

# The Detention Forum



## **Our campaign for a supportive environment – A compassionate and practical alternative to immigration detention**

### **How we see change happening:**

### **Our theory of change or our future story**

January 2024

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As the Detention Forum, we are committed to working together to end the use of immigration detention in the UK because it is unjust and inhumane. We are further emboldened in this vision, because we know from projects run across the country, included some funded by the Home Office, that there is a compassionate and practical alternative to immigration detention.

Firstly, we have pulled together all of the knowledge that we think is useful on this subject both in theory and in practice in the UK and internationally. We have been working through our communications working group to develop communications messages, specifically targeted at Members of Parliament and campaigning community groups.

We are also interested to develop our public communications supporting the development of spokespeople for our new campaign. And we are interested to work with our partners in local authorities to develop a realistic menu of actions that could be undertaken at local authority and devolved nation level to help build momentum and interest in this issue.

We also want to work to ensure that the voices both of people with lived experience of immigration detention but also those who have had the experience of visiting people in immigration detention is heard in this debate.

We want, through our grassroots working group, to build capacity and confidence amongst campaigning community groups across the country, so that they feel able to include some of our campaign messages as part of their broader campaigning against immigration detention.

We want, through our Parliamentary working group, to reach out to MPs and PPCs from all Parties to develop better relationships and have more champions on this issue to help build momentum.

And we want, through our building new allies working group, to identify new and different messengers from different sectors of our community, who could help us convey our key messages for change.

We want our website to be seen as a key reference point for people interested in this issue, to find out more, and to enthuse them to take action, but also then to direct them to our members and partners.

We also want to make far greater use of visual images to convey what can sometimes be a complex issue in a formal, simple and clear manner.

And we want to develop a stronger partnership with our sister network NACCOM to highlight and reveal the close relationship between detention and destitution.

Having got all of these building blocks in place, we want to build momentum and interest on this issue. We want to encourage more organisations and individuals to be talking about the horror of immigration detention and to be promoting the practical and compassionate alternative. We want Members of Parliament to be hearing these messages from a multiplicity of directions in different voices and different tones, but all calling for a more progressive and compassionate approach to managing immigration detention.

We think that the only way that we can achieve sustainable change on this issue in our democracy is by building capacity and confidence amongst other broader and wider sectors of our community to speak out on this issue.

We see ourselves as a network acting as a catalyst to inspire others to speak out.

We know from experience in the past that it cannot just be down to us to bring about change; we need other voices, and that is the key contribution that we can bring the ending detention in this country.

We want to encourage more politicians from all sides of the House to be making the case for change. We want them to encourage the government to see a community-based alternative as being the business as usual option for the Home Office. Initially we want to see more pilot projects being run as a precursor to the nationwide implementation of a supportive environment as a practical and compassionate alternative to immigration detention.

By building pressure, and by promoting a viable alternative policy, we think that we can create the preconditions to see the end of the use of immigration detention in this country.