



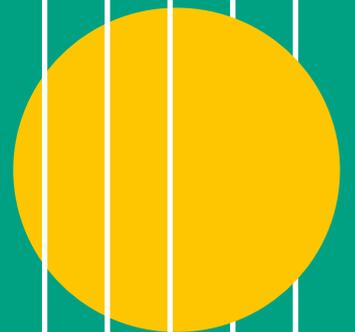
association of **visitors** to
immigration detainees

Annual Report

April

March

2024-2025



AVID Annual Report 2024-25

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Introduction

Co-chairs' Report Basma Doukhi and Hannah Cooper

The period covered by this report has unfolded within an increasingly challenging global and national context. Across many countries, debates on human mobility have become more polarised, often shaping policies that prioritise deterrence over protection and dignity. The use of immigration detention by the UK government continues to expand, with profound and lasting consequences for the people detained as well as for their families and communities.

AVID's network remains a vital source of solidarity, connection, and humanity. Visitors' groups across the UK continue to provide practical and emotional support to people in detention, countering isolation and dehumanisation. Beyond this, the network serves as a space for collective learning, mutual support, and shared advocacy. The resilience, compassion, and dedication of volunteers, members, and partners – often in the face of significant emotional and operational challenges – are a powerful reminder that another approach is possible.

This period has marked an important period of transition for AVID's Board. We said farewell to Carolina Albuerne after more than fourteen years as a trustee, including many years as chair, and we extend our deep gratitude for her leadership. We also moved to a Co-Chair model, reflecting AVID's commitment to collaborative leadership and mirroring its Co-Director structure. We have also welcomed new trustees, bringing diverse perspectives and strengthening our collective governance.



This period has been one of "sowing the seeds" for AVID's future.

As new Co-Chairs, we take on this role with a strong sense of responsibility and humility. Over the past year, the Board has been reflecting on how to further strengthen governance in ways that are accountable, inclusive, and aligned with AVID's values. This includes clarifying roles and responsibilities, fostering a culture of shared leadership, and ensuring that governance structures support meaningful participation. Central to this is a continued commitment to lived experience leadership and a recognition that people with direct experience of detention bring critical knowledge, insight, and moral clarity to the movement for change.

Alongside these governance developments, this period has been one of "sowing the seeds" for AVID's future. Significant effort has gone into strengthening the organisation's foundations, including investment in digital tools and communications, taking steps towards more sustainable (and principled) fundraising, and

ongoing work to deepen relationships across the network. These efforts, while not always immediately visible, are critical to building long-term resilience, enabling more inclusive engagement, and amplifying the voices and experiences of those affected by detention.

Despite the difficult context, we remain inspired by the strength and solidarity of the AVID community. The commitment of visitors, the courage of those speaking out about their experiences of detention, and the dedication of staff and volunteers all remind us why this work matters.

Looking ahead, we see this as a moment to build on these foundations and move towards greater collective impact. We remain committed to strengthening AVID as a values-driven organisation rooted in dignity, solidarity, and justice. One that not only advocates for change but embodies it in its leadership and practice.



Co-Directors Report Gee Manoharan and Miranda Reilly

At a recent meeting with one of our funders, we were asked to reflect on the past year – what has changed, and how we have responded.

In describing our focus, we said: “last year felt like we were sowing seeds; now we are beginning to see things grow.”

This remains a useful way to understand our work. However, the conditions in which we are operating are far from favourable or hospitable – it’s always been this way. It is shaped by policies, systems, and narratives that continue to produce harm.

When the Labour Government came into power in the Summer of 2024, we were sceptical, but – to continue the analogy – we did not know

just quite how much grit we would find in the soil in which we are planting.

It is true, there was some good news early on and the significance of the plans to deport people seeking sanctuary to Rwanda being dropped cannot be underestimated (nor the credit deserved by the organisations who successfully kept the plans at bay for the two years prior). Nonetheless this soon revealed itself to be a deceptive and a thin layer of good soil scarcely covering a pile of rubble. Charter flights originally scheduled for Rwanda were redirected to countries such as Timor-Leste and Vietnam. These were followed by a series of further removals, alongside government narratives celebrating increased “enforced returns”. At the same time the new government [re-committed to plans laid under the Conservative government to re-open](#)



[Campsfield House and Haslar Immigration Removal Centres \(IRCs\)](#). The Prime Minister declined to rule out future third-country agreements, paving the way for developments such as the [France-UK returns arrangement](#) in Summer 2025. These ambitions have also been marked by inconsistency and resistance from the very countries identified as partners. [Albania’s Prime Minister](#) rejected claims that offshore arrangements had been discussed, while [Montenegro’s Prime Minister](#) highlighted their impracticality. Taken together, these examples show a deliberate pattern of shifting responsibility onto other countries – prioritising political messaging over people’s lives and causing real harm in the process. Detention, deportation, and deterrence remain central.

Against this backdrop, our work has focused on strengthening the conditions for long-term change – ensuring that what we build is resilient, connected, and capable of growing even in this difficult terrain.



Our work has focused on strengthening the conditions for long-term change – ensuring that what we build is resilient, connected, and capable of growing even in difficult terrain.

Over the past year, we have focused on three interconnected areas.

First, widening access to knowledge.

