



MHDVG

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group Annual Report 2018

Registered Charity no: 1174056
Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2018

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The annual report & accounts were formally accepted at the
AGM of MHDVG on Monday 4th February 2019

MHDVG is supported by:

The Allen Lane Foundation
The Hilden Charitable Fund
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group Annual Report 2018

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group: a brief history

"Everybody makes mistakes but should not be punished repeatedly for them or detained indefinitely with ... no prospects of removal to my country of origin." - *B, held at Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre*

MHDVG was formed in 2011 following the conversion of Morton Hall prison, in Swindon, Lincolnshire to an Immigration Removal Centre with the capacity to hold 392 people, all of them men. Many are waiting to find out if they will be allowed to stay in Britain or returned to their countries of origin. None of them are being detained as punishment for a crime. Immigration detainees can be held indefinitely, according to Home Office statistics as of June 2018, 60 people had been held in detention for over a year. (Detention Action, 2019)

Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre has a very diverse population, which varies frequently. In the third quarter of 2017 the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) reported that there were 77 different nationalities represented: Poland (12%), Pakistan (10%), India (7%), Bangladesh (5%), Iraq (5%) and Lithuania (5%). The ethnic mix of the Centre was Asian (31%), White (30%) and a diverse range of other ethnicities including Black, Black African and Black Caribbean (17%), and Arab (7%). There was a near balance between those of Muslim faith and those of Christian faith; together these two religions accounted for around 80% of the Centre population. (Independent Monitoring Board, 2018)

Our aims are to recruit and provide a trained network of visiting volunteers who can offer emotional and practical support to people held in Morton Hall requesting visits. MHDVG has visited at least 290 people over the last several years.

People in detention either self-refer or are referred to us by their family, friends or other Visitors Groups in the UK. Many experience extreme isolation and distress, and mental health issues are common. A significant number have few friends or family in the UK and have very limited understanding of the language, law, their rights and entitlements.

"My mental health is bad thinking through my life in this place."- G held at Morton Hall IRC

We build trust with detainees to provide support and advocacy independently from legal or government bodies. We do not dispense immigration advice. All our visitors receive training from the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID) and from our own staff so that they can give accurate information, in confidence, and provide the best possible support they can.

When appropriate, we signpost detainees to a range of specialist services e.g. Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID), Medical Justice, and solicitors. Where necessary we also provide phone cards and basic amenities.

"Your visitation goes a long way in my life. It contributes to my being positively minded, focused, and never to give up." - T held at Morton Hall IRC

We also educate and inform the public about the historical and current experiences of people in indefinite immigration detention, and the broader legal situation for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the UK. By raising awareness of these issues, we aim to promote more tolerance and understanding in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire areas.

Annual report - achievements & performance

Chair's report

Towards the end of the last financial year we were awarded £17,500 from three Trusts that enabled us to employ a part-time Project Coordinator and pay for running costs for 12 months. It took us longer than anticipated to recruit a suitable candidate for the post and in May 2018 Camille Herreman was appointed on a 12-month contract. The key aims of the post are to:

- Recruit and train more visitors so that more detainees can be supported. Ideally people living closer to Morton Hall, as the majority of current visitors live in Nottingham;
- Develop an active non-visiting volunteer base to provide other forms of essential support for detainees;
- Liaise more effectively with Morton Hall IRC, and with the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID) and other visitors groups nationally;
- Expand the profile of the organisation across Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire;
- Help identify further funding opportunities to keep the organisation financially sound in the years ahead.

In the eight months Camille has been working for us the charity has grown and diversified. The numbers of visitors has increased, with 28 volunteers over the course of the year growing from 11 in 2017 (including 7 new visitors from the Lincoln area). Ninety-four visits were made throughout the year. We developed a training programme; started to build partnerships with several organisations in Lincoln, reviewed our structures and identified measures to strengthen the board and recruit more trustees; and organised a number of very successful awareness-raising events.

We recruited Stuart Brown as a book-keeper/administrator on a freelance basis, and have contracted Estelle Fisher independently to examine our accounts.

I would like to thank all the volunteers and MHDVG members for their dedication and commitment to supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the UK. Until indefinite immigration detention is ended, I look forward to MHDVG growing and becoming more effective in providing essential support to the immigration detainees being held at Morton Hall IRC in 2019.

