

Detention Forum timeline

October 2022

2022

Campaigning

Forum members play a dynamic role in the Together with Refugees campaign against key provisions in the Nationality and Borders Bill most notably against the plans for the off-shore detention of people seeking asylum

Home Office

Second Alternatives to Detention pilot project run by the King's Arms Project in Bedfordshire comes to an end. 80% of people were presented with viable options to regularise their immigration status in the UK.

Forum

Forum website is re-launched with all of our policy papers, a topical blog and links to our 50+ members. Forum's communications working group develops key messages to support all of the policy papers.

Home Office

28.6.22 Announces re-opening of Campsfield detention centre by 2023 at earliest. Forum gives its support to the new Coalition to Keep Campsfield Closed..

Campaigning

Announcement that proposed accommodation centre for people seeking asylum in Linton-on-Ouse is not now going ahead after a strong campaign of resistance.

Parliament

APPG on immigration detention publish report on the use of quasi-detention such as the former army barracks at Napier in Kent.

2021

Home Office

First Alternatives to Detention pilot project run by Action Foundation in the North East of England comes to an end, with very promising results.

Home Office

23-9-21 Announces opening of Hassockfield (later renamed Derwentside) detention centre for women opened at Consett, County Durham. First women arrive in the days following Christmas. The local group No 2 Hassockfield joins the Forum and members support the national demonstration against the new centre held in Durham.

Policy

Forum develops an array of policy papers setting out the changes that we want to see in asylum and immigration policy to drive our campaigning agenda.

Campaigning

Forum organises an open online meeting to highlight what is happening at the former army barracks across the country being used to accommodate people seeking asylum

Forum

Forum members confirm that power in the Forum rests with the membership at the Quarterly Meetings and elect a new co-ordination group

Forum

Forum members agree our new mission statement: 'we want to end immigration detention because it is unjust and inhumane.'

2020

Parliament

Forum members rally behind Detention Action in seeking to persuade MPs to vote for a Time Limit amendment to the Immigration Bill moved by David Davis MP

Society

UK goes into a national lockdown due to the Covid pandemic . Forum begins to use Zoom for its quarterly members' meetings. The first face-to-face meeting will not be held again until June 2022.

Forum

Forum appoints Jonathan Ellis to take over from Eiri Ohtani as the project director.

2019

06-06-2019

Parliament

Over 80 MPs from all major parties support an amendment to the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill calling for a 28 day time limit on immigration detention, to be considered during the Report Stage.

24-04-2019

Parliament

A new All Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration Detention is established, with secretariat provided by Medical Justice.

21-03-2019

Parliament

The Home Affairs Committee publishes its long-awaited report on immigration detention, calling for a 28 day time limit, an end to the detention of vulnerable people, automatic judicial oversight of decisions to detain, and alternatives to detention.

05-03-2019

Parliament

MPs from all major parties table an amendment to the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill calling for a 28 day time limit on immigration detention, which was debated by the Public Bill Committee.

07-02-2019

Parliament

The Joint Committee on Human Rights publishes its report on immigration detention, calling for far-reaching reforms including a 28 day time limit and independent authorisation of decisions to detain.

04-02-2019

Campaigning

Lord Ramsbotham is named fifth 'Detention Forum Champion', honouring his long-standing commitment to reforming the immigration detention system.

2018

05-12-2018

Parliament

Tulip Siddiq MP presents a ten-minute rule Bill calling for a time limit on immigration detention, with cross-party support.

03-12-2018

Home Office

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes announces an alternative to detention pilot for women who would otherwise potentially be detained.

30-11-2018

Campaigning

Caroline Spelman MP and Baroness Sally Hamwee are named Detention Forum Champions in recognition of their commitment to detention reform.

09-11-2018

Home Office

The government announces that Campsfield House IRC will close in May 2019, the fourth IRC to close since Unlocking Detention began.

22-10-2018

Campaigning

Unlocking Detention 2018 is launched, with a focus on encouraging people to take action towards detention reform.

07-09-2018

Campaigning

The Detention Forum publishes a working paper answering questions around a 28 day time limit on immigration detention.

24-07-2018

Parliament

Following its inquiry into the detention of the Windrush generation, the Joint Committee on Human Rights launches an inquiry into immigration detention in the UK.

24-07-2018

Home Office

The government publishes Stephen Shaw's second review of immigration detention and announces its response, including an internal review of time limits on immigration detention in other countries and a pilot alternative to detention project for women who would otherwise be detained in Yarl's Wood IRC. The Detention Forum places Shaw's second review in a broader context of growing media and political interest in detention reform.