Like self-seeding plants that spread organically – we have invested in digital development to make information about immigration detention more accessible and usable. This includes the launch of our new website and the publication of our visitor handbook as an open-source resource. Knowledge, when shared, becomes a tool – not just for understanding, but for action.

Second, shifting power and meaningful participation.

In other areas of our work, we have treated the soil. We have taken steps to address structural barriers to lived experience leadership within our own work. In Summer 2024, we worked with a pro bono law firm to develop [our recruitment and lived experience involvement and remuneration policies](#). This is part of an ongoing process – moving beyond inclusion towards meaningful redistribution of power within our network and organisation.

Third, strengthening the ecosystem.

AVID’s work is rooted in relationships. We support a network of visitors, groups, and people with lived experience who, together, create a web of resistance, care, and accountability around a system designed to isolate and inherently abusive.

Not all efforts result in immediate change. A joint letter we coordinated to the Home Secretary opposing the reopening of Campsfield IRC and Haslar IRC did not receive a substantive response. However, change happened in other ways – the process strengthened connections

across our network, brought new partners into alignment, and extended our reach into [public and media spaces](#).

This is what it means to build power collectively.

Our annual network gathering in February 2025 offered a clear reflection of this. Bringing together members from across the country, it created space not only to reflect and strategise, but to sustain one another in the face of increasing hostility. In a context where cruelty is becoming normalised, spaces of solidarity are not incidental – they are essential.

Our network gathering is also a reminder that when people leave the organisation, what they have planted continues to grow. Fiona, who left the organisation shortly afterwards, played a central role in shaping that space and in advancing amongst other areas – our work on widening access to knowledge on detention through the Explore programme. Her contributions continue to shape how we work and what we are able to build.

We would also like to acknowledge Sui Alla Lau, who left AVID in May 2024. During her time with the organisation, Alla made a meaningful contribution to our communication and influencing work. Her work formed an important part of the foundations we have continued to build on over the past year, and its impact remains visible in how we work today. We are grateful for the care, commitment, and insight she brought to AVID, and we wish her all the very best in what comes next.



We are delighted to have welcomed Aminata back from maternity leave at the beginning of April 2025. In the role of Senior Outreach Coordinator, Aminata supports the smaller voluntary groups in our network and providing outreach work. Saba joined us later that same month in the role of Senior Network Co-ordinator, working with the more established groups in our network and developing the programme of support, training and capacity building to our members. They have both driven forward new ideas – amongst other projects, Aminata delivered a new and adapted training programme for visitors across the network and Saba organised a visitor solidarity event, using art and poster-making as an opportunity to connect before joining the [Stop Trump rally](#).

As one participant shared:



It's good to be reminded that one is not alone in doing this... it's more important than ever to support each other at a time when cruelty and dehumanisation are becoming normalised."



We know that systems like this are not inevitable. They are constructed – and can be dismantled.



Their work reflects the importance of sustaining connection, resilience, and collective care within our network.

We are under no illusion about the scale of the challenge ahead. The current political trajectory points towards further expansion, further normalisation, and further harm. But we also know that systems like this are not inevitable. They are constructed – and can be dismantled.

Our role is to continue building the relationships, knowledge, and collective capacity needed to make that possible.

This means holding space for lived experience leadership, strengthening our network so it can act with greater confidence and coordination

and challenging harmful policies while also articulating alternatives rooted in dignity, justice, and care.

The seeds we are planting are not only about what can grow within the current system – but about what might replace it.

And that work continues.



Immigration Detention in the UK

Key Updates

APRIL–JUNE 2024

ATTEMPTS TO DEPORT PEOPLE TO RWANDA ARE STALLED, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ARE DETAINED

25th April: Following the Supreme Court Judgement in which the government's Rwanda asylum policy was ruled to be unlawful, the government took unprecedented steps and legislated that Rwanda should be treated as a safe country in The Safety of Rwanda Act.

May: Hundreds of people are detained in Yarl's Wood, Colnbrook, Harmondsworth and Brook House Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) with Notices of Intent (NOI) stating that they were being considered for deportation to Rwanda.

Visitor groups witness firsthand the resulting chaos:

- People are transported from as far away as Scotland to London detention centres, experiencing long waiting times and periods of uncertainty.
- Barriers in access to justice as people have just 7 days to respond to their potential removal to Rwanda, compounded by difficulties accessing legal advice and procedural failures in detention which make it difficult for people to access and send their paperwork.
- A devastating impact on the mental health of people detained as fear and uncertainty spread across detention centres.

22nd May: Rishi Sunak calls a general election and announces that people will not be sent to Rwanda until after the election. Despite there being no imminent prospect of removal to Rwanda, people are released on a case-by-case basis, relying on bail applications being made by their legal representative or themselves. Many people are released into homelessness; some of whom lost their asylum support accommodation during the process of being detained.

IN NUMBERS BETWEEN APRIL 2024 – MARCH 2025

20,919 people were detained, a **10% increase** from the previous year.

9 children were detained.

While the number is low compared to previous years, the detention of any child remains a serious concern.

93 people were held under immigration powers in prison at the end of March 2025.

This is much lower than in previous years (when numbers ranged between 300 and 700). This drop is partly linked to people being moved more quickly from prison into immigration detention centres (due to overcrowding and the resultant crisis in prisons), rather than remaining detained in prison.

