

COUNCIL		
Report Title	Motion in the name of Councillor Gallagher to be seconded by Councillor Feis Bryce	
Key Decision		Item No.
Ward		
Contributors	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
Class	Part 1	Date: January 23 2019

No human is illegal - against immigration detention in the UK

This council notes

- That the UK has one of the largest immigration detention systems in Europe, and is the only country in the region without a statutory time limit on length of detention. This means people can be held for months or years at a time, with no certainty about when they may be released or deported.
- At any one time, there may be up to 3,500 people in the eight detention centres that exist across the UK.
- Every year around 30,000 people enter immigration detention centres in the UK. Half of those in detention centres have sought asylum in the UK, fleeing conflict and persecution; others include visitors, workers, family members and students¹.
- That the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees and Migration published a report following their inquiry into the use of immigration detention in the UK and concluded that the UK uses detention “disproportionately and inappropriately” and that detention is “expensive, inefficient and unjust”.²
- That the Home Office has agreed to an independent inquiry into abuse in detention facilities within the UK.

This council believes

- Detention negatively impacts individuals’ physical and mental health wellbeing and there have been reports of widespread abuse in detention centres. The majority of people held in detention are eventually released, if they are able to access the right support.
- That the government must end immigration detention now.

¹ See <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-detention-in-the-uk/>

² See <https://detentioninquiry.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/immigration-detention-inquiry-report.pdf>

- As a sanctuary borough, Lewisham has a duty to speak out against detention practices that breach basic human rights and negatively impact the mental and physical well-being of individuals subjected to it.
- That the 'hostile environment' policies are designed to make the UK an unwelcoming place for migrants, and have been condemned as 'rotten' and 'destroying the lives' of ethnic minority communities in Britain by Tendayi Achiume, a United Nations special rapporteur on racism.

This council resolves

- To endorse the These Walls Must Fall Campaign (<http://detention.org.uk/>)
- To call on the government to implement the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into detention
- To ask our local MPs to support the spirit of the motion, to continue to raise the matter in the House of Commons, and to support changes in current laws and procedures to introduce alternatives to detention
- To seek further support for the motion via the Local Government Association, and by encouraging other Councils in the UK to raise the issue