09-07-2018

Campaigning

The British Red Cross publishes evidence of the humanitarian impact of immigration detention in *Never truly free*, announcing its support for a 28 day time limit.

02-07-2018

Campaigning

The Detention Forum publishes a briefing on FAQs around Alternatives to Detention.

13-06-2018

Campaigning

MPs Paul Blomfield and Stuart McDonald are named Detention Forum Champions for their tireless work in advocating for detention reform.

29-04-2018

Home Office

Amber Rudd resigns as Home Secretary after misleading Parliament over deportation targets amidst the Windrush and Hostile Environment scandal. She is replaced by Sajid Javid.

16-03-2018

Parliament

The Home Affairs Committee broadens its inquiry to address immigration detention as a whole.

21-02-2018

Experts-by- experience 100 women begin a hunger strike in Yarl's Wood IRC, calling for detention reform including a time limit.

15-01-2018

Parliament

Key provisions of the Immigration Act 2016 come into force, including changes to bail and post- detention accommodation.

08-01-2018

Home Office

Caroline Nokes MP becomes Immigration Minister, replacing Brandon Lewis MP.

2017

15-12-2017

Campaigning

Amnesty International publishes A matter of routine, arguing for a move away from the UK's reliance on immigration detention.

30-11-2017

Campaigning

The Bar Council publishes Injustice in immigration detention, calling for automatic judicial oversight and a time limit on immigration detention.

21-11-2017

Campaigning

The British Medical Association publishes Locked up, locked out: Health and human rights in immigration detention, calling for a time limit on detention.

16-11-2017

Campaigning

As part of #Unlocked17, the Detention Forum hosts a parliamentary meeting on immigration detention featuring experts-by-experience and current research.

31-10-2017

Campaigning

Women for Refugee Women publishes We are still here, arguing that the government's Adults at Risk policy is failing to safeguard and protect vulnerable women in immigration detention.

16-10-2017

Campaigning

Unlocking Detention 2017 is launched, encouraging people to take action towards immigration detention reform.

11-10-2017

Home Office

The Home Office

announces the closure of The Verne IRC, only three years after it opened. The reduction of 580 detention bed-spaces represents about a 20% decrease in the UK's immigration detention estate.

10-10-2017

Litigation

Following legal action by Medical Justice and others, the High Court rules the Government's new definition of torture in immigration detention policy unlawful.

13-09-2017

Parliament

Prompted by Panorama's revelations, the Home Affairs Committee launches an inquiry into the running of Brook House IRC.

04-09-2017

Media

The BBC's Panorama programme 'Undercover: Britain's immigration secrets' features extensive undercover footage from Brook House IRC. The Freed Voices, a group of experts-by-experience campaigning for immigration reform, publish a response to this.

12-06-2017

Home Office

Brandon Lewis MP becomes Immigration Minister, replacing Robert Goodwill MP.

01-05-2017

Politics

Labour and the Liberal Democrats again pledge to end indefinite immigration detention in their election manifestos. The SNP's manifesto includes a commitment to a 28 day time limit.

01-03-2017

Campaigning

Women for Refugee Women publishes The way ahead: An asylum system without detention, arguing for alternatives to detention.

2016

10-10-2016

Campaigning

Unlocking Detention 2016 is launched, this year focusing on friends, families and communities affected by detention.

01-09-2016

Campaigning

Detention Action publishes Without detention, outlining the strategy for developing and implementing community-based alternatives to detention to radically reduce the use of detention.

19-07-2016

Oversight

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons publishes its annual report summarising findings from 2015- 2016, including inspections into Dungavel, Harmondsworth, The Verne,

Tinsley House and Yarl's Wood IRCs. Following the Parliamentary Inquiry and Shaw Review, HMIP decides to formally call for a time limit on immigration detention.

18-07-2016

Home Office

Robert Goodwill MP becomes Immigration Minister, replacing James Brokenshire MP.

13-07-2016

Home Office

Amber Rudd is appointed Home Secretary following Theresa May's appointment as Prime Minister.

12-07-2016

Home Office

The Home Office implements new guidance on adults at risk in immigration detention, which 'aims to strike the right balance between protecting the vulnerable and ensuring the maintenance of legitimate immigration control'.