51 out of every **100** people detained were released on bail.

In other words, over half of those detained were eventually released back into the community, raising serious questions about why detention was used in the first place.

96 people were detained for more than a year, with one person being held in detention for more than four years.

8,590 people were forcibly removed from the UK.

This represents a **22% increase** from the previous year, reflecting a growing focus on enforcement and removals.

JULY–OCTOBER 2024

A NEW GOVERNMENT FAILS TO OFFER CHANGE

4th July 2024: The Labour Party wins the general election.

There are calls from the migration and refugee sector to repeal the most recent draconian pieces of legislation – The Nationality and Borders Act (2022), The Illegal Migration Act (2023) and The Safety of Rwanda Act (2024) – passed under the Conservative Government.

That glimmer of hope is offered by the Labour Government bringing an end to the Rwanda plan and closing the Bibby Stockholm Barge is quickly diminished as the Home Secretary re-affirms the Government's commitment to re-open Haslar and Campsfield IRCs. This is despite an HMIP inspection of Harmondsworth IRC (July 2024) in which inspectors found the worst conditions they had seen in immigration detention.

The Labour Government's "smash the gangs" policy quickly materialises as a continuation of "stop the boats" with immigration enforcement, criminalisation and securitisation at the helm. Lives continue to be lost as a result.

- Between **January–October 2024** recorded the highest number of deaths of people attempting to seek sanctuary via crossing the channel.
- In **October 2024**, Theophile Kaliviotis tragically dies in Brook House IRC.

July–August 2024: A surge of far-right riots spread across the UK provoked by misinformation, islamophobia and racism – spreading fear and leaving migrant communities in the UK feeling unsafe.

SEPTEMBER 2024–MARCH 2025

DETENTION EXPANSION, CHARTER FLIGHTS AND HARM

More people are detained as the detention estate reaches close to full capacity, regular charter flights take place and there is an increase in deportations.

At the same time, visitor groups continue to report:

- Issues with quality of legal advice and accessibility of legal advice in detention centres.
- A lack of accommodation options and more people being released into homelessness, including people who are recognised as vulnerable and at risk.
- An increase in safeguarding concerns as people are made increasingly vulnerable in detention and hunger strikes take place. Safeguards continue to fail people in

detention, and we hear reports of an increase in the use of segregation.

30th January 2025: The Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill is introduced by the Labour Government.

Cementing the Labour Government's immigration agenda and failure to take heed of calls for a change of direction, the Bill builds on the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 by introducing new crimes in relation to arrival to the UK via unsafe routes, putting people seeking asylum at further risk of criminalisation, whilst retaining changes which weaken protections against unlawful detention (introduced by the Illegal Migration Act 2023) and introducing more invasive bail conditions.

AVID Members

Visitor Groups	Places of support to people detained
Asylum Welcome	HMP Huntercombe
Beyond Detention	Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) and post detention support for people released from immigration detention
Detention Action	Colnbrook IRC, Harmondsworth IRC and various prisons
Durham Visitors Groups (DVG)	Derwentside IRC
Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (GDWG)	Brook House IRC and Tinsley House IRC
Jesuit Refugee Service UK (JRS)	Colnbrook IRC, Harmondsworth IRC
Larne House Visitors Group (LHVG)	Larne House Residential Short-Term Holding Facility (RSTHF)
Lewes Refugee Support Group (LSRG)	HMP Lewes
Manchester Immigration Detainee Support Team (MIDST)	Manchester airport (R302) RSTHF, HMP Manchester, and HMP Risley
Midlands Migrant Support	Swinderby RSHTF and HMP Morton Hall
Scottish Detainee Visitors Group	Dungavel IRC
Solidarity Detainee Support (SDS)	Heathrow IRCs, Gatwick IRCs, Yarl's Wood IRC, and various prisons
Waging Peace	Various IRCs and post detention support for Sudanese people released from immigration detention



Strategic Framework

AVID Strategic Framework 2023-2028

Our Mission is to join with and support communities to reduce the suffering of those in immigration detention and work towards a future without detention. We achieve this by facilitating a network which provides solidarity, guidance and advocacy to visitor groups across the UK, whilst also building connections with the wider movement. Together we strive for a more just and compassionate society that upholds the dignity and human rights of all people.

Our goals are to:

- 1 Provide capacity building support for visitors and visitor groups to increase solidarity with people in detention in the UK.** In the face of detention expansion and deteriorating safeguards, we need to build the capacity of visitor groups to develop and maintain visiting support to people in detention and ensure that they have the structure, agility and knowledge to respond and adapt to changing demands and pressures.
- 2 Drive collaboration of the AVID network to amplify our individual and shared impact.** Our long-standing relationships with and between members has led to shared values and beliefs which we have consolidated in the form of a Members Charter. We are stronger together and AVID is well placed to enable connections and foster collaborative efforts.
- 3 Connect with the wider movement to stop detention expansion and advocate for community-based solutions.** Ultimately, our aim is that we are no longer needed because immigration detention does not exist. We cannot achieve this alone and will bring the unique insights of visitor groups and strength of our network to connect with others and work towards an end of detention.
- 4 Shift power to people who have lived experience of immigration detention to shape the AVID network and lead our policy efforts.** The leadership of people who have experienced detention first-hand is vital to ensure that change happens in a way responsive to the problem, mission-driven and sustainable. We will develop new mechanisms so that people with lived experience of detention can influence policy, strengthen opportunities for joint working and champion leadership in our own organisation and network.
- 5 Ensure robust internal infrastructure to effectively and responsibly achieve our ambitions.** A small and ambitious team working in an extremely demanding context, it can be difficult to maintain boundaries and not respond to the ever-increasing demand. Robust internal infrastructure is necessary to ensure we are accountable to our wider mission, stakeholders and one another.

