parents and to incarcerate them in the absence of any crime. We would wish this on no-one and just imagine how we would feel if this were to happen to our own children!

Please bring this to an end immediately - it brings shame upon us a country and causes immeasurable harm to the children

With thanks

Bryan Lask
Hon Consultant and Emeritus Professor, Gt. Ormond St. Hospital for Children, London;
Visiting Professor, Oslo University Hospital, Norway;
Academic Director, Ellern Mede Centre, London

125. LAZOROWICZ MP, MARK

I am attaching a contribution from a constituent of mine, Pat Bryden, to the review that you are currently conducting and I urge you to give careful consideration to the points that she makes.

126. LEES, JAMES

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

127. LEFFORD, FRANCES

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

128. LENTLE, DAVID

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

129. LIANOS, HELEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

130. LIPKIN, MELISSA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

131. LOMAS, ANNA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

132. LONERGAN, MARIA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

133. LONGTHORNE, IAN

I believe the welfare of the children is of paramount importance and they should be cared for in local authority homes and not detention centres!

However I am concerned as to how many assylum seeking parents are actually using their children to gain assylum in the UK.

I believe it is important to establish how a family travelled to the UK, if they came by a carrier airline or via a people smuggling route how did they get the monies to pay for this,, if life is so difficult in their respective countries.

Voluntary repatriation should not be an option for anyone who enters the United Kingdom illegally,we should be scrutinising the issue of visitor visas for people wishing to come to the UK much more rigorously.

We need to send the right message to would be illegal immigrants and assylum seekers that we will not tolerate our immigration sysytem being abused and perhaps this will deter them and hopefully reduced the number of helpless children who are by no fault of their own being put into what must be a very frighteneing experience if they had to stay in a detention centre with adults!

134. LOSHITZKY, PROFESSOR YOSEFA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

135. LOTIF, ZIAUL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

136. LOUGHLIN, DR. MICHAEL

I write in response to your claim to be interested in the views of members of the public, though I am very unclear as to your methodology for incorporating those views into the process that leads to a final conclusion on the issue of the detention of children. The issue should not need a review. The very fact that we are locking up children shows we are not a civilised country. Many of the actions of UKBA are such obvious examples of human wickedness that I would be deeply ashamed if anyone I cared for worked for such an organisation.

You already know very well that imprisoning children is harmful to them. The evidence from medical practitioners, the Children's Commissioner and others is overwhelming and shows beyond all reasonable doubt the serious harm that detention causes to children.

It is an absolute moral imperative that do all of the following:

1. end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention
2. ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement
3. rule out in principle any procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process, as children's best interests are served by keeping families together
4. improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families seeking refuge in the UK, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process, and giving those whose claims have failed a real

I have had the good fortune to know a number of refugees, and found them to be fine people, often heroic people. There are many people I would rather not live with in the same country, such as the sort of person who thinks it is morally legitimate to lock up children - but I refrain from calling for people who work for organisations who do such horrible things to be separated from their families and bundled onto planes.

I would like to see harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention become a thing of the past. You now have the chance to do something decent with your life, so I hope that you do not waste it. Please let me know the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

137. LOVELL, JACQUI

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

138. LOWE, MARSHA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

139. LOWE, PAMELA

from - a former education worker in Central America, mainly 1970s/80s and now concerned by the way the UKBA treats asylum seekers in the UK.

CHILDREN IN DETENTION.

Every detail of events in the development OF A CHILD from birth on will influence the nature of the resultant adult. To talk of how to change the effects of detention in order to avoid negative influences later in life, one must look at the beginning of life. Thus I see any improvement in conditions of detention as closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. We need to take a much more effective view on the causes which drive persons, especially young families to flee. This is a vast subject and develops from the place Greed plays in international commerce and development. However, this is well beyond any possibility at this time so we need to consider a poor substitute.

We tend to assess other cultures using the norms of our own, the one culture we know and understand (this is often the causes of stress and violence) Children see the whole world as being like what exists around them. Too often what they meet on entering the UK with parents simply confirms that belief. They come from a society of distrust, distress and violence with themselves as the recipients of the most undesirable aspects of that situation. Barbed wire and handcuffs, uniformed staff, often carrying arms simply amplify their images of a world where violence dominates are perpetuated.

We in the UK begin formal education of our children very early, sometimes before the 4th birthday. Elsewhere education begins much later (I was near 7 before getting to school) and I do not see late entry to school as a handicap – what I do see as a set back is the nature and continuity of that education, the environment in which it exists. Life itself is a part of our education. If we wish to establish a more peaceful and content society for future generations, then we must look to their development.

A family reaches the UK and somehow finds somewhere to settle. Local society take sympathy , especially where very young children are involved and befriend and help. Then officialdom

steps in. Surely this is a part of what caused them to flee. They see mother (and father too?) bombarded with aggressive type questions and becoming disturbed – this then upsets them and leaves them feeling very insecure. Worse, they are taken away, separated and handcuffs appear. They are just beginning to make friends at a local school, to make progress and develop a feeling of security when the whole of the world is torn apart. This is what they had fled. Human beings must be horrid creatures and not to be trusted – not in their homeland and not here either. This feeling will remain for a very long time, even into adulthood. They are kept much away from Mother and given what is labelled as education – in massive groups they are kept occupied but not as in normal schools with friends of their own age. They are in a nursery developing problems for future generations apart from sowing yet more misery. **THE ONLY REAL ANSWER TO THIS IS TO PREVENT ANY OF IT FROM THE BEGINNING.**

Those working in this type of situation need to see and look upon their “clients” as human as much as they are themselves, they need to put themselves in the shoes of the persons they have the responsibility of working with. I think the worst thing of all is for young children to see their mothers in handcuffs or ill treated in any other way. There is an urgent need for assessment of family units, assessment by suitably qualified persons and for that assessment to be recognised and respected.

Before deciding upon a deportation, the UKBA needs to inspect the background of any possible deportee. Many have been years in the UK and have established good roots which have brought a feeling of security to themselves and their children. Forced out of the country, they will do so with no good feelings for the authorities, the government which drove them away from all they were working to achieve – that is if they survive the ordeal. No doubt the size of the immigration problem governs much of the process – again, we need to look more to its roots. Economically there must surely be ways of caring for persons who “should not be here” other than by putting them into Yarlwood or Oakington rather like wild animals in a zoo. Many of them do in fact end up with permission to remain here but with much damage already done to them and done to the future generation.

In all, I see no really effective alternative but to remove their need to flee. Seeking refuge in a country where so much is foreign to one’s own culture is difficult enough – to do this with children to bring as well must be dangerous and heart breaking, damaging to the development of the young ones – and bringing them to a country which says it respects Human Rights – but not for them – must be sheer hell. Where are our Christian values ?

140. LOWE, PETER

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

141. LOWING, ADRIENNE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

142. LUCAS MP, CAROLINE

I should be grateful if the Review Team would take account of my support for the submission from the Children’s Rights Alliance for England (CRAE). A copy of which I have attached to this email.

Like CRAE, I welcome the commitment from the coalition Government to ‘end the incarceration of children for immigration purposes once and for all’, and the announcement that the review will take account of international, European and human rights obligations.

The detention of children for immigration purposes violates their fundamental human rights and must be ended immediately. It is manifestly at odds with the UK's human rights obligations towards children and the UK Border Agency's duty under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

Therefore, it is disappointing that the Government has decided to retain the current policy position of locking up children pending the outcomes of this review. This move is unnecessary and threatens to undermine the good intentions behind the Government's commitment. In this interim period, I support CRAE's call for urgent action to be taken to ensure that children in immigration detention have access to the same rights and protection for their welfare, including access to independent advocacy, as all other children in the care of the state. This must apply regardless of whether children are unaccompanied minors, in detention with their families, or the subject of age-disputes.

Any new processes put in place as a result of the review must be rights-based, transparent, and subject to judicial oversight and, most importantly, based on the principle of the best interests of the child as set out in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This precludes the separation of a child from their parents for immigration purposes.

The review must result in a change in policy, then in practice and finally in law – in order to ensure that no return to the detention of children for immigration purposes is possible in the months and years to come.

