

scottishdetaineevisitors

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

January 2020 – December 2020



Scottish Detainee Visitors

Scottish Charity Number: SC033781

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Charity Trustees

1. Mary Munro (chair)
2. Martha Harding (vice-chair)
3. Robert Whittet (treasurer to November 2020)
4. Neil Cowan (treasurer from November 2020)
5. Sophie Locke (Secretary from November 2020)
6. Anne Meikle (to November 2020)
7. Anissa Thabet (from November 2020)

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Chair's report

It is very difficult to write this without resorting to obvious comments about how extraordinarily challenging 2020 has been. Read our director Kate Alexander's review below on how the pandemic has impacted on our work and the people we try to support.

On behalf of the Board, members and volunteers working with SDV, I would like to use this space to give a heartfelt thank-you to Kate for her positivity, good humour and effectiveness throughout the year. Thank-you also to Firdaus, our administrator, who has stuck with us despite long months on furlough.

In turn I would also like to thank our small but highly committed Board. For pressing reasons, our Treasurer Robert Whittet, and Anne Meikle stood down in November and Neil Cowan will be standing down at the AGM.

What have we learned during this time? I think that the main lessons have been that:

- we have succeeded in supporting people in detention in other ways than simply our customary twice weekly group visits to Dungavel
- that there are new possibilities in working in both in person and by phone support, including the use of interpreters and involving volunteers who are not within group travel distance of Dungavel
- that the record low numbers in detention both at Dungavel and across the UK during this time challenge the assumption that immigration detention is essential or inevitable.

As the restrictions and abnormalities of the pandemic begin to lift, I feel that Scottish Detainee Visitors is well placed to meet whatever comes next.

Mary Munro, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Structure, governance and management of SDV

Trustees are appointed in compliance with the constitution. We advertise opportunities to join the board on our website, and use social media as well as personal contacts.

In the interests of good governance, in 2020 we completed the process of reviewing and updating our organisational policies, supporting our staff, trustees and volunteers, and the principles of our constitution.

Throughout 2020, SDV employed two part time staff. Until 23 March 2020 they were based in our shared office space at Scottish Refugee Council. After this point, our Director Kate Alexander was based at home, and our Administrator, Firdaus Ahmed, was, for most of the time, on furlough.

Objectives and activities

Our constitution defines our objectives as follows:

- To relieve the conditions of stress and isolation of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland who are or have been in immigration detention (4.1);
- To improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland who are or have been in immigration detention (4.2);
- To raise awareness around the issues of detention and advocate for change in order to further our other charitable objectives (4.3)

Scottish Detainee Visitors began as a project managed by Scottish Refugee Council in 2001, in response to Dungavel opening as a detention centre, but in 2002 SDV was constituted as a separate charity and then, in 2015 a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO SC033781).

The core of our work has always been regular visiting of people detained in Dungavel, but now also includes work to support people who have been released from detention and policy and advocacy work aimed at bringing about detention reform.

Our activities in 2020

Supporting People in Dungavel

2020 was a year like no other. From March to August visits were suspended due to Covid 19, but there were still people in Dungavel who needed support. Like many organisations, we had to adapt to provide our services remotely and over the phone. This presented particular challenges for SDV as our visiting model is based on group visits, providing peer support to volunteers – unlike other visiting groups, we have never provided one to one support.

In response to the pandemic the Home Office released hundreds of people from detention. The result was that at the end of March 2020, there were 895 people in detention in the UK (555 in detention centres and 340 held under immigration powers in prison). That is less than half the total at the same time in 2019. There were 26 people detained in Dungavel at the end of March 2020, compared to 72 the previous year, and 42 at the end of December 2019. At the time, this was the lowest number of people ever recorded at Dungavel but, although the numbers fluctuated a little over the year, they dropped further to 24 by the end of the 2020.

By the end of March 2020, 10 people from our list of people with whom we were in contact remained in Dungavel and we were able to call each of them every week to offer support. The calls were initially provided by staff, but over the next few months we developed the systems we needed to provide volunteer based support. By the end of the year, this role had completely passed to volunteers, as we had secured funding to provide them with phones for their SDV role.

