

# **Inquiry into the use of Immigration Detention**

## **Written Submissions**

### **Introduction**

1. I was born in Modakeke, Nigeria. I came to the United Kingdom on the 30/04/2008 on a 6 month visiting visa directly from Mohamed Airport Lagos, Nigeria to Heathrow Airport, London.

### **How long did you stay in detention? What was the reason you went to detention?**

2. I have been locked away in detention centre two times; all together totalling roughly nine weeks.
3. I was using a false document to work on construction site, and was arrested by the police and was sentenced to 4 months imprisonment on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2011. I spent two months there, till 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2011. I was taken to Colnbrook Immigration Removal Centre, West Drayton 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2011 and was released on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011, on my asylum claim as a gay man.
4. My second detention experience started on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, on my signing on activity date. The reason I still do not know, even as I am writing this submission. As I usually report fortnightly I went to Lunar House, Croydon to sign on and I was called into a separate office for a present circumstance interview which I did. I was detained there till around 5.50pm after a 10 minutes interview that was conducted at 4:10 pm.
5. The Home office personnel informed me that they had decided on my immigration matter since March 2014 and I am being detained on this ground. I promptly told the officer that I was not served a copy of their decision, neither was my solicitor. I told the officer that I will appreciate it if he could kindly get me a copy of the decision on my asylum claim since I was still in their office to know the reason that led to my detention. He refused bluntly, saying that he was only instructed to detain me.
6. Prior to this day, I came for the same signing on event of the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2014. I was detained from 11am that day without my medication, food and water till 8pm that day. Before my release, I begged the officer that I have appointment with my GP and showed him the appointment card, she went away and told me she would tell the officer in charge of my case and my plight – but I did not see her again that day. I was the last person to leave the office on the day (8<sup>th</sup> July).

7. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2014 I was taken to Dover Immigration removal centre and was released without bail on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2014.
8. Summarily the reason why I was detained and released I do not know till today. My solicitor requested for the decision on my immigration matter and was told precisely on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August through a letter that, the decision was being processed and that my solicitor should expect the decision before the end of that week – to my amazement, even as I am writing this submission there has still been no response.

**What was your experiences of living in immigration detention? What were the conditions like?**

9. Detention was terrible because it further aggravated my depression. I could not sleep and unfortunately my room in detention centre was directly opposite the gate, so I could see people coming in and going out of the centre. Two times late in the night around 2am I saw about 15 big immigration officers came to beat, drag and forced people with blood all over them into a van and take them away. I did not see those guys again. I woke my roommate up then, and I cried. I was scared and could not leave my room.
10. When they discovered that I could not always sleep, I was being told every day to go and get one of the advertised jobs in the centre as a therapy. These are jobs advertised for £3 p/w or £6 p/w. I now look at it that I worked on the street of London and was called an illegal worker to support and source for my tuition fee legally, and was arrested as working illegally in the United Kingdom at minimum wage rate of £6.31 p/h. But the same job was being offered at reduced rate of £3 p/w or £6 p/w in detention centre in the same United Kingdom to the same person, freely advertised by immigration officers, working as recruiters. What a paradox.

**How easily could you access services such as legal advice, healthcare, pastoral support?**

11. I could not have access to my medication early.
12. The same food was being served every day for 7 days in a week, three times a day.
13. Pastoral support was restricted; I could not get access to a church pastor who was free till after a week of trying.

**Did you think you got enough support to deal with any mental, physical or emotional issues you experienced in detention?**

14. I was treated like a liar. The nurses said to me they are sure I do not take my drugs, and so I was forced to take the medication in their presence. I was introduced to music class to assist me during my stay.

15. I was the only one that stayed longest in my room; they kept changing my roommates every day.

**Do you think detention had any longer-term impacts on you, your family and/or your wider community?**

16. I still see the blood of the guys that was bitten and dragged into van in detention and still struggle with sleep. When I try to sleep, I cry and wake up.