143. LUCAS, SYLVIA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

144. LUSTED, TRACY

Dear Mr David Wood and the UK Border Agency Review Team,

I have personally been very concerned about the issue of children in detention for a long time. As someone with vast experience of working with vulnerable children, I can see how being detained would be a very traumatic and upsetting experience for a child. I think most children would find it very difficult to understand why they were being punished when they hadn't done anything wrong.

Most children do not like to stand out as being different from other children and it is unfortunate the the UK Border Agency is in the position where it is attempting to remove families that have been in the UK for a number of years. I think this is partly due to case owners taking a long time to assess cases, but also due to a lack of good legal advice. If families do not have access to decent legal advice it means they are often able to challenge court decisions made about their case and this can take a long time to resolve.

I don't think the answer is to separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. I think the whole system needs to change so that it is fairer and so that families have a better understanding of what is happening with their cases and are aware from the start that they might not be able to stay in the UK permanently.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

145. MACMILLAN, EWEN

I am concerned that the views of those who care daily for unaccompanied minors entering the UK be accorded appropriate consideration in the assessment of their age.

I have cared for an accompanied minor since he was detained at the age of sixteen, shortly after entering the UK in 2005. He had been subjected to virtually continual violence in rural Uganda since the age of five. Ugandan social workers in Kingston-upon-Thames correctly assessed his age, but this was challenged by the borough in which he was subsequently detained, Hillingdon. A clinician who was then among the most active age-assessors in the UK determined that he was twenty-three years old, plus or minus two years, when he was in fact sixteen. Between 2006 and 2009, he grew 4.5cm -- which it is generally accepted adults do not do between the ages of 21/23 and 24/26. Since 2005, the High Court has criticised the analyses among others of the clinician who had assessed him, and case-law has established that physiological measurements such as bone-development and dentition is but one element in assessing the age of young people. I believe that the High Court's indication of a subtler approach to age assessment is entirely appropriate, although the process does not yet take account of what is known in France as "maturation precoce" -- the premature ageing of young people subjected to extreme stress, for instance hunger or violence. This is quite well studied in girls who may exhibit the premature onset of the oestral cycle, but perhaps less well documented in boys.

The most important ill effect of the inaccurate age-assessment, on the basis of allegedly objective scientific criteria, may be the undermining of the credibility of this young person's application for asylum or humanitarian leave to remain in the UK. Since an expert has decided that he had lied about his age, the UKBA could argue that he had lied about other aspects of the violence he had suffered -- on which he is certainly better informed than anyone else.

As his carer for the past five years, I know him to have been the age he claimed, and which social workers originally confirmed, on the basis of the peer-group he chose as his friends from all ethno-linguistic groups in our London neighbourhood. Although he chose friends of all ages from his own tribal background, I had no doubt that he unconsciously selected friends from other groups because they were close to him in age, resisting public expectations unfamiliar to him of whom he would be most likely to associate with -- such as those based on skin-colour. As his carer, I also noted other subtler signs of the transition from adolescence to adulthood, for instance his slow abandonment of cuddly toys.

I believe that the perspectives of carers should be taken seriously in this respect. Every parent believes that she or he knows the age of children in her or his care, and I believe that these perceptions, based on long observation, should be taken seriously in the assessment of young people.

146. MACRORIE, ROD

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

147. MAGS, JARVIS

I am not an expert in this field by any means but I guess there would be a negative effect on children if they are detained by locking up. Some children would be on their own and some with a relative. I can imagine that there would be different reasons and ways that the people arrived in the UK. My comments here are for your officers and staff to consider only.

I feel that it is imperative to deal with /process the children and relatives very quickly and the law may need changing to facilitate this.

People should be returned to their region or country asap. You may already have centres set up in other countries but this needs to be helped so that children can be resettled there or wait there until their country is safer.

Given the predicted and occurring problems in the world due to climate change the problem of children and adults arriving here will multiply. I feel that the responsibility needs to be addressed regionally in the world but detention of children would be a very short occurrence here with the schemes set up across the globe.

It is not sustainable to continue to be a haven here, we have many people waiting for a house and we can only provide 65% of our own food.

148. MALPASS, SUSAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

149. MASON, HELEN

I'm delighted to read Government plans to cease the detention of asylum seeking children and young people.

I was concerned to read the that the review re Yarl's Wood by Bedford and Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Boards found that "None of the agencies involved...gave adequate weight to the inherent vulnerability of children in detention nor to the issues of diversity affecting these children and their families".

With regard to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people, my view is that it is crucial to view all children and young people that reach the UK seeking asylum as highly vulnerable. Indeed, the institutional environments used for their detention is no place for any child or young person.

The experiences of a child or young person seeking asylum in the UK can be subject to huge variance. Consequently, meeting their individual needs upon their arrival can be highly complex, and at times, an overwhelming challenge for existing services. Notwithstanding the impact of their (perhaps traumatising) experiences on their development and current functioning, meeting their needs in terms of race, language, culture and religion may provide additional challenges too.

Indeed, those that gain leave to remain and enter perhaps the UK system remain highly vulnerable to ongoing prejudice, disadvantage and exploitation. In my view, there exists too many in-care factors that account for the failure of looked after children more generally; hence the risks may be even higher for children and young people placed in care once granted leave to remain.

I will follow your work on this with great interest.

Helen Mason BA MEd MEd CPsychol
Educational & Child Psychologist
Chartered Psychologist and Expert Witness
(Specialist in Looked After Children)
Looked After Child Psychologists

150. MAYER, PAULINE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

151. MBAKOP, CELESTIN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

152. MCCULLAGH, JOYCE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

153. MCFARLANE, DR. ANN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

154. MCGOWAN, STEWART

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

155. MCKEATING, JUSTIN

I am writing in the hope my views considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children.

I am extremely concerned about the issue of children being detained in such a fashion in this country. The amount of evidence from medical practitioners and reports by the likes of The Children's Commissioner show all too clearly the serious harm that this detention causes children.

I am urging you to end the detention of children and their families as soon as is practicably possible, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would also urge you not to make the replacement policy one of separating these children from their families. The evidence shows that refugee families housed in the community are extremely unlikely to abscond as they are reliant on schools, doctors and the support of their neighbours.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

156. MCLAUGHLIN MSP, ANN

I am delighted to be given the opportunity to respond to this consultation which is effectively about ending the detention of children of asylum seekers. Indeed I am delighted that it is finally to become a reality. In this submission I intend to examine 4 areas:

1. The experiences of a child constituent of mine who has been detained on 2 occasions.
2. International examples I believe we can learn from as well as our own pilots.
3. The arguments for the ending of the detention of children of asylum seekers.
4. More general changes which I believe will improve the system for families but may in fact also meet consideration no 6 in the terms of reference ie increase take up of the voluntary returns process.

International Examples

I do not know enough about the international examples to claim them to be perfect. However I would encourage the UK government to learn from the best examples, not to replicate them exactly but to use the best of each. In saying that I do not know enough about the international examples, I am very happy to volunteer myself to be part of any working group looking at how we proceed with this policy change. If our pilots have not worked, we need to look at why they have failed and not simply claim that they can't work. If they don't work, we are doing something wrong.

I am aware that the Australian model worked well for the first 3 years (I have no up to date information so can only comment on the 3 years) and I believe that to be because it was coupled with a change in the culture within their Border Agency equivalent. A relationship has been built up between the agency and the families concerned and the supportive relationship continues whilst in community detention.

I am aware that many others will give many examples of good international practice so I will not go into detail other than to reiterate that I would very much welcome the opportunity to look into this in more detail in order to make sure we get it right.

Arguments against Detention of Children for Immigration Purposes

I very much welcome the new government's plans to end the detention of children. I do, however feel the need to make the argument again given that the policy came about as part of a compromise agreement and not all partners in this coalition were offering this in their manifesto. I think the right decision has been made and I welcome it but in order to get the best outcome possible, everyone involved in the implementation of the new policy needs to buy into the idea.

When offices such as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Children's Commissioner for England, Scotland's Commissioner for Children & Young People, the UK Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, the whole of the Scottish Parliament to name but a few, are united in their criticism of the practice of detaining children, it is surely time to urgently review the policy.

Detaining children is simply inhumane. Doing so gives that child the message that they have done something wrong, that they are somehow bad and to blame for their situation. This damages their mental and physical health and examples of this are well documented. My fear is that without the right intervention at the right time, the damage will live on into their adult years.