In August, visits opened again and we were able to resume our staff-led drop ins. Sadly, however, an outbreak of Covid among staff at Dungavel stopped them after just two sessions. Their resumption in September was also short lived as the second national lockdown stopped all visits across the detention estate. We were not able to return to the centre for the rest of the year

People in detention are always among the most isolated people in the country. Throughout the pandemic that isolation intensified. Visits were impossible for most of the year, and while fewer people in detention is always welcome, for those that remained, the experience was even more lonely. Our regular calls were much appreciated by people in Dungavel, as was the practical support and information we were able to provide. These extracts from our reports of our support calls give a flavour of the issues we encountered over the year.

S was really angry. His lawyer had managed to stop his flight. But the Home Office issued another ticket for the following day. He's resigned to going but wanted a little more time to prepare his kids

C has lots of issues with his paperwork and sorting things out is complicated by lockdown. He seems to enjoy our chats but the frustration with his situation breaks through sometimes

G told me that there still aren't many people in Dungavel. It's difficult to tell how many because new arrivals are held in isolation. People feel quite forgotten because there are no visits

P is new to us. He's been in Dungavel for a few weeks. He's bored and isn't sleeping well. There are still very few people in the centre and even fewer who speak P's language. I think he appreciated the chat.

W is still quite down. He's been detained for more than six months now and is finding it hard. We talked about things he could do to make himself feel better. But really it's detention that's making him feel bad.

H was a little down. We talked about how hard it is to keep your spirits up after a long time in detention. He says it's made even harder by the fact that there are so few people around. He's pretty lonely.

Life After Detention

Covid had a real impact on our Life After Detention Group who were unable to meet in person for most of the year. When lockdown happened, we were really grateful to our sessional worker Stevie Ritchie, who kept in touch with people, provided support and referred people to other agencies. Over the course of the

year, he encouraged the group to begin to meet online, which has been welcome, although they can't wait to be able to meet again in person.

The pandemic, and the release of so many people from detention raised the prospect of there being a larger role for SDV to play in providing services for people post detention. So in August 2020 we commissioned a short scoping exercise to highlight what our options might be. This was a very valuable piece of work and will help determine the shape of our work with the Life After Detention group into 2021.

Support from the detention visiting community

SDV has always benefitted from the support and advocacy of AVID (the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees) but throughout 2020 their role has been particularly important. AVID has, from early on in the crisis, facilitated regular Zoom meetings between visitor groups to share information about the effects of the pandemic on the people we support, on numbers in detention, and on the policies and procedures of the Home Office and their contractors. This was especially important at the beginning of the pandemic, when information was scarce and many of us were struggling to communicate with staff at the centres we work in.

The support of colleagues from other organisations, and the ability to learn from each other's experiences as we have all adapted to extraordinary circumstances, has been invaluable. We are so grateful to AVID for their role in encouraging it.

Policy and advocacy work

SDV's policy and advocacy work aims to ensure that people in Scotland and decision makers in Scotland and the rest of the UK have a better understanding of the inhumanity and impact of detention, and are aware that there are alternatives to it. Our work in 2020 has been focused, in partnership with colleagues in Detention Forum, on responses to the pandemic. We have also been working with colleagues on the refocussing of the policy goals we hope to achieve as a forum working on detention reform.

In 2020 we:

- Produced blogs on topics such as responding to covid and the quarterly Home Office Detention Statistics. These have been published on our website and sent to MSPs on our database.
- Provided comment to broadcast, print and online media outlets on detention matters.
- Spoke at conferences and events
- Continued to expand and improve our online presence with the help of a team of social media volunteers.

Despite the horrors of the pandemic, the reduction in the number of people in detention was welcome and we, along with others, hoped that this would be something that could be built on in the future. Unfortunately, as the year progressed it became increasingly clear that the current UK Government intends to preside over an ever more hostile environment. Its use of army barracks, hotels, and other forms of institutional accommodation to house vulnerable people seeking refuge in the UK increases the number of people subject to detention-like conditions.

In early 2021, we learned of plans to open a new detention centre at Hassockfield and the heavily trailed New Plan for Immigration contained many proposals that would lead to increased detention. There is still much work to be done.