Lynda Wilson
Chair

“M has been so grateful for my time... I feel privileged to have met him ... I was able to represent a community within the UK that supports people like M seeking asylum and show humanity where in other areas of his life he has been rejected.” - New volunteer visitor

Coordinator's report

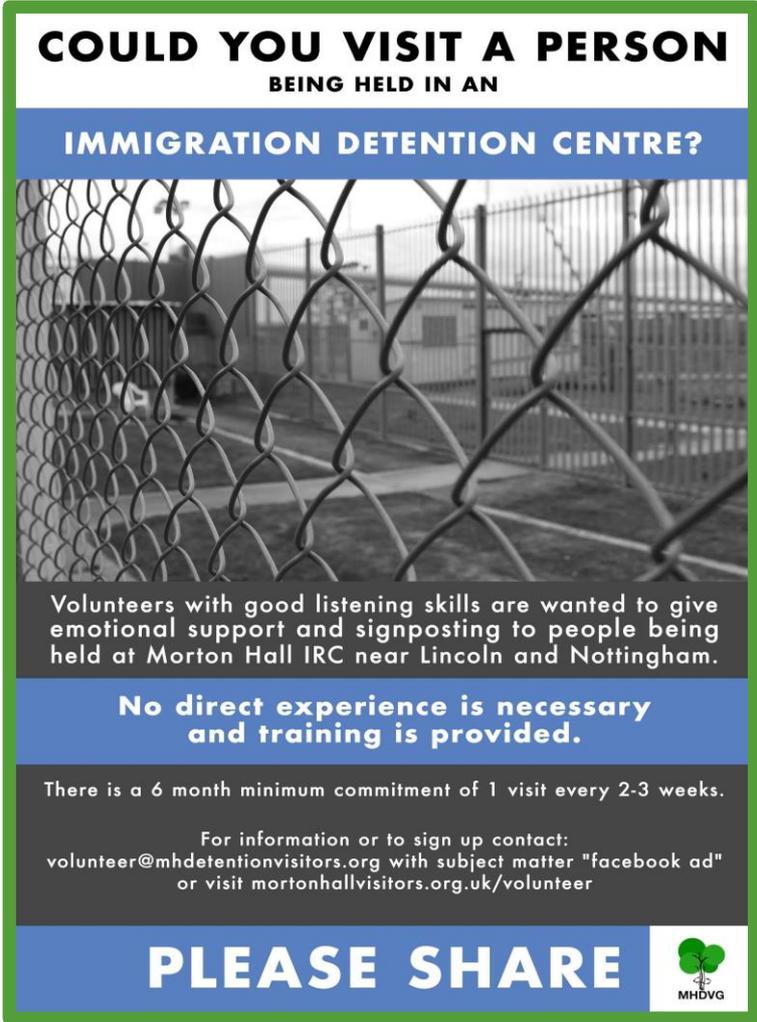
Since my post began in May there have been many developments and changes for the charity. The last 8 months have seen a significant increase in the numbers of volunteer visitors, we have made connections and collaborated with dozens of organisations across the country, and have raised public awareness of the impact on people being held indefinitely in detention centres through events, training and advocacy. I also look forward to the new year in which we aim to continue growing, building, and succeeding in our work supporting people in indefinite immigration detention.

Camille Herreman, December 2018

Volunteers & visits

Following a recruitment drive primarily using social media we almost tripled our active volunteer numbers over the course of the year from just 11 in 2017 to 28 in 2018.

118 shares by people and organisations lead to countless numbers of people viewing our social media appeal for volunteers.



**COULD YOU VISIT A PERSON
BEING HELD IN AN
IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRE?**

Volunteers with good listening skills are wanted to give emotional support and signposting to people being held at Morton Hall IRC near Lincoln and Nottingham.

**No direct experience is necessary
and training is provided.**

There is a 6 month minimum commitment of 1 visit every 2-3 weeks.

For information or to sign up contact:
volunteer@mhdetentionvisitors.org with subject matter "facebook ad"
or visit mortonhallvisitors.org.uk/volunteer

PLEASE SHARE



- Active volunteers over 2018: 28 (11 in 2017)
- New volunteers trained/inducted in 2018: 16*
- Visitors now based in Lincoln area: 7 visiting and 1 non-visiting volunteer.
- Currently active volunteers: 18
- Number of non-visiting volunteers: 3 (2 in 2017)
- Referrals: 45 people in detention
- Number of visits: 94** (62 in 2017)
 - * 5 have not become active
 - **A number of the new visitors began visiting late in the year

Training

With the tireless support of AVID staff we developed a bespoke training programme, the first one of which took place in early December in Lincoln with 4 new volunteers attending. In addition, regular support is also provided by phone as well as at our regular monthly meetings.