It is well documented that children who grow up believing, for whatever reason, that they are "bad" or "wrong", will, without the right intervention, have low self esteem and low self confidence as adults. This is usually the case with children whose parents have given them this feedback. When these messages are coming not just from family but from society and authority, the impact must surely be dramatic.

On a personal note, I went to visit a family in Dungavel IRC. Now I am a Member of Parliament, I have a good level of self confidence and I passionately believed in what I was doing. And yet, I felt like a criminal. I had to be accompanied by uniformed guards, doors locked behind me, I looked out of the window at barbed wire and I was finger printed. If I was left after a short visit feeling that somehow, I was doing something wrong, what impact does even a short stay have on a child?

The most common argument I hear against ending the detention of children is that if we do not, families will abscond. However I would encourage the UK Government to look at the

international examples. I do not have up to date figures but I believe in the first 3 years of the Australian community detention, the absconding rate was less than 1%. There are very obvious reasons for that. Where does a family with children go when it absconds? Where would they find shelter, food, clothing, schooling? Often families in detention are mothers with children – with one parent it makes it even harder. Asylum seekers don't have family networks in this country, they have no-one to hide them, their other friends are mainly other asylum seekers who are not financially capable of supporting them and in any case, are too frightened to get on the wrong side of the Home Office.

I would argue absconding rates in the UK would be even lower than Australia for one very simple but important reason – the climate which does not lend itself to being “on the run”.

More General Changes

I wanted to take this opportunity to encourage the government to look at the system in its entirety and consider something I believe the Australians did very effectively a number of years ago. I believe we need a complete culture change within the UKBA. I believe there are many caring people working there but that the culture is an undesirable one that works against the human rights of those accessing the services. I do not think the aim of UKBA staff should be to send people back, I believe it should be to enable people to find the best solution for them within the framework of UK law and international law.

I know of someone who was absolutely terrified to go back to her country of origin. She was wrong to be. She had some horrific memories and I could see why she had this blind spot about it. But the war in her country had ended and her “side” had won. There was no danger to her. She couldn't see this and so would not even contemplate talking to someone about returning. As it happens she was given leave to remain. However, had she had a caseworker assigned from the start, who sat with her and explored her options in a non threatening way (by that I mean who wasn't going to take her willingness to explore the option of returning as a weakness and a reason to send her back) trust would have been built up and when the war ended, she may well have decided to take the plunge and return voluntarily. The caseworker would have, over the months, looked at contacting her country of origin and finding out what her options were for employment and housing, encouraged and enabled her to talk with “resettlement” people in that country all the time reassuring her that this did not count against her. The voluntary returns projects don't offer that, my understanding is that you only get support if you agree to drop your case.

Had this person's story had a different outcome and she had been deported without any of that support, she would have been traumatised on the return home and may well have done as she told me on more than one occasion and committed suicide before touching down in her home country.

However, had she lost her case and been deported after the scenario I have described, she would at least have known something of what lay ahead, she would have contacts and as I say she may well have returned voluntarily.

I would be keen to explore this further because I believe we would have better overall outcomes and we would be treating people with dignity.

157. MCLOUGHLIN MBE, JACKIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

158. MCMAHON, GENEVIEVE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

159. MEZIANE, ALI

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

160. MILLER, PIERS

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

161. MILLS, LIS

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

162. MITCHELL, LUCY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

163. MITCHELL-FARMER, DR. REBECCA

(letter to Tony Baldry MP)

Dear Mr Baldry

Thank you for your letter dated 24th June, which I received on 26th June. I appreciate you inviting me to comment before you submit your response, although I have just noted the deadline and I may be too late.

It is good a review is taking place. I note tram Damien Green's letter that it is to be conducted by the UKBA and therefore hope it will be sufficiently well informed and impartial.

I know a major concern of people working in the field is that ending child detention may mean children become separated from their parents/carers. I would think such separation should be avoided at all costs. Obviously this may mean that adults who would otherwise have been detained should therefore not be in detention.

Another area of difficulty is the age of a young person is disputed (i.e. the young person claims to be a minor, but the UKBA claims they are an adult). I have heard of cases where the opinions of medics and psychologists have been disputed by the UKBA who maintain an individual is 18 years or over. There should be a clear protocol for establishing age (using independent professionals) where this is in dispute, or where people are having to travel without valid documents.

These are my initial thoughts, I hope they are helpful.

164. MITCHELL, SHELAGH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

165. MORRIS, RACHEL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

166. MOSLEY, SHEILA

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children.

I am personally very concerned about this issue. I believe it is indefensible to lock up children, especially when you consider all the evidence available from medical practitioners, The Children's Commissioner and others to show the serious harm that detention causes to children.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together.

It is vital that the Government stops locking up children as soon as possible, but it is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families seeking refuge in the UK. For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process, and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past.

It is clear that we need a fairer system that demonstrates our natural instinct to protect and care for all children in our society.

I made the following notes in relation to alternatives to detention:

There has been debate about alternatives to detention.

Common elements of a solution include:

[information from other countries]:

there are community-based approaches that have a casework and welfare focus, and community-based approaches that primarily use restrictive conditions to encourage compliance.

Given the limited capacity of the detention estate, the most obvious alternative to detention is simply to not detain.

Evidence:

a lack of evidence that families systematically disappear pending judicial review or other legal appeals; questioning about why it is so often used, and why children are subjected to spending relatively long periods of time in the detention estate.

Electronic tagging:

the suggestion that electronic tagging can enable the authorities to keep a track on people pending final legal decisions is clearly preferable to detention, but at present, there does not

appear to be evidence of an effect of electronic surveillance on absconding rates. There has been widespread concern among refugee supporting agencies about the negative effect tagging can have on the lives of asylum-seekers.

Bail:

Bail can be considered as an alternative to detention, once detention has already been employed but is no longer justified. The lack of an automatic bail application (legislated for in 1999 but never implemented, and repealed in 2001) means that people remain in detention who would be bailed if they were to apply.

The state funded Toronto Bail Programme works with people who have no family or other person to act as surety. Clients are released without bond to the programme and required to comply with regular reporting and unannounced visits. The programme reported a 91.6 per cent compliance rate for 2002-03.

However, there is also evidence that bail without restrictive conditions is equally effective. Several homeless shelters in Toronto provide support and access to legal advice. 'Hamilton House, for example, reports that 99 per cent of its residents have complied with the full asylum procedure. Matthew House reports that only three out of 300 residents have disappeared from its premises in the past five years.'

Reporting:

Asylum-seekers on temporary admission or bail are all subject to reporting conditions, which involves travelling to 'reporting centres' at regular intervals. Failure to report leads to withdrawal of support.

While reporting is clearly preferable to detention, current reporting practice in the UK can be extremely invasive and difficult to comply with, especially for families with children.

The Government has the opportunity to develop the reporting system into a more meaningful and positive process as part of the case owner approach. This would allow more sensitive reporting arrangements and for the reporting process to be directly linked with casework contact, where families could get information about their case, explanation of delays and opportunities to raise any concerns or difficulties they experience. Holistic care: In Sweden families with children are initially accommodated in a reception centre where their health and support needs are assessed, before being dispersed to regional 'refugee centres': flats organised round a central office. A system in which there are closer links to a person with concern for the individual/family: a caseworker who:

- explains the determination process and their client's rights within it
- ensures that the application is handled properly and that the client is able to access interpreting and legal representation
- provides referrals to counselling and healthcare.

Asylum-seekers are required to visit the caseworker at least once a month, when they receive a case update, their subsistence allowance and a review of their needs and risks assessments. Reviews of the system suggest it is successful in both providing support and securing compliance with immigration decisions, including return. Detention is very rarely used, and the maximum detention period for children under 18 in Swedish legislation is three days, with a possible extension to six days in extreme circumstances. This system is reported to have brought significant cost reductions in the treatment of asylum-seekers. In Canada, the state-funded Failed Refugee Project, run by the Greater Toronto Enforcement Agency, provides

counselling and practical assistance to asylum-seekers whose claims have been refused. Clients of the project are given a 30-day period to plan return and organise their affairs. In 2001-02, 60 per cent of the project's clients returned to their country of origin after this period, and a further 20 per cent after a follow up visit from the project. Thus, overall 80 per cent of the project's clients returned without any need for punitive measures, detention or enforced removal.