Activities Report

Goal 1.

Provide capacity building support for visitors and visitor groups to increase solidarity with people in detention in the UK.

A small network, relationships are at the heart of the way we work. The support which we provide to our members takes place alongside ongoing 1-1 support and a dedicated point of contact within the AVID team.

Our 13 members are diverse in size and structure, ranging from registered charities with staff teams to purely voluntary groups. Collectively, they represent around 300 volunteers and visit more than 6,000 people in detention each year (just under one-third of the total number of people who are detained). For some of our members, visiting is their sole focus and for others this takes place alongside a wide range of activities including casework, post-detention support and advocacy.

The 1-1 support which we provide supports this diversity and the relationships that we hold with our members take place across teams as we connect with volunteers, visitor group-co-ordinators and leadership teams.



During this period, key areas where we provided support and guidance were:

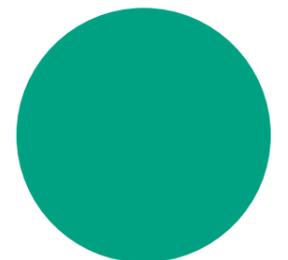
- Immigration detention casework
- Managing referrals
- Trustee recruitment
- Fundraising
- Access to sites of detention
- Conditions in detention
- Escalation of issues and concerns in detention

Over the past year, we delivered training to **over 90 volunteers and staff** across our network – combining targeted support for smaller groups with a network-wide programme of learning.

This included:

- **20+ volunteers and staff** from smaller, volunteer-led groups receiving tailored, in-depth training
- **70+ participants** engaged through our network-wide training programme

Together, this represents a significant investment in strengthening the people who provide **direct, regular support to individuals in immigration detention across the UK.**





Increased capacity of frontline volunteer groups

Between April and July 2024, we delivered tailored training to groups supporting people detained across multiple sites, including Dungavel IRC, Derwentside IRC, HMP Risley, Manchester RSTHF, Morton Hall, and Swinderby RSTF.

This included:

- **Scottish Detainee Visitors** – training on the implications of the Brook House Inquiry, strengthening understanding of safeguarding, accountability, and systemic risk.
- **Manchester Immigration Detainee Support Team** (10 volunteers trained) – increased confidence in visiting skills, detention policy and practice, and maintaining appropriate boundaries and wellbeing.

- **Durham Visitors Group** (5 volunteers trained) – enhanced ability to support women in detention through improved knowledge of policy, practice, and trauma-informed approaches.
- **Midlands Migrant Support** (3 volunteers and 1 staff member trained) – strengthened understanding of detention systems and processes across multiple sites.

Impact:

These sessions provided intensive, context-specific support, directly strengthening the ability of smaller groups to deliver consistent, informed, and safe support to people in detention. By focusing on groups with limited capacity, this work has helped address gaps in access to training and support across the network.

Improved quality and consistency of support provided to people in detention

Alongside targeted delivery, we convened a **network-wide training programme**, reaching over 70 participants and creating shared standards of practice across the network.

Key areas of learning included:

- Trauma-informed approaches and compassion fatigue delivered by Trauma Treatment International.
 - Strengthened volunteers' ability to provide emotionally informed support while maintaining their own wellbeing.
- Access to legal advice and representation in detention delivered by Adam Spray, Wilsons Solicitors.
 - Improved participants' ability to support individuals to prepare for legal appointments and navigate complex systems.
- Safeguarding and escalating concerns delivered by Safer Foundations.
 - Increased confidence in identifying risk and taking appropriate action.
- Detention legislation, policy and guidance delivered by Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA).
 - Built practical understanding of the legal framework underpinning detention.

Impact:

This programme has contributed to greater consistency, confidence, and quality in visiting practice, ensuring that people in detention receive more informed and effective support regardless of location.



