

James Brokenshire MP  
Minister for Security and Immigration  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2DF

12 December 2014

Dear James,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Immigration Detention currently being held by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration. The panel would like to thank you for your engagement with the inquiry so far and would particularly like to thank you for your written evidence submission.

As part of the inquiry, the panel have received written and oral evidence from a range of individuals and organisations, including from many individuals who have a direct experience of being detainees in the detention estate. The panel will produce a report in the New Year, and to help inform that report the panel I would be extremely grateful if could answer a number of questions that have arisen in the course of the inquiry. Please find these questions as follows:

1. In the evidence received by the panel a reoccurring issue is that of health care provision in Immigration Removal Centres. The responsibility for commissioning healthcare services across the detention estate has recently been transferred to NHS England. As part of this transfer, what specialist training will be provided to healthcare staff, and to other IRC staff, in the treatment and identification of the particular healthcare needs that detainees have?
2. In your written submission to the inquiry, you commented on the Rule 35 process. In that submission, you commented on an audit carried out by the Home Office Quality Audit team, following on from an audit that took place in 2010. When do you plan on publishing the findings from that audit?

In a letter to the Home Affairs Select Committee dated June 25 2014, you said that the audit “will consider whether all mandatory processes and actions, as set out in

Whilst Sarah Teather MP will treat as confidential any personal information that you may pass on, she will allow authorised persons to see the information if this is needed to help and advise you. She may pass some or all of this information to agencies such as the DWP, Home Office or a local authority if it is necessary to help with your case. She may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed of related issues that you may find of interest. Please let her know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

**Sarah Teather MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA**  
**Tel: 020 7219 8147**  
**E-mail: [teathers@parliament.uk](mailto:teathers@parliament.uk)**

Rule 35 of the Detention Centre Rules 2001 and the Rule 35 Asylum Instruction, have been adhered to”. Did the audit also look at the processes themselves to see if they can be improved?

Key to the Rule 35 process is the way in which doctors fill out Rule 35 reports. What training are doctors currently given on how to fill out a Rule 35 report and how that report will be used?

3. The panel has heard evidence of detainees being frequently moved around the detention estate. When asked via a written parliamentary question about how often moves occurred, you answered that “this information requested cannot be provided without collation and examination of individual records at disproportionate cost.” (Written Question 212824). What rules are currently in place to limit the number of times individuals are moved and to notify legal representatives when such moves occur?
4. At the end of September 2014, 3,378 individuals were held in IRCs. This is a 21% increase on when the Coalition Government came to power, and a 50% increase since the end of 2008. What factors have driven the increase in the number of individuals detained, taking into consideration that in the third quarter of 2010 65% of detainees who left detention were removed from the UK, compared to less than 50% of those who left detention during the third of 2014.

Since April 2014, the Home Office has no longer funded Refugee Action to provide an Assisted Voluntary Return programme for individuals detained in IRCs. No alternative programme has, it appears, been implemented. What assessment has the Department made of the impact of this change? In particular, has it resulted in a change in the number of detainees leaving the UK? Given that you say in the your written evidence to this inquiry that the average cost of voluntary removal is £1,000 compared to nearly £15,000 for enforced removal, what were the reasons for removing access to voluntary removals for detainees?

Given the number of current detainees mentioned above and that the current capacity of the immigration detention estate is in excess of 4,000 spaces, what assessment has been made of the need to expand Campsfield IRC?

Additionally, the panel welcomes the inclusion of the number of individuals held in prisons solely under immigration act powers in the latest immigration statistics for

Whilst Sarah Teather MP will treat as confidential any personal information that you may pass on, she will allow authorised persons to see the information if this is needed to help and advise you. She may pass some or all of this information to agencies such as the DWP, Home Office or a local authority if it is necessary to help with your case. She may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed of related issues that you may find of interest. Please let her know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

**Sarah Teather MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA**  
**Tel: 020 7219 8147**  
**E-mail: [teathers@parliament.uk](mailto:teathers@parliament.uk)**

the first time and believes that this will help parliamentarians and others scrutinise the way immigration detention is used in the UK. At the end of September 2014, 425 individuals were detained in prisons under such powers. Given the excess capacity currently in the immigration detention estate, why were these individuals held in prisons rather than in IRCs?

5. In your written evidence you mention that among the alternatives to detention currently used is electronic monitoring, but you cite the high cost of this (£515 per month) as a limiting factor. How does this cost compare with the cost of detaining an individual for a month?
6. The panel heard evidence which suggested there are a number of benefits experienced by those countries which have utilised alternatives to detention. For example, the panel were told that Sweden, whose asylum applicants are approaching 100,000 per year, uses a caseworker model. The evidence received stated that Sweden reported an 82% rate of return from the community among refused asylum seekers. Additionally, examples in Canada, Australia and the US of both refused asylum seekers and irregular migrants demonstrated return rates of between 60% and 69%. What comparisons have the Government undertaken of the UK detention system and the use of alternatives with those systems in place in other countries?
7. Current Home Office guidance states that detention should only be used as a last resort, and you mentioned this is your written evidence to the inquiry. However, some of the evidence received by the panel suggests that this isn't the case. What measures are in place to ensure that the guidance is complied with?
8. In relation to Yarl's Wood IRC, what comparison has the Government taken between the male/female officer ratio at Yarl's Wood compared to female prisons such as HMP Holloway? Also, concerns were raised with the panel regarding searches of detainees at the IRC; has the Government received any representations on this subject and what is the Government's response?

Also in regard to Yarl's Wood IRC, the panel were told that when women first arrive at the centre they are asked questions in a public space. What assessment has the Home Office carried out regarding the appropriateness of asking potentially vulnerable women private questions in this environment?

Whilst Sarah Teather MP will treat as confidential any personal information that you may pass on, she will allow authorised persons to see the information if this is needed to help and advise you. She may pass some or all of this information to agencies such as the DWP, Home Office or a local authority if it is necessary to help with your case. She may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed of related issues that you may find of interest. Please let her know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

**Sarah Teather MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA**  
**Tel: 020 7219 8147**  
**E-mail: [teathers@parliament.uk](mailto:teathers@parliament.uk)**

Thank you once again for your engagement with the inquiry. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jonathan Featonby in my office on 020 7219 8147 or via [jonathan.featonby@parliament.uk](mailto:jonathan.featonby@parliament.uk).

Yours sincerely,

**Sarah Teather MP**

Member of Parliament for Brent Centre and Chair of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Immigration Detention

Whilst Sarah Teather MP will treat as confidential any personal information that you may pass on, she will allow authorised persons to see the information if this is needed to help and advise you. She may pass some or all of this information to agencies such as the DWP, Home Office or a local authority if it is necessary to help with your case. She may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed of related issues that you may find of interest. Please let her know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

**Sarah Teather MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA**

**Tel: 020 7219 8147**

**E-mail: [teathers@parliament.uk](mailto:teathers@parliament.uk)**