Figure 1: Coordinator and AVID staff deliver 1-day training course

Organisational development

- The trustees recruited a part-time bookkeeper/admin worker
- I established an experienced supervisory team to support my post, which includes the Director of Yarls Wood Befrienders.
- Using a skills audit, we reviewed our board of trustees and policies, and identified gaps in knowledge and expertise with an aim to provide training, and to recruit more trustees.

Partnership work and organisational profile

Through the recruitment of volunteers and promotions for events we have had the following reach:

- 118 organisations and people shared our social media post leading to countless numbers of people viewing our appeal for volunteers.
- We have met and networked with over 30 partner organisations
- Organised and/or attended 5 events, information stalls and talks regarding indefinite immigration detention.

We have started to develop relationships with other organisations working in the field and specifically those in Lincolnshire. This has led to an improvement in services we offer and a greater visibility and knowledge of the organisation. Our relationship with the management of Morton Hall IRC and the welfare team has developed with a regular member of staff able to facilitate communication between the organizations.

Organisations contacted and met with include University of Lincoln, Lincolnshire Action Trust, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS), South Kesteven Migration and Communities Network, Lincolnshire CVS, Chaplains of Church of England - national network, Detention Forum (national network of campaigns to end indefinite detention), British Red Cross (BRC).

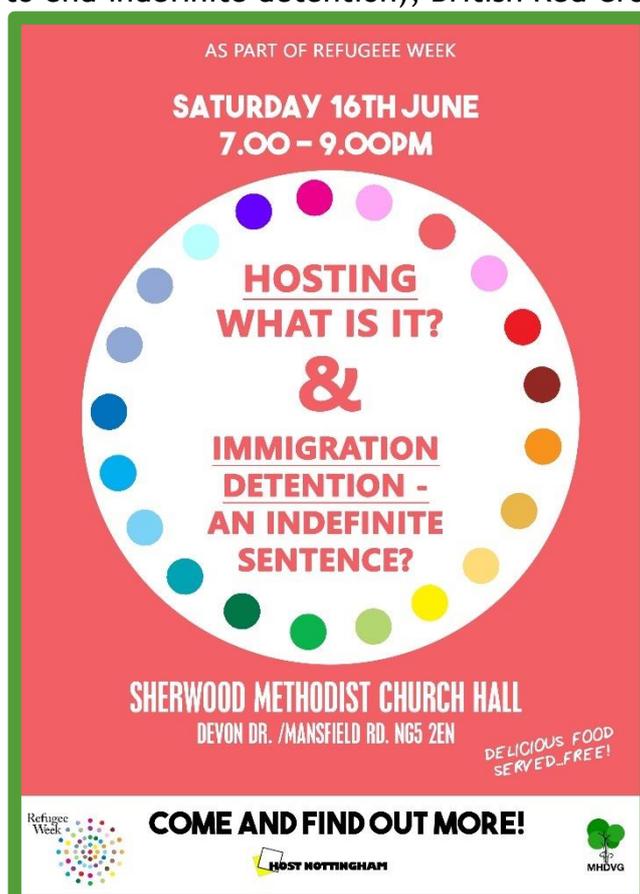


Figure 2 Poster advertising an event MHDVG organised during refugee week.

MHDVG has been part of initial discussions to establish Lincoln as a city of Sanctuary. MHDVG has given its support to the initiative with the aim of raising awareness of immigration detention and MHDVG's work as part of a broader conversation about immigration and asylum in the Lincoln area in partnership with universities and the local council.

We already have a very good relationship with AVID, and we have attended conferences and training events where we can network with all the other visitors groups (15+) around the country.

Advocacy work & awareness raising

We contributed, through AVID, to the Joint Commission on Human Rights inquiry into detention and we participated in national campaigns such as the Detention Forum's 'Unlocking Detention' campaign.

We gave interviews to the Church Times, and organized a number of events in Nottingham during Refugee Week.

Other events include volunteer open days in partnership with NCVS and public information stalls at local festivals.