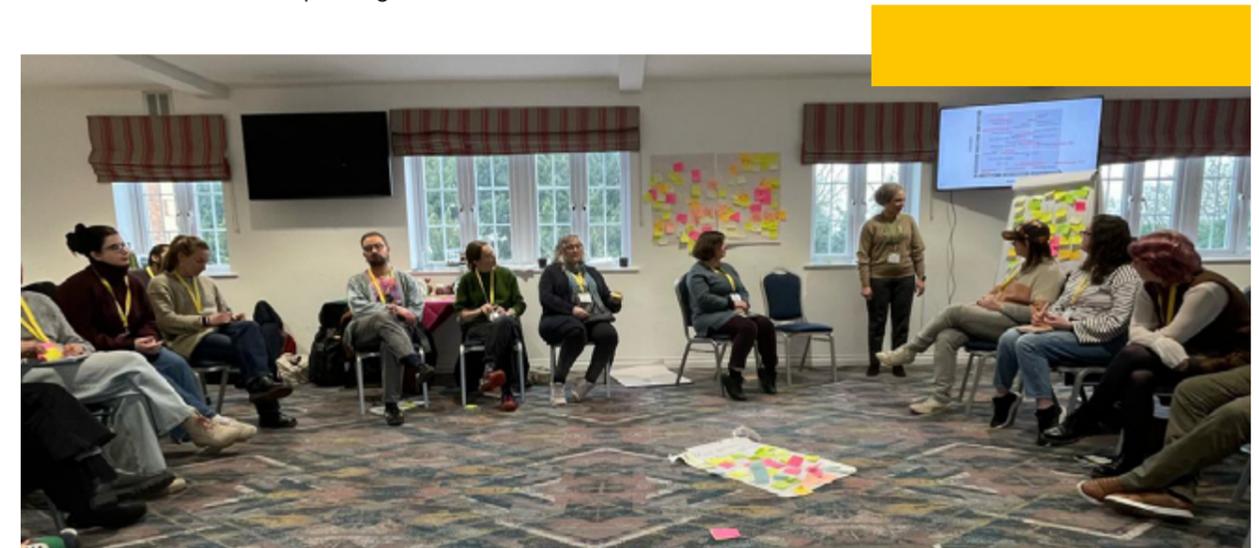
It was helpful to have more clarity regarding how to support people in preparation for any legal meeting they have."

– Legal Advice and Representation in Detention Participant



Clear breakdown of the law and how it all relates to each other, as well as practical implementation of the law."

– Detention Legislation, Policy and Guidance Participant



During this period, we undertook a period of digital development which involved the launch of a new website and making our handbook for visitors publicly accessible in an online version.

This was informed by research undertaken in 2021 with Refugee Action’s Explore Programme to understand how we can make our resources more accessible. Our findings from this programme were:

- The fast pace of change and need to adapt resources meant file-sharing was more suited to a share drive and email exchange.
- The need to make volunteer visitor facing resources more directly accessible by not relying on group co-ordinators to disseminate resources.

- Having a physical version of the handbook only was difficult to maintain with up-to-date information. At the same time, the broad base of information which the handbook provides makes it well suited to act as a central resource for volunteer visitors which can connect to other more specific resources.
- The value that AVID brings by providing “bigger picture” information on detention and wider trends.

Our new website is also shaped by our current strategy and the launch of our members charter, showcasing our collective aims as well as the reach of our network beyond visiting.

You can now visit our website and find:

Are you a visitor? or Are you in detention?:

We have designed our website around our two primary audiences: visitors (including friends and family) and people in immigration detention.

Knowledge Hub: this space is designed to make it easier to find information and resources. You can filter for information according to your situation and the type of information you are looking for.

Projects from AVID and AVID Members: the aim of this space is to showcase the variety of activities and campaigns from our members, as well as how supporters can get involved.

AVID Members Charter: we are showcasing publicly our shared values as a network for the first time on our website.

Updated Map: This is an updated map of detention which allows you to filter by site of detention and see which groups visit in each site.

AVID Training and Speakers Videos: Here AVID members and their volunteers can access recordings from AVID trainings and talks for volunteer visitors and coordinators all in one place.

The link to our Online Visitor Handbook: The go-to guide for visitors covering a wide range of topics on visiting skills; who can be detained; immigration detention legislation, policy and guidance; detention in the prison estate; legal advice; bail, removal and deportation; and safeguards in detention.

Goal 2.

Drive collaboration of the AVID network to amplify our individual and shared impact.

Our monthly members calls continued to provide a space for structured peer-support, to share best practice and to identify trends in detention to support broader advocacy efforts.

To provide a space for deeper discussion on key issue areas we co-ordinated:

- **Three Prison group focused calls** for visitor groups who visit people held under immigration powers in prison.
- **Two Deep Dive workshops** on: “Gathering and responding to feedback from people in detention” and “Compensation and remuneration for people with lived experience of detention”.
- **Two working groups** in relation to two of our members charter values: anti-racism and anti-oppression and care and accountability.
- **Four crisis calls** in response to the detention of people for deportation to Rwanda.

These spaces have resulted in specific actions and increased collaboration across our network.

- Through our prison groups calls, we co-ordinated a joint letter in partnership with Human for Rights Network, Border Criminologies and Captain Support UK to the new UK Minister of State for Prisons – Lord Timpson – calling for an end to the prosecution of people seeking safety and stronger protections for children, receiving a formal response outlining forthcoming legislative changes under the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill (introduced January 2025).
- The working group on anti-racism and anti-oppression initiated a reading group for detention visitors on Home Office independent research report on [The Historical Roots of Windrush Scandal](#). This was the first time we had run something of this kind and enabled visitors from across the UK to connect, reflect and contextualise detention within the context of UK’s immigration and past colonial history.





AVID members supported more than 100 people under the scheme as well as people in the community who were afraid they might be targeted

In Focus – Rwanda Response Calls

Between May-June 2024, we hosted a series of network wide meetings to prepare for frontline support to people in detention impacted by the Rwanda scheme. This was a space to discuss strategies for a quick response, support signposting, share intelligence, identify and escalate practical issues and optimise our capacity across the network.