Casework and welfare approach

The underlying principles of the casework and welfare approach to working with families at the end of the process should include: access to an independent caseworker whose role includes:

- ensuring the family has legal representation
- access to independent, high-quality legal advice to ensure that families with outstanding refugee or humanitarian protection needs are identified, and in order to build trust and confidence in the asylum system ensuring that asylum seekers are not only informed of their rights and obligations but that they also understand them; including all conditions of their release and the consequences of failing to appear for a hearing;
- ensuring the family's housing, support and welfare needs are fully met;
- providing practical and emotional support to the family in planning for the future including, where appropriate, planning for return (this should include family tracing, support to wind up affairs in the UK and planning for housing, employment, school enrolment and rebuilding community links in their country of origin)

Families who cannot be returned

For many people return is not an option as a result of the situation in their country of origin. Where there is no prospect of returning a family safely, the Home Office should grant temporary renewable leave to remain. Attempting to force families to return with their children to conflict or post-conflict situations is not only impractical, but also puts children and families at risk of harm. Granting of temporary leave to nationality groups who cannot return due to the political state of the country has been used in UK, but not for a while. Some families cannot be returned safely as a consequence of the health or welfare needs of family members. When assessing whether a safe return is possible, the vulnerability of all family members should be taken into account, with particular emphasis given to the needs and interests of children. Families who cannot be returned for welfare reasons should be given indefinite or temporary leave as appropriate. With particular reference to:

<http://www.qarn.org.uk/homepage/2009/12/06/alternatives-to-detention-for-children-and-families>

http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/resources/documents/media/17148_full.pdf

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

167. MUBAIWA, MUCHAZVIONA WONDER

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

168. MUNRO, DEIRDRE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

169. MURPHY, RICHARD

I think there should be mandatory detention for all illegal immigrants. By entering the country they have shown a disregard for our laws and cannot be trusted to do the right thing. It is reprehensible that children are used as pawns by would be immigrants. The children should be detained, along with their parents before they are deported. The British people have had enough of lax immigration policies, especially with regard to the asylum industry. Any time in detention should be only minimal - if UK officials are effective and efficient their application can be accessed within only a few weeks. A failure of their application should result in immediate deportation, without appeal. Too much taxpayers money is used to fund endless appeals by asylum-seekers - this must stop. This is one area that could be targeted to yield huge savings to the taxpayer. Why should there be any appeal? They either have a case or they don't - it is as simple as that.

170. MURRAY, R.A.

While it is often presented as an issue of border security versus the human rights of children, there are a number of humanitarian reasons to continue the policy of detaining minors while their parents are awaiting deportation.

First, if having children in the country when caught attempting to illegally enter or remain in the UK is effectively a protection against detention or "get out of jail free card" (which one can assume it will be if children cannot be detained, as their parents would not be able to be detained either) then illegal immigrants will be more likely to put their children at risk by bringing them into the UK illegally.

Second, illegal immigrants and their children are potentially at greater risk remaining in the UK as part of the underground economy than they would be in their own country; for this reason, preventing them from evading deportation by restricting their movement in the UK would be acting in their safety.

171. NADEEM, SHAHID

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

172. NARES, MICHAEL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

173. NARWANGA, FLAVIA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

174. NASH, VICKI

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

175. NEDIE, BELLIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

176. NORMAN, REV. GARY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

177. NUGENT, JILL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

178. O'CALLAGHAN, JANE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

179. O'REILLY, DEIRDRE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

180. ODDY, MARTHA

With regard to the forthcoming review of the practice of detention of children who are refugees or asylum seekers, I would like to register my opinion. I feel strongly that this practice is uncivilised and cruel and in addition, does damage to cross-cultural integration and mutual respect in the UK. the Government's intention to stop this practice is most welcome. I hope that this intention is adopted into law and that we support these desperately needy young people sooner rather than later.

181. OORIAH, VIGAN

Childhood is the time of joy and laugh, or this is what we would all like to remember from our childhood...not being in a prison like a murdered or like a mentally sick and dangerous predator who's been put in a cage to protect others.

The justice moto is: Innocent until proven guilty; and what is the guilt of a child?

The simple fact that child detention has been allowed is such a disgrace for a country that colonised half of the world.

It appears that some of the practices from the Inquisition have been embedded in the UKBA's policies, and I sincerely hope that this does not reflect on what the British people feel that is right.

182. ORMEROD, PENELOPE

I am appalled and ashamed that the UK, for so long with its proud history as a refuge for the vulnerable and the oppressed, should now be locking up innocent children. The vast majority of asylum seekers and refugees come from places of conflict - too often from places where our governments since the 1980s have made things worse rather than better for ordinary citizens, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The record of our government in showing compassion to the tortured and the raped is dismal - but when it comes to the innocent children of people asking for refuge, it is particularly indefensible and repugnant.

I hope the new coalition will show more courage and compassion than New Labour, who seemed more frightened of bad headlines in the Sun than of sending oppressed people back to be tortured and killed.

183. PADDAN, PARDEEP

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

184. PATEL, SURAYA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

185. PATTERSON, RUTH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

186. PEACH, ESME

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

187. PHILLIPS, KATHLEEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

188. PINTER, ILONA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

189. POPLE, LARISSA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

190. PRESTON, SUE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

191. PRIDHAM, JOHN

I am writing concerning the comprehensive review being carried out by Damian Green and his department of the detention of immigrant children. I strongly urge the review to recommend the cessation of the detention of children and their families as is current practice. As a citizen of this country from birth, am ashamed that such a practice exists. It is inhumane and has no place to be enshrined in the laws of a civilised country.

192. PRITCHARD, CLIVE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

193. PROWSE, DENISE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

194. RAMNIAL, DEV

Parents will go to any extent to have their child stay in uk. They are used as a scapegoat and in future the parent themselves can settle in UK.

195. RANDALL, RONNE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

196. RICHARDSON, KATE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

197. RICHFIELD, ELLY

I am incredibly happy to hear that child immigration centres are being ended however this emotion initially came from shock and astonishment when I heard such things existed in England. Especially considering that we as a country are ratified with the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child. These immigration centres almost completely go against the main ethos of this document let alone basic human rights. I as a Family Support Worker prided myself that I worked and lived in a country that worked hard to make each and every child have a life that was of equal opportunity to that of any other child, whether it be health, education or even housing. Millions upon millions has been spent on producing childrens centres, extra schools, better housing, easier acces to healthcare for these children yet we as a country denied these rights to children and families who came to this country who where part of these families who needed the most support. Many of the families who were held in these immigration centres came to this country to escape the kind of treatment and life that was forced upon them in these centres. We should be treating these children with care and compassion as a priority. I just hope that the end of these centres provides these families with a more positive outcome than the previous. Everyone deserves a fair start in life and putting children in prison like settings most certainly isnt. We must remember that although we might not have the funds and resources to be able to provide materiesticly for all these families to stay in England we must always provide empathy, sympathy and a understanding as to why they have seeked asylum in our country and as to why they have escaped or left theirs. I just hope that the governments new agenda on this is something that reinstates my view that we as a country are humanitarians and will uphold our word that was given when we ratified with the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child.

198. RICKARD, ANNA-JOY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

199. RIGG, CLLR MAUREEN

First of all, thank you for carrying out the review so swiftly. I hope that it will also be very thorough and sensitive to the needs of children, whatever their parents have done or not done.

My reason for wanting to contribute to the review is that I have first hand experience of the trauma suffered by children of asylum seekers when they arrive in this country and live here while their parents go through the necessary legal processes. I taught English to refugees fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan a decade or more ago as well as a handful of Pakistani Christian families.

We need to distinguish between those who seek sanctuary here with their families and single people arriving here. If someone has gathered up their family and travelled to the UK those children have no idea why they've been moved. They might have experienced trauma before setting off (bombing, shootings etc) but they certainly experience enormous trauma on the journey. Once here they slowly start to build a new social network, be it school, nursery, church, neighbours and the children slowly begin to feel safe again. If the parents are found to have no justification for staying here they are very unlikely to be able to disappear into the underworld as a single person can. They are committed to staying together with their children.

