

Detention Communications

TOOLKIT

We've written this communications toolkit to help community groups, which are already either interested in or campaigning against immigration detention, so that you feel even more inspired to talk about a positive vision for this country without the need for immigration detention. These messages are intended to be complementary to your existing or planned campaigning against detention. We hope this helps you! Do let us know what you think and what else we could do to support your local campaigning.

Our Campaign

The UK government locks up many people in the UK including

- those who have come here to seek safety, or
- have already completed a 12month prison sentence and have irregular immigration status.

This approach is brutal, costly, reduces engagement with individuals, and will also most often result in people eventually being released back into the community. But we know that there is another way that is both compassionate and practical.

Detention destroys lives. The only people who benefit from this policy are the private contractors who are paid millions of pounds each year to run these facilities.

Detention is a choice our government has made for us. Now is the time to choose a compassionate approach. We must commit to community.

Most people going through the immigration process do so whilst living in the community showing detention is unnecessary. Pilot programmes of humane alternatives to detention, where people live in the community and are given holistic support to understand their options, have been proven to be less costly and lead to much better outcomes

All the evidence suggests that it is far more effective and cheaper to work with individuals to help them explore whether they have a viable way to stay in the UK.

There is a compassionate and practical alternative – a supportive environment. As a society, we need to commit to community. Will you join us in this campaign for change?

Campaign Messages

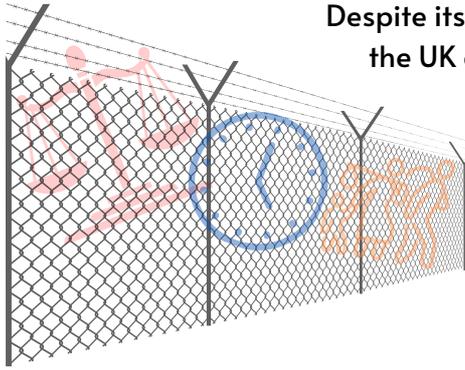
Stop locking up people who are without a regular migration status or are seeking asylum



They are not being given proper support to help them to explore if they can stay in the country



The Problem Our Campaign Seeks to Tackle



Despite its commitments under international law and conventions, the UK government currently locks up many people indefinitely, who are migrants or are seeking asylum. And by indefinitely, we mean locking people up with **no time limit.**

They detain many people who have fled from their country of origin seeking safety from war, conflict or persecution. While people are not always locked up in cells, as in prisons, they are locked into the detention centre and unable to leave. Some people do experience a curfew and will be locked in their rooms at certain times. And some people will be detained in prisons where they will be locked in cells.

They lock up many people who have an irregular immigration status. This includes some people who have lived in this country ever since they were children, who had thought that they would stay here for the rest of their lives, but have committed a crime, which then resulted in a prison sentence of 12 months or more. At the end of their sentence, they then find themselves liable for automatic deportation to a country where they have never lived as an adult.

Our immigration system has a standard default setting to lock up such people indefinitely. Yet recent statistics show that almost 8 out of 10 of people who are detained in this way will then go on to be released back into the community on bail.

This is a brutal, costly & ineffective way to manage immigration. It causes huge harm to people. It also acts as a major obstacle for integration into our society, when so many people will go on to stay in the country. So why does the UK invest so much in an ineffective system? Who is profiting from this? Certainly not local communities or the people affected.

Why does this government insist on locking so many people up indefinitely when it is clearly unjustified and wrong?

Why do we not help them to explore if they can stay in the country?



There are many reasons that people might not have been able to regularise their status such as extortionate legal fees, the expense of visa applications, lack of safe and regular routes by which to claim asylum and the lack of immigration routes available to people.

We know that many people are not being given proper support to help them to explore if they can stay in the country, instead people with a potential right to stay are detained and threatened with deportation. And people can be actively excluded. This approach is not sustainable and has resulted in an increasing population of people who are left in limbo and unable to access their fundamental rights.



“Detention is a symptom of wider **hostile** migration policies and it is these that we need to be addressing. Detaining people causes **huge damage** to both the people affected and to our communities.”



There is a compassionate and effective alternative to locking people up

OUR ARGUMENTS

People seeking asylum can be locked up at any stage of their asylum application and there is no maximum period for their detention – they can be detained indefinitely.

Locking up people causes huge problems for both their physical and mental health and prevents them from engaging effectively with the immigration system.

It is cruel to detain people who have already been detained in their own country because of their political views & have fled here for safety.

