



## All-Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration Detention Inaugural Meeting

Tuesday 28 January 2020  
Committee Room 10, House of Commons, SW1A 0AA

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**Parliamentarians present:** Alison Thewliss MP (SNP) - Chair  
Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle MP (Green Party)  
Paul Blomfield MP (Labour)  
Wendy Chamberlain MP (SNP)  
Joanna Cherry QC MP (SNP)  
Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat)  
Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour)  
Jason McCartney MP (Conservative)  
Stuart C. McDonald MP (SNP)  
Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP (Labour)  
Gavin Robinson MP (DUP)  
The Earl of Sandwich (Crossbencher)  
Hywel Williams MP (Plaid Cymru)

**Others present:** Kris Harris (Medical Justice)  
Elspeth Macdonald (Medical Justice)  
Andy Murphy (Office of Alison Thewliss MP)  
Amy Provan (Office of Paul Blomfield MP)

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### Minutes

#### 1. Welcome

1.1 The chair welcomed attendees to the inaugural meeting of the APPG on Immigration Detention in the new Parliament, following the general election in December 2019.

1.2 Apologies were noted from Deirdre Brock MP and Caroline Lucas MP.

## **2. Introduction to the secretariat**

2.1 Kris Harris gave an introduction to the work of Medical Justice, who had provided the secretariat for the APPG since it was first established in April 2019. Medical Justice sends independent doctors into immigration detention centres to document individual's evidence of torture and challenge instances of inadequate healthcare. The organisation handles over 1,000 detainee referrals per year and covers all of the UK's immigration detention centres. Alongside its casework with individual detainees, Medical Justice also undertakes wider research, policy advocacy and litigation work.

## **3. APPG plans**

**3.1** Elspeth Macdonald discussed some proposed activities for the group:

- a) Approximately 3-4 discussion events over the year, to include external speakers and attendees. The first one would take place in March. Possible topics included:
  - o Statutory public inquiry on Brook House (announced by government in November 2019)
  - o Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's (ICIBI) first Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention Audit Report (once published)
  - o Detention of victims of trafficking (gained considerable parliamentary attention last year)

The chair and secretariat would firm up the topic and date and let Members know.

- b) New Detention Centre Rules - currently being drafted by the Home Office. They would be laid in Parliament as secondary legislation subject to negative procedure. While the time-frame was still unclear, some legislative activities were anticipated for when they were laid. The Secretariat would keep Members updated in case they wished to get involved.
- c) Group visit to a detention centre - possibly Brook House. The chair would write to the Immigration Minister and submit a request.
- d) APPG inquiry - this was something to consider pursuing, given the success/impact of other groups' inquiries (e.g the Joint APPGs on Migration and Refugees inquiry into detention). The focus could be narrow or broad depending on Members' preferences.
- e) Annual networking event in July - this would be modeled along the lines of the launch event held in June 2019, which had generated very positive feedback from many participants.

**3.2** Members also raised the following areas:

- a) Indefinite detention / 28-day time limit amendment - APPG could provide forum for coordinating parliamentary work on this
- b) Community-based alternatives to detention
- c) Linking up with APPG on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery for a joint event
- d) Session to include views of medical professionals working with detainees

#### **4. Election of officers**

4.1 The following parliamentarians were elected as officers of the group:

- a) Chair: Alison Thewliss MP (SNP)
- b) Vice-chairs: Christine Jardine MP (Liberal Democrat)  
Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP (Labour)
- c) Officers: Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle – Green Party  
Sir Peter Bottomley MP – Conservative  
Stephen Doughty MP – Labour  
Richard Fuller MP – Conservative  
Rt Hon. Harriet Harman QC MP – Labour  
Baroness Hamwee – Liberal Democrat  
Helen Hayes MP – Labour  
Baroness Lister of Burtersett – Labour  
Stuart C. McDonald MP – SNP  
Kate Osamor MP – Labour  
The Earl of Sandwich – Crossbencher  
Hywel Williams MP – Plaid Cymru

#### **5. AOB**

None