Therefore it is sensible to use non-custodial methods of keeping track of the parents, allowing the children as much normality as possible.

When all appeals have been exhausted a date should be set for removal which allows proper preparation of the children - time to say goodbye to school friends, time to pack their clothes and toys. Parents may be too upset to help much in this and there should be proper opportunities for voluntary supporters - churches for example, to help with it. This would also help to prepare the parents.

Transport to the airport should be as "normal" as possible, not prison vans, no handcuffs, absolutely no violence against the parents or children.

All staff and contractors must remember that even if a family has arrived here because the parents want a better life economically and have no reason to fear going home, the children are not at fault. It is essential to treat the parents as human beings if only to avoid traumatising the children further.

200. RIMMER, PAUL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

201. ROBB C.J., SISTER PATRICIA

I am the Catholic Chaplain at the Oakington Immigration Detention Centre where families were held until 2007 when the Centre became made over to a male only establishment. I have worked at Oakington since 2000 I am familiar with the Yarl's Wood Immigration Centre and have been involved in staff training days there as well as serving as a chaplain at the time of the fire and more recently visiting families held in detention.

The Oakington Immigration Centre had a well run and friendly family unit set in its own grounds (the original Officer's quarters) and a very well motivated staff of teachers and nursery staff, although the teaching was limited by funds. Oakington was far more child friendly than Yarl's Wood with its prison like atmosphere. My experience of children in detention, however nice the surroundings and staff, is that it:

- denies children a normal childhood
- deprives children of educational facilities to the appropriate standard in a classroom of those of a similar age group
- denies the child a family home atmosphere
- the child is aware that his/her parent(s) are prisoners
- loss of friends from previous school
- missing exams
- missing friends and out of school activities
- no home cooking
- institutionalisation
- Barbed wire and locked door.
- Roll calls
- Loss of religious activities with a familiar group

The child experiences:

- Stress; anxiety of waiting for release or deportation
- Anxiety: does not want to leave parent in case the parent is taken away

- witnesses removals carried out by force and sometimes violence
- hears the cries of those in distress
- hears adults talking about their concerns
- hears other children suffering separation from a parent who is not detained.
- Uncertainty
- Fear
- Anger at missing out of school and events with peers.

The effects of detention on a child can lead to:

- bed wetting
- nightmares,
- ADD
- loss of appetite
- Abdominal disorders
- sleep disorders
- clinging to parents
- depression
- anger
- violence
- and more

Long term effects can be:

- sleep disorders
- hair loss
- lack of concentration
- falling off at school
- depression, skin disorders
- uncommunicative
- anger and violence
- Fear of strangers

I have met all of the above.

Case A illustrates much of the above:

5 year old boy, second son, taken into detention at first Tinsley House and later Yarl's Wood with older brother and parents. All threatened with detention. Two attempts to remove family, but mother (pregnant) described as "too ill to travel" by paramedic though she had been passed by Yarl's Wood medical team. Child witnessed mother's distress and pain and the fear. Heard his father trying to talk to escorts, but being verbally abused, rode in van with mother (separated from father and older brother) and heard escorts being verbally abusive.

2 years after detention this clever boy has:

- Attention Deficit Disorder
- interrupted sleep patterns
- Hair loss
- nails damage (to cuticle of nail)
- fear when someone knocks on door

- every Sunday night has to sleep between parents "in case immigration come" as previously removals were attempted early on a Monday morning
- inability to sit still for more than a few minutes
- uncommunicative much of the time
- he has slipped back at school, but remain one of the brightest in the class
- he is having two types of therapy and sees a dermatologist for his nail loss.

This child had experienced 35 days in detention in Oakington on arrival in 2005. Later he had three days in Tinsley House followed by 32 days in Yarl's Wood. His childhood has been destroyed. No one knows yet if the effects will be life long, but he has now lost 5 years of normal childhood, the chance of quick treatment leading, hopefully, to recovery, and the security of knowing he is living in a country that will not abuse him as he has been abused before. There are many other similar cases.

It is inhumane and shameful to keep children in detention, to separate them from their parents and to instil fear of authorities, especially authorities in uniform, into them.

This practice must stop. It is destroying the lives of children, their parents and their siblings.

Sister Patricia Robb CJ
Catholic Chaplain, Oakington Immigration Centre

202. ROBERTS, VALERIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

203. ROBINSON, THELMA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

204. ROSE, ADAM

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

205. RUSSELL, ANDREW

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

206. SAMEY, ALEXANDER

Thank you for inviting the views of the public.

I have been angry about the UK's treatment of asylum seekers for some time, not least because of the treatment of children that was implemented by the UK Border Agency and related agencies. The detention of children is entirely unacceptable and a shameful practice. These children have committed no offence, of course. They are CHILDREN, often already exposed to harm or traumatic events, either directly or indirectly through the circumstances of their families. That they should run the risk of further harm by being detained or separated from their families when they come to the UK is outrageous. Regardless of the legitimacy of their parents' claim to immigration or asylum status, the children must be absolutely protected from harm; they deserve our unconditional protection in a country that prides itself to be sharing a humane tradition of Western civilization, as well as being a signatory to the universal declaration of human rights. By detaining them, whether in privately run detention centres (in themselves a shameful blot on our reputation) or in state-run centres, the UK is actively harming them, this is

abundantly obvious from the facts that have become known (and is indeed entirely predictable), as well as taking away their liberty.

I have long considered our treatment of asylum seekers and potential immigrants (regardless of their motivation or legitimacy) as criminals as shameful behaviour by the state, but the treatment of children is the worst component of this. It is indefensible, and I am appalled that a public consultation, welcome as it is, was even considered necessary as a path to the possible cessation of the practice. It should never have been allowed in the first place, nor implemented when allowed.

I urge you to end the detention of children and their families with immediate effect, so that families who currently find themselves in immigration detention are released. No procedure that separates children from their parents should ever be used as part of the UK Border Agency treatment of immigration problems. It is totally unacceptable. How would you feel as a child (of any age) if you were forcibly separated from your mother or your father, or your siblings? It is a nightmare that surpasses the imagination of most of us adults, who have had the luck (and it is pure luck) of growing up in safe and stable environments. It is a terrible injustice, and no self-respecting government employee should ever have consented to resort to it, even if government policy allowed it.

I would appreciate being informed of the results of your review in due course.

207. SANDS, MARGARET

Please get rid of the inhuman practice of detaining children in what are really prison circumstances and surroundings for those children. Applying a disputed age limit without positive identification is also abhorrent; where there is lack of evidence in an ordinary criminal case for a UK citizen, the adult concerned gets the benefit of the doubt. Are foreign children to be denied a similar understanding?

Perhaps some of those in the Immigration Office could spend some time in a less democratic country and see how they are treated when they can't comply with regulations they don't know about or can't speak the language! It would be a salutary lesson in understanding people as human beings. Once again, please ensure that no children are detained, with or without their families while their case is being examined.

Thank you.

208. SAUNDERS, CAMILLA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

209. SCHWEIGER, MARTIN

I am responding as a private individual but my views are influenced by my membership of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and my occupation as a Consultant in Public Health (Health Protection). For about 5 years I chaired the Yorkshire and Humber Asylum Seeker Health Interest Group.

I do not believe there are any right answers in managing asylum seekers, only some least worst responses.

Fundamental to the process of enabling successful integration into the UK or return home is the maintenance of self worth and dignity. What ever process you use let people feel they are being

listened to, treated with respect and able to own the outcome. Return home is very much easier all round if it is voluntary and can be done with "head held high". Dawn raids and periods in detention, particularly those during which your children are also detained, destroy self respect. We get the rise of frustration, bitterness and poor self esteem which make repatriation even more difficult.

Training and supporting Immigration Officers in giving unwelcome news would be one positive step forward.

I strongly encourage the review team to stop any more child detentions and to work with others to find ways of managing the whole process with more dignity for all concerned. With goodwill it can be done.

210. SCOTT, PAULA

I understand that you are seeking the views of members of the public regarding the ending of the detention of children at immigration centres.