During this time, AVID members supported more than 100 people under the scheme as well as people in the community who were afraid they might be targeted. As a result of these joint efforts we:

- **Identified practical issues in detention centres.** For example, at one detention centre, people detained were held on the induction wing for prolonged periods of time limiting their access to welfare and the IT room, and delaying vital paperwork being sent to lawyers.
- **Identified barriers to support** for people in detention including not understanding the paperwork they received and related timeframes, finding a solicitor within the short 7-window to respond to a Notice of Intent (NOI) and the quality of legal advice.

- **Shared how groups were supporting people in response to the increased risk** on mental health, hunger strikes and self-harm (both for people impacted by the scheme and others in the centre who were impacted by the spread of fear and atmosphere in detention).
- **Shared best practice** for supporting support people on release from detention to combat release into homelessness.

We responded by:

- Identifying and sharing information for solicitors, whilst informing lawyers of trends and challenges in detention.
- Creating a resource for visitors on how to support people in detention under the Rwanda scheme and shared resources from other frontline partners.
- Monitoring specific areas including access to legal advice, healthcare in detention and access to interpretation.
- Co-ordinating a joint letter to Director General for Immigration Enforcement calling for the immediate release of all people detained for Rwanda when the plans stalled after the general election announcement.



In February 2025, we hosted our annual network gathering.

Alongside training and capacity building, we have prioritised creating spaces for connection, solidarity, and collective reflection across our network. In a context where immigration detention is becoming increasingly normalised—and where volunteer visitors, staff and people with lived experience are often working in isolation—these spaces are critical. They enable individuals and groups to come together, share experiences, and sustain one another in challenging conditions.

Over a period of two days, we were joined by 29 people, representing nine AVID members and three partner organisations.

Over the course of the two days, we offered a varied programme involving:

- Networking and building understanding of our objectives.
- Training and troubleshooting on immigration bail, safeguards in detention and homelessness post-detention with Medical Justice, Bail for Immigration Detainees and The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM).
- Collective strategising on our policy and advocacy aims.
- Collective care and re-connecting with our why.

As is often the case with such events, the most important outcome from the conference was the nourishment that came from being together in person. We came away feeling more connected, with new ideas for how to work together and with fresh energy to tackle the day-to-day of working in detention. This is some feedback we received:



Connecting with like-minded people is always a joy. I have personal experience of immigration detention.. so seeing this network of people in the same room, fills me with hope."



A great chance to step away from the busyness of day-to-day work to refresh and connect with others to better support people in detention."



It was brilliant. The sessions were engaging, thought provoking and productive."

Goal 3.

Connect with the wider movement to stop detention expansion and advocate for community-based solutions.

We have continued to resist Detention Expansion.

In September 2024, alongside Keep Campsfield Closed and Border Criminologies, we co-ordinated a joint letter with 82 signatories against plans to re-open Haslar and Campsfield IRCs to the (then) Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

This was in response to the arrival of the new government and their continued plans to re-open the above mentioned – previously closed – immigration detention centres. It took place alongside wider work in this area to support local groups campaigning against detention expansion.

Whilst this did not receive a sympathetic response from the Home Secretary, it did enable us to connect with new partners and supporters as well as engage with the media.



As someone who has survived the nightmare of immigration detention, I know first-hand the toll that it takes on the human soul. The government's response? To expand this inhumane system by planning to reopen the Haslar and Campsfield House centres in Hampshire and Oxfordshire respectively, ignoring the mountain of evidence that detention inflicts profound harm. This isn't just a misstep; it's a blatant betrayal of human dignity."

– Gee Manoharan, Co-Director, AVID
([The Guardian, Letters](#))

Our asks to the Home Secretary:

- 1 Reduce the Immigration Detention estate:** No human should be incarcerated for administrative convenience. End the use of detention as a tool of immigration enforcement starting by using detention as a last resort and ending the detention of vulnerable people, in line with Objective 13 of the Global Compact for Migration.
- 2 Review and implement the Brook House Inquiry Recommendations:** Ensure that the systemic failures identified in the inquiry are addressed and that similar abuses do not occur in other IRCs.
- 3 Uphold the Values of Fairness and Humanity:** Align immigration policies with principles of fairness, humanity, openness, diversity and inclusion, as recommended by the Windrush review.
- 4 Invest in community-based alternatives:** Redirect resources away from detention and into community-based support that prioritise dignity, fair treatment, and human rights.
- 5 Engage with Individuals with Lived Experience of Detention:** Any future policy decisions must be led by those with lived experience of detention and migration, ensuring that their voices are at the forefront of creating a truly just system.

You can read the joint letter in full here



Labour's plan to reopen immigrant detention centres will be disastrous

Sun 1 Sep 2024 16.38 BST

Share

Gee Manoharan says the government should pivot towards community-based alternatives that uphold British values of humanity and justice



We have brought attention to under-scrutinised areas impacting people in detention and exposed by AVID members.

In Summer 2024, we held the first meeting for the "Immigration Detention Network" with the Independent Monitoring Boards (IMB), The Independent Visitors Custody Association (ICVA – chair), and AVID and Manchester Immigration Detainee Support Team (MIDST) to enable greater monitoring, information sharing, escalation of issues and ultimately the prevention of people being detained in police cells.