12-05-2016

Parliament

Following growing disquiet about immigration detention and a last-minute ping-pong regarding a proposed time limit amendment, the Immigration Act 2016 introduces changes to immigration detention policy including automatic bail referrals after 4 months for certain people, changes to post-detention accommodation, and a time limit for pregnant women.

01-02-2016

Oversight

In the lead-up to the 2016 Immigration Bill, the Equality and Human Rights Commission supports the Parliamentary Inquiry's recommendation of a 28 day time limit.

14-01-2016

Home Office

The Home Office publishes Stephen Shaw's 'Review into the Welfare in Detention of Vulnerable Persons', which calls on the government to reduce the size of the detention estate 'boldly and without delay'. In response, Immigration Minister James Brokenshire announces changes designed to reduce the scale of detention and improve the welfare of people who are detained.

2015

12-11-2015

Litigation

The Supreme Court refuses the government permission to appeal against the Court of Appeal's decision of 29 July, marking the end of the road for the Detained Fast Track.

02-11-2015

Oversight

Members of the National Preventive Mechanism reach a common position on the need for a time limit on immigration detention’.

15-10-2015**Home Office**

The Home Office

announces the closure of Dover IRC, explaining that it was not compatible with a detention estate of ‘modern, secure centres located with easy access to the airports from which removals take place’.

01-10-2015**Campaigning**

The International Detention Coalition publishes *There are alternatives: A handbook for preventing unnecessary detention*.

02-10-2015**Oversight**

As part of its global ‘beyond detention’ strategy, the UNHCR publishes a national action plan for the UK, raising concerns about the scale of immigration detention and lack of time limit.

21-09-2015**Campaigning**

Unlocking Detention 2015 is launched, taking people on a virtual tour of the detention estate for the second year running.

10-09-2015**Parliament**

MPs endorse the findings of the Parliamentary Inquiry into immigration detention.

21-07-2015**Oversight**

The UN Human Rights Committee calls on the UK government to introduce a time limit on immigration detention.

02-07-2015**Home Office**

Immigration Minister James Brokenshire announces that the Home Office is suspending the Detained Fast Track.

09-07-2015**Campaigning**

The Detention Forum publishes *Rethinking Vulnerability in Detention*.

12-06-2015**Litigation**

The High Court quashes the Detained Fast Track asylum appeals process, meaning that those seeking asylum can no longer be detained simply for the purpose of quickly assessing their claim.

01-04-2015

Politics

Labour and the Liberal Democrats pledge to end indefinite immigration detention in their election manifestos.

26-03-2015

Parliament

The House of Lords debates the report of the parliamentary inquiry into the use of detention.

03-03-2015

Parliament

The Parliamentary Inquiry into immigration detention publishes its report,

31-03-2015

Home Office

Haslar IRC closes its doors, the first in a string of closures to come.

06-03-2015

Experts-by- experience

Following a Channel 4 investigation into Yarl's Wood IRC, protests and hunger strikes break out in several IRCs. Protestors call for an end to the 'indefinite deprivation of liberty and human rights'.

08-02-2015

Home Office

Theresa May announces a review of welfare in immigration detention, led by former Prisons and Probation Ombudsman Stephen Shaw.

2014

07-11-2014

Campaigning

AVID releases Hidden Stories, documenting 'the relationships that are built through volunteer visiting and the difference this can make to both volunteer and visitor'.

10-11-2014

Campaigning

The Detention Forum calls for a moratorium on the expansion of the detention estate, following the announcement of a plan to double the size of Campsfield IRC. The plan was later dropped.

08-10-2014

Campaigning

Detention Action, with input from experts by experience, publishes The State of Detention.

14-09-2014

Campaigning

The first Unlocking Detention is launched, using social media to challenge the 'out of sight, out of mind' approach that has allowed the cruelty of immigration detention to remain hidden.

09-07-2014

Litigation

The High Court finds the Detained Fast Track process to be operating with an unacceptable risk of unfairness' following legal proceedings brought by Detention Action.

07-07-2014

Parliament

A Parliamentary Inquiry into immigration detention is launched by the All Party Parliamentary Groups on Refugees and Migration. Advocates and experts by experience give oral evidence.

2012

The Forum sets up four working groups on time limit, vulnerable people, judicial oversight, and communications. Later that year, Forum members agree the Forum's new theory of change with an initial focus around securing a time limit on immigration detention.

2010

Detention Forum is set-up; an initiative driven by Eiri Ohtani and Maurice Wren, and it is the former who becomes the Forum's first project director.

ENDS