I feel very strongly that it is wrong to lock up these children. In my view, such action is bound to have a negative and detrimental effect on their physical health and mental wellbeing, They have committed no crime, so how can taking away their personal liberty and depriving them of their human rights possibly be justified? Above all, I believe it is both immoral and harmful to use a procedure that separates children from their parents as part of the immigration process. It is unquestionably in the best interests of the children for families to be kept together and not separated at this stressful and frightening time for them.

I very much hope that this consultation and review result in an end to the future detention of children and their families, and an immediate release for those families currently detained.

I look forward to the results of your review

211. SELICK, REV. PETER

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children. I have personal experience of the effects of detention on two vulnerable children from my church congregation, which I would like to share with you.

Two very young (aged 2 and 5) members of my church (West Bromwich) were detained with their mother at Yarls Wood in 2009 for two one-week periods, before eventually being deported towards the end of the year. The Nigerian mother told me how, on both occasions, one the children more or less stopped eating for that period, and the other became very withdrawn.

With all the clear evidence of early traumatic experiences on future psychological development, I believe it is wrong to detain children in this way. Certainly in the case I know about, the mother had absolutely no intention of 'disappearing', given the connections that she and the children had in the community; so I cannot see the need to have detained the family at all.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together.

It is vital that the Government stops locking up children as soon as possible, but it is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families seeking refuge in the UK.

For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process (I know of a number of asylum seekers being duped by corrupt 'advisers'), and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past.

In my case, the claim for asylum lay around the issue of forced female genital mutilation, which despite UK laws prohibiting it and its encouragement, appears to be seen as not an important enough issue by the border agency - eg such that they do not even keep records (according to a FOI request by myself) of how many claimants this concerns.

It is clear that we need a fairer system that demonstrates our natural instinct to protect and care for all children in our society.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

212. SHAFI, NAZNEEN

End Refugee Child Detention

213. SHALKOWSKI, JUDITH

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

214. SHEA, SANJA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

215. SHEPPARD, REV. IAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

216. SHEWARD, DEBBIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

217. SHIELDS, CANON MICHAEL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

218. SHULMAN, ADAM

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

219. SIDIBE, ABDOU

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

220. SIMMONS, ALEXANDER

I'm afraid my contribution today is not able to be nearly as extensive as I would prefer it to be, having only received a response from the UKBA today, giving me a matter of hours to reply by the deadline (tomorrow).

As a citizen of the UK, I am ashamed of the current treatment of asylum seekers, especially that of children, in this country. Numerous reports, including those of Sir Al Aynsley Green, have shown that children and their families seeking asylum in this country are not given access to quality healthcare, despite the high risk of illness in detention centres. There are far too many reports of children and women especially, who have been treated with next to no respect by their guards. I draw your attention specifically to Yarl's Wood.

I welcome the UKBA's recognition that the welfare of children is key is reviewing the current process. However, I wish to stress the importance of keeping children with their families to ensure this. I fear that any recommended alternative that advocates the separation of children from their parents, perhaps placing them in temporary care, would only impact negatively on these children's already fragile mental development.

Furthermore, at no stage of the asylum seeking process should children be separated from their parents, even temporarily, apart from a medical emergency for example. It has come to the public attention that children have at times been separated from their parents and transported across the country in caged police vans to different residencies. Such an experience could only be traumatic for a child, in a foreign country, where their parents are merely exercising their fundamental right to seek asylum.

I urge you to reconsider the current position that keeps children and families in detention for fear of absconding. It is perhaps an understandable position when dealing with individuals, but for families with dependant children, absconding would be utterly impractical.

Thank you for considering my comments, I hope to hear details of a considerate, respectful alternative to the current system soon.

221. SIMS, DANIELLE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

222. SIMPSON, ANTHONY

I welcome the review, and expect the new Government will want to make good, in a prompt manner, on its pledge to end detention of children for immigration purposes. In this connection I wish to emphasise the following.

1. Parents and children should not be separated in any new arrangements. The justification, which was hitherto offered for detaining whole families in places such as Yarl's Wood, holds good when children are no longer to be detained. Children need their

parents with them. Families cannot easily abscond, and this should be reflected in any appropriate risk assessment.

2. My first-hand contact with UKBA's work as it affected children arose as a result of serving as a school governor. Children at the school were traumatised by early-morning raids and sudden detention. Their schoolmates were also traumatised by their sudden removal, with notable impact on behaviour.
3. The three children who were detained in Yarl's Wood are now all receiving therapy in an attempt to mitigate the trauma of detention and incarceration.

In the light of points 2 and 3, any new arrangements should be by negotiation with families with a view to securing their consent to what is being asked of them.

223. SLATTERY, JAMES

I would like you to consider the inhumanity involved in locking up children in detention centres. It is a measure of a country how it treats its most vulnerable section of its inhabitants and Great Britain with its long tradition of tolerance is presently failing miserably to protect this very frightened community.

In my view the Border Agency find it much easier to detain a mother and her children who they know will be easily intimidated rather than perhaps pursuing a single person who is mobile and perhaps violent.

One other consideration should be that how these children will remember the treatment they received in this country when they are important players in world politics in a generations time.

Please end this inhuman treatment of children without further delay.

224. SMEE, JEAN

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children. As a retired primary school teacher, mother of three and now a grandmother I am personally very concerned about this issue. I believe it is indefensible to lock up children, especially when you consider all the evidence available from medical practitioners, The Children's Commissioner and others to show the serious harm that detention causes to children. As a teacher I know the damage that will be done to the education of children detained in this way and from reports I have read it is clear that the education offered to the children in these circumstances is substandard.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together. Experience from other countries has shown that families facing deportation rarely abscond even when they are not locked up and our country, which has prided itself on providing a place of refuge for people at risk in their own country, should now treat this people humanely forthwith and overturn the last government's disgraceful policy.

It is vital that the Government stops locking up children as soon as possible, but it is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families

seeking refuge in the UK. For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process, and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past.

It is clear that we need a fairer system that demonstrates our natural instinct to protect and care for all children in our society. Countless families around the country would be appalled as I am by the unnecessary and expensive policy of punishing innocent children by incarcerating them and thus violating their human rights.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

225. SMITH, BEE

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children.

I am concerned about this issue. It is indefensible to lock up children who have committed no crime, especially when you consider the detrimental impact on these individuals' health and state of mind. It is an affront to the human rights of children to take away their liberty and to treat them in this way.

I ask you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

226. SMITH, PHILIPPA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

227. SMITH, REV. OLWEN

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered apart of your review into ending the immigration detention of children. With all the clear evidence of early traumatic experiences on future psychological development, I believe it is wrong to detain children in this way. Certainly in a case I know about, the mother had absolutely no intention of 'disappearing', given the connections that she and the children had in the community; so I cannot see the need to have detained the family at all.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

In particular, I believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together.

It is vital that the Government stops locking up children as soon as possible, but it is also crucial to improve the wider system to provide a fair and humane process for children and their families seeking refuge in the UK.

For instance, providing access to good quality legal advice and better support throughout the process and giving those whose claims have failed a real and informed opportunity to consider voluntary return before any enforcement measures are used. These improvements would lead to much greater numbers leaving the UK voluntarily if their claims fail, meaning that harmful and inhumane enforcement actions like detention would become a thing of the past.

It is clear that we need a fairer system that demonstrates our natural instinct to protect and care for all children in our society.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

228. SPRADBERY, MIKE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

229. SPRAGUE, CATHIE

please consider the developmental needs and attachment issues facing these innocent young children who have probably already suffered trauma they have their whole life in front of them, please give them a chance to make it a good life. They are our future. Compassion is vital now. End the detention of children and families.

230. STANLEY, MARIA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

231. STEADMAN, ALEXIS

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

232. STOCKFORD, DR. GEMMA

As both a member of the public, a visitor to detention centres, and a doctor may I congratulate you on looking at this issue promptly.

Keeping children in detention is immoral and the figures show that many are not even kept in detention prior to removal as they are later given leave to remain. It would not be acceptable to remove them from their parents as an alternative. The figures show that families with children are very unlikely to abscond.

If there is really agreement to deport a family and you feel prior detention is essential then it should be as a part of the transport process- <24 hours.

Children and families should not be woken at dawn and dragged out of their homes. It will leave mental scars for years to come.