Fundraising

We are currently working on funding applications to sustain the organisation from October 2019. The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, which awarded us £7,500 last year, have granted us a further £7,500 for a second year.

We will also be submitting further applications once our 2018 Annual Report & Accounts have been approved at our AGM in February 2019.

A friend in need... who are volunteer befrienders and how to become one?

15 JUNE 2018



Volunteer befrienders at immigration-removal centres provide a service to detainees. *Jemima Thackray* finds out what it takes to become one



"There are thousands going through the system, and very little is known about them. For me, visiting is about saying 'I see you and I hear you,'" Camille Herreman, a volunteer befriender at Morton Hall, in Lincoln, and the co-ordinator at Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group (MHDVG), says.



Juve J. Cortés

"MY BEFRIENDER makes me feel good, like I'm not in this hole. I don't feel like I am inside when she visits. She's like the mother I have never had. I feel like we are in the park or something, like I am free and a child again," one detainee said, when describing the visit of a volunteer from Yarl's Wood Befrienders.

Yarl's Wood, the female-only immigration removal centre in Bedfordshire, is one of 11 immigration-removal centres (IRCs) in the UK holding asylum-seekers, foreign offenders, and visa over-stayers, against their will and without a transparent time-limit. Many of them will go on to be released at some point, their detention futile, costly, and emotionally traumatising.

"There are thousands going through the system, and very little is known about them. For me, visiting is about saying 'I see you and I hear you,'" Camille Herreman, a volunteer befriender at Morton Hall, in Lincoln, and the co-ordinator at Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group (MHDVG), says.

The Rt Revd John Richardson, when he was Bishop of Bedford, set up Yarl's Wood Befrienders to provide support for detainees, as soon as Yarl's Wood opened in 2001. Now, every centre has a visitors group: an organisation of volunteers who provide emotional and practical support for people being held in indefinite detention.

Volunteer visitors, or befrienders, make a commitment to visiting someone in detention every week, or every other week, and some also stay in touch by phone. All visitor groups stipulate that volunteers befriend just one person at a time.



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a linked charge of Episcopate in a beautiful southwest Scotland. The rector to help our church communities, evolve to meet the needs of the 21st century, and to develop new groups, and to develop

Vicar

London and Home Counties. Merton College, Oxford. VICAR

ORGANISTS AND

Assistant Director

Worldwide. Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. Assistant Director of Music. A person who fills this role works closely alongside the Director of Music to continue the growth of our ministries.

Find out more

Figure 3 Article on immigration detention visiting in national paper the Church Times featuring excerpts from interviews with MHDVG coordinator Camille Herreman and volunteer Rhiannon Prideaux.

Case study - volunteer visitor's account

"I have seen that the detention system in the UK is broken"

I visited people detained at Morton Hall detention centre for around three and a half years. In that time I visited 6 people, all from different countries and detained for a variety of different reasons. Many of them spent time in different detention centres or prisons before and after I visited them. The majority of them experienced periods of depression or more serious mental health issues. All of them were told by the Home Office that they had no right to remain in the UK but only one was removed from the UK after detention. Everyone else I visited was released back into the community after often long periods in detention which had a lasting impact on their health and wellbeing.

I became a visitor at Morton Hall mainly due to my job at the time working for Nottingham Arimathea Trust, an organisation in Nottingham, which houses destitute asylum seekers. One of our residents was detained and I went to visit him with a colleague. He was terrified. Confused as to what was happening, worried that he couldn't make contact with his solicitor and desperate to get back to Nottingham. He came to meet us armed with a bundle of papers he had managed to obtain to apply for bail, which he didn't understand and I couldn't make sense of either. I remember wondering what I would do in that situation, or how I would feel if it was one of my family members detained in a foreign country with no one to talk to and no one to help them. That person was released after a few months (another detention that didn't lead to removal) and after that I joined the visitors group to help other people in similar situations.

From my experience as a visitor I have seen that the detention system in the UK is broken. Detention is supposed to be used to facilitate removal and yet in reality less than 50% of those detained are sent back to their home country. Detention is not supposed to be used for victims of torture, or children, or those with serious mental health issues. And yet we are constantly seeing cases of unlawful detention which are resulting in the home office paying out hundreds of thousands of pounds in compensation. And then there is the human impact. Last year at Morton Hall there were three deaths, two of which were thought to be suicide. People feel increasingly hopeless and desperate the longer they spend in detention and many feel they have nowhere to turn to. As a visitor I might not be able to influence the outcome of someone's asylum claim or free them from detention but I can show them that there is someone who cares about them as a human being, will support them when they feel angry or frustrated and will encourage them to remain positive when they feel like giving up.