The establishment of the "Immigration Detention Network" was the culmination of an extensive piece of work originating from MIDST's support to people in Manchester RSTHF where they heard repeated and concerning reports from

people detained in police cells about their treatment. AVID worked with MIDST to collate testimonies and freedom of information reports to build evidence on this under-researched area. This was shared with IMB and ICVA and the resulting "Immigration Detention Network" agreed to a 6-month period where they would jointly monitor the treatment of people detained in police cells.

We have continued to raise awareness of the realities of immigration detention, whilst connecting with partners and the wider movement to challenge detention.

We have joined partners in the sector to speak at public facing events bringing our knowledge on immigration detention to Right to Remain's [online rally on immigration detention](#); SOAS university's [Influencing the Corridors of Power \(ICOP\) panel event](#); and Westminster University's [internship programme](#) for social science students.

We launched a new animation titled "Removed" – which we co-produced with the Unchained Collective. Removed tells the story of one woman – Hope – from the moment she is taken from her home, in the middle of the night, to an immigration removal centre where solidarity and human connection manage to break through the walls of detention. Nevertheless, the cycle of violence continues to all those currently detained and threatened by the system.



Scan the QR code to watch Removed:



In March 2025, we hosted the premiere of Removed in partnership with Westminster University and the Unchained Collective.

This powerful event involved an online screening followed by a participatory "long table" discussion. With 95 people signed up to join us, we were nervous about trying this new format although we needn't have been. In the long-table format – unlike a panel discussion – there is no audience and everyone is invited to engage in an open-ended, non-hierarchical conversation. Gee, Co-Director of AVID, took the role of the "mad hatter" and host, inviting people to come and leave the table as they pleased with different prompt questions to guide the conversation. This was a great success and lent itself to the involvement of people whose voices are not otherwise always heard, and particularly people with lived experience of detention.



Finally, we continued to work with wider partners in the sector including being an active member of the Detention Forum, a network of organisations committed to ending immigration detention, as part of their co-ordination group.

We have connected visitor groups to key stakeholders bringing evidence to quarterly

After watching Removed, this is what some of the attendees told us:

“ It is alone that pain and cruelty seems to defeat us. But together, in solidarity, we are larger.

“ We have desensitised ourselves to the inhumane violence that happens around us. We have to speak up and stand together wherever and whenever you see injustice. Letting things slide because the conversation is tough is only going to give the oppressor more power. We need to have these conversations.”



Home Office Stakeholder Forum meetings on detention and engaging with consultations on changes to detention policy, including a review of the Adults at Risk policy. We also worked closely with detention monitoring bodies – Independent Monitoring Boards and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) – to contribute evidence to their reports.

Goal 4.

Shift power to people who have lived experience of immigration detention to shape the AVID network and lead our policy efforts.

We provided community spaces for people with lived experience of detention and connected people with lived experience with advocacy opportunities.

- In April 2024, and in partnership with Liverpool University and Cuttothechase productions, we hosted a showcase in London to share art, poetry and songs created over a series of workshops by 10 participants and shaped by their firsthand experience of detention.
- We joined Beyond Detention's Art Group to develop an awareness raising campaign to support our joint letter to the Home Secretary against detention expansion. Beyond Detention's Art Group is a group formed of people who have previously been detained who meet regularly online, from across the country, to connect through art. We approached them to ask for ideas and worked with them to develop the idea for "Freedom Birds" to engage the public using art.
- We partnered with the Migration Museum and participated in their exhibition – "All Our Stories" – which launched in September 2024 and brought together a huge range of artwork to tell the story of how we – as individuals, communities and nations – have been shaped by migration over the years, recognising that migration is integral to all of our identities.
- In November 2024, we joined His Majesties Inspectorate for Prisons (HMIP) annual conference, working with 3 advocates with lived experience of detention who presented to inspectors from across the UK about their experiences of immigration detention, prison and what they would like to see from inspectorates.



Alongside these activities, we have supported members of the AVID network to strengthen lived experience leadership.

Back in 2021, in another project supported by Refugee Action, we conducted research into the barriers to meaningful engagement in the AVID network for people with lived experience of detention. Amongst several other barriers, two key issues which were identified were (a) people not being properly remunerated for their time and (b) rigid recruitment practices which failed to recognise diversity of experience gained in different areas.

Two related questions which were preventing proactive change in these areas were (1) how can we ensure that people's time is valued taking into account different immigration statuses? and (2) how can we undertake targeted recruitment practices and what is the relevant HR law in this area?

To answer these questions, in Summer 2024 we partnered with a pro-bono law firm, supported by PILnet, who supported us to develop our recruitment and lived-experience involvement/remuneration policies. We developed an accompanying memo for AVID members addressing questions on targeted recruitment, immigration and employment law. This was discussed in more depth at our Deep Dive workshop on remuneration and compensation.

You can read more about this partnership on our blog:



Goal 5.

Ensure robust internal infrastructure to effectively and responsibly achieve our ambitions.

