

Parliamentary Inquiry into Immigration Detention

Personal statement –Anonymous

1. I had a short stay in Yarlswood detention centre. My story is a transition from Holloway HMP and I had a very hard time emotionally because I left my 17 year old daughter home alone during my detention. I spent 2 months and 2 weeks in Holloway for immigration offences and over a week in Yarlswood.
2. I think because of the restrictions at an HMP, Immigration detention is better but a big difference is a prison has a time of stay and release whereas Immigration detention doesn't have so it makes it impossible to know where you stand. All said, being incarcerated is not at all something that anyone would want to experience. It takes away your power, your confidence and makes you lifeless to yourself and your dependent.
3. I was mentally and emotionally affected not knowing where my child was or what she was doing at a point in time as when I tried to reach her she was not answering. I panicked to some extent that my heart will be palpating.
4. When I finished my sentence at Holloway the charity that looked after the foreign nationals there was calling lots of departments of the Home Office to know what their plans were for me. Nobody knew anything. They kept giving me different numbers to call until I got London Bridges telephone number who told me I should go back to calling Croydon. By then the caseworker said she was sorry but she had signed for me to be taken to Yarlswood IRC.
5. At Yarlswood you do not have access to your Home Office caseworker, there are people who are an intermediary between you and your caseworker. This is just wasteful and everything is so muddled up as no one has any information for you regarding your situation or what they are doing about it. All these problems have a negative effect on you and gave me anxiety and panic attacks.
6. These experiences have had a negative effect on my daughter, who was left to fend for herself during those months I was detained, she is still withdrawn and worries if I am separated from her for periods of time.
7. Life after detention is another experience, you are made to report without any support. I didn't declare asylum, I relied on our previous application which was article 8. Now I had to rely on friends, church and charity. Thank god for these charities who were giving me money every month, one support was giving my daughter and me food vouchers.
8. Not working and earning a living is a very depressing situation. No knowing what is going on with you, whether you are coming or going with a dependent child who has spent her formative years here in the UK.
9. I think people can be given a right to work in the UK while waiting for a decision to be made on their application. Then it will give a person enough to put a roof over their head and feed

you and your dependent, in my case. Having to go to people for help for you and your child is a very horrible thing to go through at my age (56 years old) and everything I went through, it's only my faith that has kept me going.