Kate Alexander, Director

Finance report


Our independently examined accounts for 2020 are on the subsequent pages of this report and they show that we ended the year in a healthy position with a balance of nearly £40,000 to carry forward to 2021. This however obscures the fact that 2020 was a difficult year for SDV financially. Our multi-year grant from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation came to an end and we made numerous applications for funding throughout the year. Unfortunately, most of our applications were unsuccessful, and had it not been for our unusually low expenditure in the year, as a result of the pandemic, we might have really struggled. We were extremely fortunate, however, that a crowdfunder towards the end of the year raised an extra £7,000. More importantly, it also brought an extremely generous £10,000 donation from very kind friend of the organisation who wishes to remain anonymous, but knows how grateful we are.

We ended the year with the excellent news that we had been successful in an application for three years' funding from Roberston Trust, so we started 2021 on a very positive note and in a much stronger financial position than had seemed possible a few months earlier. We thank all our funders and donors for their support.

Neil Cowan, Treasurer

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:



Print Name:

Mary C. Munro

Date:

28.05.2021

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of Scottish Detainee Visitors (SCIO)

I report on the accounts of the above-mentioned charity for the period to 31st December 2020 as set out on the attached pages.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustee and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10 (1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44 (1) c of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiners Report

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiners Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44 (1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met, or to which in my opinion attention should be drawn, in order to reach a proper understanding of the accounts.



Signed

Date 13th April 2021

C A I Morton CA.

Scottish Detainee Visitors (SCIO)
Scottish Charity Number SC033781

Receipts and Payments Account
Year Ended 31st December 2020

	Year Ended 31 December 2020		Year Ended 31 December 2019	
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
<i>Restricted</i>				
Allen Lane Foundation	5,000			
Job Retention Scheme	1,802			
Awards for All			10,000	
Esmee Fairbairn			20,000	
Total restricted receipts		6,802		30,000
<i>Unrestricted</i>				
Esmee Fairbairn Covid Fund	10,000			
Awards under £3,000	2,000		5,500	
Donations and fundraising	19,090		6,842	
Gift Aid and other income	3,098		<u>2,571</u>	
Total unrestricted receipts		<u>34,188</u>		14,913
Total receipts		<u>40,990</u>		<u>44,913</u>

	Year Ended 31 December 2019		Year Ended 31 December 2018	
	£	£	£	£
Payments				
<i>Restricted</i>				
Office rent			(2,500)	
Life After Detention room hire			(783)	
Life After Detention expenses			(1,480)	
Salaries and pensions	(6,802)		(46,750)	
Total restricted payments		<u>(6,802)</u>		<u>(51,513)</u>
<i>Unrestricted</i>				
Salaries and pensions	(25,426)		-	
Support for people in detention	(4,176)		(5,829)	
Life after detention costs	(3,181)		(2,433)	
Staff training and other costs	(32)		(295)	
Board training and expenses	(544)		(139)	
Volunteer visit travel	(1,023)		(5,778)	
Volunteer meetings, induction and training	(175)		(458)	
Membership subscriptions	(228)		(275)	
Fundraising, admin and office supplies	(878)		(834)	
Website costs	(710)		(723)	
Policy project costs	(105)		(66)	
Office rent	(3,750)		(2,750)	
AGM costs			(379)	
Evaluation			(4,694)	
Professional services	(5,850)		(607)	
Insurance	(297)		(297)	
Total unrestricted payments		<u>(46,375)</u>		<u>(25,557)</u>
Total payments		<u>(53,177)</u>		<u>(77,070)</u>
Surplus/ Deficit		<u>(12,187)</u>		<u>(32,157)</u>

Scottish Detainee Visitors (SCIO)
Scottish Charity Number SC033781

Statement of Balances at 31st December 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
Bank and cash in hand		
Opening balances	51,633	83,790
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	(12,187)	(32,157)
Closing balances	39,446	51,633
 Reserves		
General Funds	<u>39,446</u>	<u>51,633</u>
Closing balances	<u>39,446</u>	<u>51,633</u>