There is an automatic policy of detaining and seeking to deport anybody who serves more than a 12 month prison sentence and is not a British citizen, even if they have no connection with the country of their birth and have lived here since being a child.

This practice is tantamount to double punishment when a British citizen would just be released after their sentence

This detention practice also undermines efforts to support people in exploring whether there is a viable way to stay in the country

Despite being locked up, the vast majority of people will then go on to stay in the country but their long-term integration will be held back by having been detained.

It costs £120 per night to keep someone in immigration detention. Home Office evaluation reports of community alternatives to detention have been much cheaper.



A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT COMMITS TO COMMUNITY

INITIATIVES
funded by the Home Office and/or independent charities

TAILORED SUPPORT
EG legal support, access to healthcare



There is a compassionate and effective alternative to locking people up

This alternative ensures that:

Individuals remain out of detention with their liberty but also connected to support in their community

Their physical and mental health improves

Individuals engage more with their own case to resolve status

The cost to society is reduced

If people are able to stay in the country, they have a better chance of being integrated not separated from our society



We know that initiatives funded by the Home Office & also initiatives from independent charities have shown there is a better way to support people in resolving their immigration status.

These schemes provide individuals with tailored support. People have been helped with general issues such as access to healthcare and have been provided with legal support on their immigration case. That has helped them to meet their basic living needs and to understand the immigration process and how they can best engage with it. We know that it's this combination of support and legal work that is what people most need when their immigration status is questioned.

Evidence from similar schemes around the world confirms that this is a far more effective way of supporting people.

We would like to see:

- **this supportive approach become business as usual for our government**
- **each case managed individually in order to help people see their best options**
- **people being supported in the community not being locked up**
- **a supportive environment - to commit to community.**

Such an approach is more humane than locking people up, but also cheaper, more effective and sustainable because it encourages greater engagement and understanding.

We know that people who are detained indefinitely experience increasing physical & mental health problems, hence they struggle to engage with the official system which determines if they can stay in the UK. The harm caused by immigration detention has been well documented in the past. In addition, many people subject to arbitrary detention can also find themselves unable to access welfare support: NRPF*. Our sister network NACCOM already does so much to support such people. No person living in the UK should be unable legally to meet their basic living needs. This issue is not just about detention but about how people can survive in our society.

We know there is a better, more humane approach to how we manage our immigration system. We are committed as a growing network to make this change happen. We want to see a supportive environment & to commit to community. We need to provide tailored personal support to people in the community as the most compassionate & effective approach.

* NRPF - No Recourse to Public Funds



The actions we want to take as part of our campaign:

We believe that it is time for a supportive environment in our country and that we need to commit to community.

The practice of locking people up is inhumane, costly and ineffective. We need to raise awareness about the locking up of thousands of people for reasons of immigration, which is being done in our name but without our support.

The initial starting point should be **not to lock people up** because it is unjust, cruel and inhumane. We know how painful arbitrary and indefinite detention is. We know the horrible and lasting effects it has on people's mental and physical health. It is a cruel system.

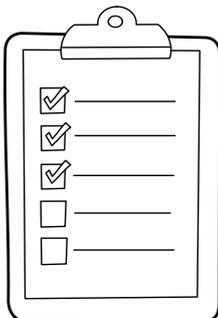
We know that **there is a better and more compassionate way** – it is more effective and costs less money. The [independent review of the first Home Office funded pilot project](#) concluded that it was less expensive per participant per night than holding an individual in detention. We also know from [the second pilot project that 4 in 5 people were offered a viable way to stay in the UK](#). It is a cheaper and more effective method.

We need a more **supportive environment** in this country where people are helped in the community to explore whether there is a viable way for them to stay in the UK. They are provided with support work and legal work in their own community.

Instead of locking people up we need to **commit to community**. People should be provided with individual, tailored support in the community and not locked up.

We need to raise awareness of this issue, talk about it and make the case for change.

We need to mobilise more people to call for this change in policy and pressure their elected representatives to speak out - to commit to community.



**Actions
could
include:**

- Talking about this issue with friends and colleagues
- Writing to your MP
- Meeting your MP either in person at a constituency surgery /online
- Contact your local authority to ask them to support another pilot project in your area
- Making the case for change in your local paper
- Encouraging the organisations that you are a member of to promote this issue
- Publish a blog post on the issue
- Arrange a demonstration
- Include the issue in your newsletter