233. STUBER, ROLF

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

234. SUMMERFIELD, SUSAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

235. SWAN, SUSIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

236. SWINFEN, ROBERT

As with many other people who have experienced the distress caused to young people by detention, I warmly welcome the decision to end child detention. I acknowledge that there are no wholly satisfactory answers, but I would offer the following observations:

1. Statistics which I have seen indicate that about 50% of children who are detained are released again in the UK, usually as a result of fresh legal action being taken by their lawyers. While this does not imply that all of them eventually receive the right to remain in the UK, it does seem to indicate that they were not as near the end of the road as those making the detention decision believed. I therefore suggest that a 50% reduction in detention cases could be achieved by insisting that all detention decisions were reviewed by a second UKBA official to consider how likely it is that further legal representations will be accepted, and putting the detention decision on hold while awaiting the outcome of any legal representations
2. Families with young children are far less likely to abscond than single people; by applying what appears to be a similar test of the need to detain to families and single people, expensive and unnecessary detentions are being made.
3. People who believe that their case has been dealt with fairly, and that all their representations and evidence have been thoroughly considered are more likely to engage positively with an assisted returns process. The Solihull pilot appeared to demonstrate that the provision of good legal advice from the very start of an asylum claim increased the number of voluntary returns outcomes as well as the number of successful asylum claims. In the longer term the total number of detentions would in all probability be reduced and the number of voluntary returns increased if similar support and advice was provided to all claimants from the start of the process.
4. I recognise that there will always be a number of families and unaccompanied children who will resist all efforts to persuade them to accept voluntary return, however weak their case to remain. Ideally in these cases, UKBA should engage constructively with local communities and supporters to explain why their case to remain is not valid so as to achieve a wider background of support for removal. This will provide a wider social basis of understanding for the difficult decisions which have to be made in such cases and further reduce any risk of abscondment.

Thank you for the chance to take part in this consultation, and I wish you well in your deliberations.

237. SYMONDS, JENNIFER

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

238. TA, SIMON

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

239. TALKES, WENDY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

240. TAMLIT, ALISTAIR

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

241. TAYLOR, J.P., ROSEMARY

The Human Rights Act states that everyone has a right to family life. British and EU law are both very clear about this. The treatment that is meted out to children of parents who are unsuccessfully seeking asylum in our country is damaging in the extreme, and is surely illegal. This country has a long history of absorbing immigrants who turn out to be extremely useful citizens. As a Jew my own forebears were amongst these immigrants, and we have been very beneficial to this country. Apart from the cruelty aspect of the inhumane treatment in the prisons or so-called detention centres we should be acting with enlightened self interest, and giving these children a chance to turn into balanced, hardworking adults, instead of the damaged people they are bound to be after the sort of torture we have been putting them through. We are storing up trouble for the whole world when we imprison children. Please stop it.

242. THACKER, RAJEEV

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

243. TODD, MALCOLM

I am concerned that this practice is merely being “reviewed”, with the implication that the detention of children may not be ended, and quickly.

There have been several reviews of this practice, and of the harm it causes. See this report by Bail for Immigration Detainees 18 months ago:
<http://www.biduk.org/library/BID%20briefing%20on%20children%20and%20immigration%20detention%20Feb%2009%20FINAL.pdf>.

I urge UKBA to recommend the **immediate** cessation of detention of children. Reasonable and humane alternatives to such detention can be reviewed and implemented thereafter with as much despatch as the agency can accomplish. The risk, such as it is, of a small number of absconsions in the interim does not justify extending by a single day the harm being done to children by the current policy.

244. TOOSE, JOANNE

I am deeply disturbed by the current policy which regularly (but not always) detains vulnerable children and families including 1000 children per year for a period of up to 61 days, while their application for Asylum in the UK is investigated. These families are being detained without statutory limit which breaches international HR's law and causes unnecessary psychological/mental health distress of individuals and families already traumatized by the experiences that lead them to seek Asylum in the UK.

In some cases neglect of physical health and treatment as reported such as those from Yarls Wood. Reports confirm that the current policies of SERCO and the UKBA fail to 'safeguard' already vulnerable children.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/14/yarls-wood-child-sex>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/7837282/Yarls-Wood-immigration-centre-treated-children-in-a-shameful-way.html>

<http://refugee-migrant-justice.org.uk/downloads/RMJ%20Safe%20at%20Last%20WEB.pdf>

This is not in any way justified and is disproportionate against the UK borders right to implement immigration control.

The usual reason for detention has been to avoid people from absconding. There is very little evidence to support this likelihood where families are concerned. I would have thought that was it is obvious that it is much more difficult to 'go missing' with a family, no home and no means to support dependents. I am also concerned that 'tagging' may be considered as an option (HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, The detention of Children in the Immigration system. The first report of session 2009 -10 section 8). Tagging is used for the monitoring of known criminals and as such this levels Asylum seekers along side rapists, pedophiles and other criminals that represent a risk to the public. This is not justified.

In the report '**THE GOVERNMENT REPLY TO THE FIRST REPORT FROM THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE SESSION 2009-10 HC 73, THE DETENTION OF CHILDREN IN THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM' 2010** ' paragraph 2, it states

'The Government would always prefer voluntary compliance and co-operation with the immigration laws, including any requirement to leave the United Kingdom. There are occasions, though, when the UK Border Agency has to enforce removal because the family will not leave voluntarily, despite being offered practical and financial assistance to do so, once they have exhausted their appeal rights and the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal have upheld our decision.'

In another report by the organisation 'Refugee and Migrant Justice' 'Safe at Last' there are reports of the UKBA conducting ILLEGAL entry interviews of minors without due regard for their welfare which is paramount under many international and UK laws.

<http://refugee-migrant-justice.org.uk/downloads/RMJ%20Safe%20at%20Last%20WEB.pdf>

I am equally disturbed by the fact that parentless children are being deported to their country of origin without due care for their welfare. When did we become such a heartless nation? These are non justifiable actions.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/1011100/Anger-hundreds-children-deported-alone-EU-rules/>

I strongly believe that the current policy regarding Asylum seekers including the placement of Asylum seekers, and in particular children, in detention centers operates out side of of legal and humanitarian boundaries. Detention is a draconian measure and as such be absolutely

avoided unless there is strong evidence to suggest that an individual or family is likely to be a risk to public safety.

It's way past time that the Government owned the issue of asylum rather than leave it in the hands of incompetent and inadequate agencies whose sole purpose is to criminalise and dehumanise asylum seekers. Asylum seekers above all other immigrants should be treated with dignity and compassion. The majority of these people are already victims of some oppressive regime, or are almost always victims of violence, abuse and exploitation and face real risk of loss of life, imprisonment, deprivation and exploitation on return to their country of origin. Can we really be part of that process?

I don't have a solution to the issue but I instinctively know the current policy is wrong when I see it blatantly disregards the concept of a humanitarian approach and I'm appalled every time I am confronted with news about the lengths the UKBA will go to to meet that policy. The UK can do much better than this.

The real problems for this country arise from the huge influx of economic migrants and the policy around that, not asylum seekers who make up only a small percentage in comparison but are clearly the most vulnerable and easy to target.

245. TOTTLE-NUGENT, JIM

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

246. TOWNSEND, REV. GEOFFREY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

247. TOYE, JANET

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

248. TRUDE, ADELIN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

249. TRUEMAN, TREVOR

Thank you for this opportunity to send comments to the review team.
I have no objection to any of the following being made public.

Name

Dr Trevor Trueman

Position and experience

Part time General Medical Practitioner, now retired, with history of training health workers in Ethiopia. As Chair of the Oromia Support Group, which reports on human rights violations in Ethiopia, I have been asked to comment as an expert witness in over 350 asylum applications, mostly concerning Oromo asylum applicants in the UK.
CV attached.

I have become concerned with the asylum-determination process and consequences for refused asylum applicants for over ten years and published an audit of 200 Home Office refusal

letters and 57 appeal determinations in the, peer reviewed, Journal of Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Law, the journal of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association, last year (attached).

