**A call for a time limit on immigration detention**

Dear [MP]

As a constituent in [Constituency], I am writing to you to raise my concerns about the injustice of indefinite immigration detention.

You are probably aware of the abuse and mistreatment of people held in detention shown in the BBC ‘Panorama’ documentary which aired in 2017, and led to the current Public Inquiry – that reported on **19th September 2023 with a call for an end to indefinite detention and a 28 day time limit**.  Many organisations and individuals have raised objections to the way we practice immigration detention in this country, including senior faith leaders, the Bar Council of England, Amnesty International in 2017, Liberty in 2018, the Joint Committee on Human Rights and the Home Affairs Select Committee in 2019, the UN in 2022 and the British Medical Association in 2023.

I have been following the Refugee Tales project of Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and been shocked to discover that the UK is the only country in Europe that detains people indefinitely for immigration purposes. Currently, around 20,300 people are detained by the Home Office each year at a cost of £107 per person per day (£94 million per year – 2022).  In addition, the government spent £13 million on unlawful detention claims last year. I was surprised to learn that **75% of people were released with no outcome achieved** in terms of immigration control, and after much expense to both the taxpayer and the people detained. Immigration detention costs over **£39,000 per person** per year.

At the end of June 2023, of those released from detention:

* 62% of people had been detained for over a week
* **38% had been detained for more than 28 days**
* 151 people had been detained for over 6 months
* 26 people had been detained for over a year, and 5 people for over 2 years
* 3 people had been detained for over 3 years, and 1 person for over 4 years

I note that the maximum period that a terrorist suspect may be detained is 14 days.

There are many **alternatives to detention**, some of which are both **cheaper and more humane** than our current system. Please see the recent UNHCR report on the King's Arms Project <https://www.unhcr.org/media/evaluation-refugee-and-migrant-advice-service-s-alternative-detention-pilot>

The Brook House Public Inquiry called for an **end to indefinite detention**, and I urge you to examine the findings and amplify the call for change. It is the view of our community of people who are experts-by-experience and our GDWG volunteers who regularly visit people in detention that **detention causes harm** and I urge you to **support the call for a future without detention** being made by Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter further at your earliest convenience. Refugee Tales includes a team of people who are experts-by-experience and who are interested to discuss their insights into the system they have experienced first-hand and I urge you to meet them.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,