Our focus during this period has been on:

- **Ensuring our financial future** through increased efforts to secure multi-year grants from trusts and foundations, whilst building new partnerships.
- **Strengthening our board and building strong working relationships, underpinned by trauma-informed principles.** With new leadership from our Co-Chairs, Hannah and Basma, as well as several new board members, it has been important for us to put time into building relationships and understanding how we work together as a board. We partnered with Trauma Treatment International who ran a supervision session and training on trauma-informed organisations. Through this process, we clarified our board's shared principles and committed to making these concrete in the form of a "trustee charter".
- **Digital development.** Alongside the work which we undertook to develop our external facing website and handbook, we developed our internal information management systems including a new database to improve monitoring and evaluation and a digital security review.
- **Building a team culture of care and belonging.** We have continued team supervision to continually work towards a culture of belonging, with plans to develop a "belonging statement" to consolidate our commitments to ourselves and one another, picking up threads discussed in our team supervision.



- **Strengthening joint leadership and strategic focus.** Through Cranfield Trust, we were paired with a mentor who has been supporting us on the development of our business plan. This has been an important process to strengthen joint leadership between our Co-Directors and to clarify our priorities – recognising our limited resources and ambitious strategic framework for 2023-2028.

Shannon Smith

Following the transition agreed at our 2022 AGM, our accounts continue to reflect the move from a calendar year to the financial year. This report therefore covers the period April 2024 to March 2025 and represents our second cycle under the revised reporting structure.

We are pleased to report that the organisation is in a significantly stronger financial position this year. We carried £95,324 forward of which £45,000 are dedicated reserves (equivalent to three months running costs). We have secured a robust portfolio of funding that provides stability and confidence as we enter 2025/26. We are grateful to our funders. Several of these grants are multi-year, which helps to strengthen our long-term resilience.

While we greatly value the continued support of trusts and foundations, we are mindful that the wider funding landscape is becoming increasingly uncertain. To mitigate this, we have set clearer targets to grow income from individual memberships, donations and corporate supporters, helping us diversify our funding base over time. We have also allocated funding for a fundraising consultant in 2026/27 to support our diversification strategy and strengthen future income generation.

The Trustees are grateful to the AVID team for their continued work to maintain and strengthen our financial position, and for delivering the impact that underpins our fundraising success. We would also like to thank everyone who contributes through membership fees, donations, gifts or grants. Your support remains essential to ensuring that people in immigration detention are met with compassion and solidarity, and that visitor groups across the UK are connected, resourced and heard.



Summary of Accounts

Statement of Financial Activities for the Period from 6 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 31 March 2025 £	Total 1 Jan 2023 to 5 April 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	105,042	-	105,042	174,852
Charitable activities	3	3,952	190,758	194,710	18,246
Total income		108,994	190,758	299,752	193,098
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	(85,681)	(70,580)	(156,261)	(220,054)
Total Expenditure		(85,681)	(70,580)	(156,261)	(220,054)
Net income/(expenditure)		23,313	120,178	143,491	(26,956)
Gross transfers between funds		(421)	421	-	-
Net movement in funds		22,892	120,599	143,491	(26,956)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		72,432	6,739	79,171	106,127
Total funds carried forward	12	95,324	127,338	222,662	79,171

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Summary of Accounts

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Period from 6 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

2. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds general £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and legacies;			
Donations from companies, trusts and similar	99,000	99,000	161,000
Donations from individuals	6,042	6,042	11,052
Other income from donations and legacies	-	-	2,800

3. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds general £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Workshops	1,914	-	1,914	1,464
Membership	1,755	-	1,755	1,691
Bank interest	283	-	283	241
Grants & Donations	-	190,758	190,758	14,550
Conference	-	-	-	300
	3,952	190,758	194,710	18,246

4. Grants and donations

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total £
Garfield Weston Foundation	25,000	-	25,000
Oakdale Trust	2,000	-	2,000
The 29th May Charitable Trust	5,000	-	5,000
City Bridge Foundation	-	40,318	40,318
Anonymous foundation	-	130,440	130,440
Rayne Foundation	-	20,000	20,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	61,000	-	61,000
Hillcote Trust	5,000	-	5,000
Sundry donations	6,042	-	6,042
Garden Court Chambers	1,000	-	1,000
	105,042	190,758	295,800

5. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds general £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Staff cost	2,458	2,369	4,827	5,620
Premises & running costs	3,241	2,896	6,137	28,402
Governance costs	3,912	120	4,032	6,152
Direct charitable expenditure	3,360	15,125	18,485	23,655
Wages, NI & pension	72,710	50,070	122,780	156,225
	85,681	70,580	156,261	220,054

With thanks to

Staff

Gee Manoharan, Co-Director for Policy and Influencing
Miranda Reilly, Co-Director for Membership and Operations
Aminata Kalokoh, Senior Outreach Co-ordinator
Saba Razaghi, Senior Network Co-ordinator

Trustees

Basma Doukhi, Co-Chair
Hannah Cooper, Co-Chair
Shannon Smith, Treasurer
Niusha Bonakdarian
Wiki Mark

Volunteers

Alma Gamper Saez, Political Education Intern

Funders

City Bridge Foundation
Garden Court Chambers
Garfield Weston Foundation
The Hillcote Trust
Oakdale Trust
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
The Rayne Foundation
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

And with thanks to all of our donors.



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