Comments

1. There is no evidence that families abscond if they are not detained.
2. Despite receiving negative initial decisions, and usually dismissal of appeals, a significant proportion of detained asylum seekers, including families with children, are eventually given leave to remain. Their detention is therefore unnecessary, unjust and a needless burden on the public purse.
3. Detention, destitution and deportation can only be claimed to be fair if the decision-making process is strictly fair. The success rate of appealed decisions and the higher success rate of determinations made when applicants are adequately represented and the decision-makers are adequately informed (the Solihull pilot) demonstrates that the decision-making process is not presently fair. Organisations which have assessed the adequacy of the decision-making process, including UNHCR and my own research, support this contention (references in the attached paper).
4. Detention of families with children is continuing during the review. There is no justification for this.
5. How to stop detaining children? Just stop detaining families. If, after proper consideration of asylum and human rights claims, deportation is carried out, it may be done with adequate warning from their home.

I would gladly enlarge upon these comments if requested to do so.

250. TUBBS, REV. GORDON

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

251. TUGWOOD, REV. MARION

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

252. TURLEY, CATHERINE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

253. TWEDDLE, GINETTE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

254. VARDELL, DR. NIGEL

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

255. VESEY, LAURA

Surely these children should be protected under our children's act? I cannot believe that we are locking them up in this way. It is completely unacceptable and unjust.

256. VINER, DANIELE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

257. WAISEL, TIRZA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above – plus the following text)

As a Jew and a daughter of a holocaust survivor I am appalled to find out that the country who welcomed the Kinder Transport of Jewish children from Austria and Germany at the beginning of the second world war, thus saving their lives, the same country that became a signatory of the Geneva convention 1951 shortly after this war, has now forgot its humane past and is turning its back on its moral and legal obligations by keeping children in detention.

It is well known how traumatic and long lasting effects detention is for children, with the continuous lack of freedom and the humiliation it entails for the children themselves and as witnesses of this humiliation to their parents - their source of support. Any asylum seeking child who is kept in detention after already experiencing the traumatic and unsettling effects of uprooting and the journey to the UK - becomes by definition a Child In Need according to the Children Act 1989.

Avoiding detention of children may therefore reduce the demand on British Children & Families' social services departments and ease the pressure on the public purse.

Stopping this policy will be both humane and wise from the UK interests point of view.

258. WALLACE, HELEN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

259. WASHINGTON, BELINDA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

260. WATERHOUSE, SOPHIE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

261. WATKINS, CATH

I am very pleased to hear that you will be conducting a review into ending the detention of children for immigration purposes.

When I first discovered that our country was locking up children just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, I was appalled. I had believed that our country was one of the fairest and most civilised in the world, and that belief was badly shaken by the stories I heard - some at first hand - about the conditions and treatment in immigration detention centres.

I can think of no argument that justifies detaining children in what is effectively a prison (despite the careful naming), under the care of prison guards, subject to a prison routine. Especially children who have done nothing wrong.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention.

I am asking you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement.

Please do not even consider any solution that would entail separating children from their parents. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

262. WEBBER, RICK

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

263. WHITMARSH, GUY

You are asking for views on the detention of children for immigration purposes.

There appears to be little need for this practice.

It is psychologically harmful to detain children in prison-like conditions, where their parents are also stressed.

It is a costly practice - it is cheaper to leave these families in the community, and there appears to be no evidence that deportations (if that is to be the end result) are any more difficult to carry out.

In the run-up to the elections many leading politicians of all parties signed the Sanctuary Pledge, one of the elements of which was a promise to end the detention of children for immigration purposes if they were elected to power after May 6th. Are these same politicians now seeking a way of reneging on that promise?

264. WHITTLESEA REED, ESTHER

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

265. WICKREMASINGHE, RAVI

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

266. WILLIAMS, ADRIAN

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

267. WILLMER, HILARY

I am delighted that there is a review of this awful practice of detaining children. I have twice visited Yarl's Wood to visit families from our church in Leeds who have been sent back to Nigeria - where for one family we remain the sole means of support. It is unsafe to contact the wider family; the mother has tried to find work during the last 2 years and has worked as a teaching assistant for 2 terms; she received no money as the pupils did not pay the school fees. Although a trained accountant, she has found occasional poorly paid work on a construction site - again for virtually no money. She has 4 school age children.

Families with children at school are unlikely to abscond; we would have been prepared to stand bail. There was no need for them to be taken by force from a dawn raid - 6am in each case. So there was no need for detention.

My main concern, however, is that there has been change from the Lib Dem commitment to stop detention of families to that of ending detention of children. If this resulted in separation of families with the parents being detained and the children taken into care that could be even worse than the current situation - which is in itself unnecessary.

Please end detention of families

268. WINDSOR, JEANNETTE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

269. WIRTZ, LAURA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

270. WISEMAN, SYLVIA

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

271. WISEMAN, CLARE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

272. WOLTON, DR. SUKE

Thank you for providing the opportunity for the views of members of the public to be considered as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children.

Previous governments have continued with child detention on the grounds that: 1. it is difficult to ascertain when the person detained is a child and when they are not. 2. they would prefer to keep families together and detain mothers and children together.

Neither of these two arguments are sustainable in a just society.

1. Young people should be given the benefit of the doubt. If you can't prove that they are a child but there is some grounds of possibility, such that they claim to be a child and do not appear to be older than 25, then they should not be detained. If in doubt, end detention. It is not a cheaper and certainly not a humane alternative to the care of social services.

2. What is the reason for detaining mothers with young children? There is no good reason. Or mothers with any children. Mothers should be given the support they need to look after their children and not detained. How can you be imprisoned and be a good mother? How can that much anxiety, stress, humiliation and fear of deportation be justifiable for anyone, much less someone who has others in her care.

Immigration detention is a policy of humiliation in attempt to deter people from coming to Britain. It is inhumane and unproven to have any effect at all. It only ends up lending credence to the idea that some people are less equal than others.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

273. WOOD, CHRISTOPHER

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

274. WOODALL, BRIDGET

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

275. WOODALL, GUY

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

276. WOUFF, ANNE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

277. WOUFF, DR. CHRIS

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

278. WORTH, DR. KAREN

Thank you for asking for the views of the public as part of your review into ending the immigration detention of children.

I am extremely passionate and bothered by this issue. It is an indefensible crime to lock up children who have done nothing wrong other than be born in the wrong place. It must have a detrimental impact on these individuals' health and state of mind. It is an affront to the human rights of children to take away their liberty and to treat them in this way.

I would urge you to end the detention of children and their families NOW, and immediately release those families currently in immigration detention. As a doctor I have spent my working life assisting families stay together and for children to grow up healthy and happy. This policy can only damage and hinder this.

I would ask you to ensure that children's welfare is at the heart of any new policy you implement. I also believe it would be wrong and harmful to use a procedure that would separate children from their parents as part of the immigration process. Children's best interests are served by keeping families together. It is terribly traumatic for families to be separated- scars which remain with people for life. I can testify to this as several of my family members including my father were sent to this country without their parents on the kindertransport from Germany in 1939. That was an extreme and dire situation. Not one that should be lightly taken by governments. My father was damaged for life by the process- but of course at least he was alive.

I would very much like to hear the results of this consultation and your review in due course.

279. YENDOLE, REV. JOYCE

(campaign letter drafted by Bail for Immigration Detainees – see Ann Adler above)

280. YETUNDE, TITILAYO

I will like to book an appointment in order to have a confidential meeting with the immigration minister.

I have been nursing an idea on immigration and its solution since .The total population in Britain divided by the current government resources equals to economy recession.

As the current government know this now, I will like the current immigration minister to co-operate with me to reach a lasting solution to this economy problem and illegal migrants.

This can be done in a better way without having to deport the illegal migrants and their children immediately. In this minister's regime you can leave behind a remarkable name after my meeting with him.

I currently work part-time with a law firm and on my free days I decided to visit churches, conferences, speak on tv live shows and radio programmes to enlighten the masses about immigration updates and after my shows i discovered that lots of people are suffering in silence out of ignorance still lots of lawyers still oppress this people that they can still get their stay in uk not having conscience when they know that they have no grounds. All of this touches my heart and I feel it is time I discuss the solution with the U.k government.

This solution will generate revenue for the U.k government, it will bring in only genuine migrants to the united kingdom, it will strengthen the security of this country, it will bring promote families instead of single parents, the rate of divorce will be reduced and most of the illegal migrants will be willing to return back to their countries with less effort and resources from the ukba.

All of the above can be explained and methods of carrying out the project if i can be permitted to speak.

hoping to see your reply soonest.