



11th August 2014

Jonathan Featonby
Office of Sarah Teather, MP
House of Commons
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

Dear Parliamentary Group Representative,

I am writing this letter in response to a letter of enquiry we have received at our medical practice regarding our experience of the use of detention in the UK immigration system. I gather this is part of a wider general enquiry into the use of detention in the UK immigration system which is to be looked at by a panel of MP's in the near future.

I am the main GP working at The Mulberry Practice which is a dedicated primary care medical centre for asylum seekers and refugees in Sheffield. I have been working here for the past 3.5 years. During my time here both myself and my colleagues have come across a number of cases relating to patients in our care where they have been taken into an immigration detention centre, usually quite suddenly and without warning. This has in nearly all cases resulted in a serious worsening of their mental health.

As a GP, without access to the full facts of a person's asylum application it is very disheartening to see people whom one has been caring for, treating with medications and often improving in their mental health symptoms to witness the severe distress caused when they are taken into a detention centre. This is most pertinent to cases where the asylum seeker has been refused but is continuing to stay on in the UK due to (in my opinion) genuine fear of persecution or imprisonment or even fear of death should they return to their home country.

As a medical practice we are not given automatic notification of when a patient of ours has been detained and often the first we hear about this matter is when the patient returns to our practice having being released from the detention centre. We are in effect left to "mop up the pieces" of the severe stress reaction with its many individual presentations that invariably occurs.

A further point I would like to offer is that in our experience here dealing entirely with asylum seekers, there is a very high proportion of our patients who are suffering with stress and adjustment reactions of one variety or another and a great deal of what can be verified as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We have a great deal of experience and expertise in dealing with these problems and have our own specialist in-house mental health Counsellor. A widely appreciated fact about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is that the symptoms such as nightmares, flashbacks and panic attacks caused by past experiences will be precipitated or reactivated by

current stressors in a person's life. This is particularly pertinent to detention centres which I gather can appear very much like a prison with uniformed Immigration Officers and Guards which will often trigger these symptoms in patients who have been imprisoned in their home country or persecuted by the authorities there.

I hope this information is useful to you. Should you wish to contact me regarding further information on specific points please do so.


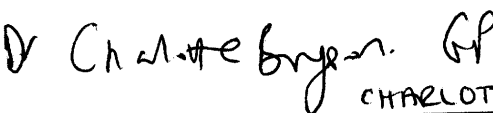



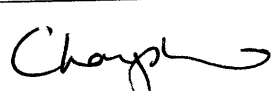

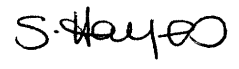
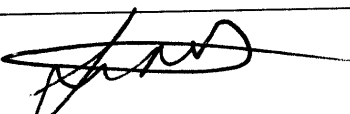
Kind regards.

Yours Sincerely



Dr Mike Nutt
General Practitioner

Co-signatories

 Helen Colmer RECEPTIONIST	 Charlotte Bryan GP CHARLOTTE BRYAN
 Candice Nowell SENIOR RECEPTIONIST	 GP STUART CORNWELL
 Andy Firman RECEPTIONIST	 DR C. LONGSHAW GP.
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