Visiting has definitely been a learning experience. At first I was frustrated because I felt I didn't know enough about immigration, criminal justice and probation to help people. The first person I visited was an EU national who had served a prison sentence over a year and was facing deportation because of this. He wanted to

stay in the UK because his son was here but couldn't afford legal fees. I didn't know how to advise him and felt useless. Then I realised that being a visitor isn't about giving advice. Of course, we signpost people to relevant support services including legal advice and BID who help people apply for bail. But the value of visiting is simply giving someone a chance to talk and a connection with the outside world. Providing them with a break from the monotony of life within a detention centre and showing them that there are people who care what happens to them. One person I was visiting sent me the following a short time after I had started seeing him:

“Hi Rhiannon, sorry I haven't spoke to you since you visited, a lot has happened so I was a bit down but I'm ok. I hope you doing ok and again thanks for everything. I really appreciate what you have done for me. Not everyone will waste their time on someone like me....thank you”

I hadn't realised at the time how much the visits meant to him. He seemed like a confident and outgoing person with many friends in the detention centre. I guess this made me see how lonely and worthless he really felt deep down. I haven't visited any other detention centres but from what I have heard from people at Morton Hall, the worst part about detention is that no one knows how long they are going to be there for. There is no end date to count down to and absolutely no way of making plans for the future. People don't know where they are going to be by the next month, week or day. They quickly lose their friends and support networks



Figure 4 illustration @Carcazan

on the outside and have nowhere to go to for support. That is why the visitors groups are so important and play a crucial role in supporting their wellbeing.

I have recently moved abroad so I have stopped visiting at Morton Hall. However, I still think of the people that are detained there every day with no idea what will happen to them and hope that some time in the near future we will see some drastic changes to how the detention system is run in the UK.

Rhiannon Prideaux
3rd December 2018

Trustees report for the year ending 31 December 2018

The trustees during the financial year and up to and including the date the report was approved were:

Name	Position	Dates
Lynda Wilson	Chair	Appointed August 2017
Francesca Bargiela	Trustee	Appointed August 2017
Penny Dale	Trustee	Appointed March 2018

Charity number

Charity number 1174056. The charity was registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales on the 1 August 2017.

Registered and principal address

The Sycamore Centre
33A Hungerhill Road
Nottingham
NG3 4NB

Bankers

January-October	September - present
The Cooperative Bank P O Box 250 Delf House Southway Skelmersdale WN8 6WT	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4J
This account is now closed.	

Structure, governance and management

The charity is governed by a constitution adopted on the 1 August 2017

Method of recruitment and appointment of trustees

The trustees of the charity are appointed by the members at the AGM.

Trustees report (continued) for the year ending 31 December 2018

Objectives and activities

The charity's objectives

For the public benefit, to relieve the needs of foreign nationals who are, or who have been, detained under UK law at the Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre, or elsewhere, who are suffering financial hardship, distress or are otherwise in need by the provision of financial support, goods, items, advocacy and support, particularly through, but not limited to, the provision of a trained visiting network.

The charity's main activities

1. The provision of a trained visiting network of volunteers who can offer emotional and practical support to detainees in Morton Hall IRC
2. The education of the public about the plight of immigration detainees, the experiences they may have had historically or whilst detained, and the broader legal situation for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

Public benefit statement

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our Trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular the prevention and relief of need.

Achievements and performance

Please see annual report 2018 achievements and performance section (see contents page)

Financial review

We started the year with £17,590 in the bank. The net payments for the year were £10,813 including net receipts of £664. Grants and donations received in this financial year comprised £500 from Nottinghamshire County Council, and a donation of £164 from The Masked Booksellers. The main items of expenditure were the Project Coordinator wages and travel, travel expenses for visitors, office rent and mobile phone usage. At the end of the financial year our closing balance was £7,455 with a further £49 in petty cash.

Reserves policy

We intend setting a 'reserves policy' in the next financial year, which will be sufficient to ensure that winding-up costs are covered should it be desirable or necessary to cease activity. The reserves should be sufficient to cover staff redundancies, rent and utility costs and any professional fees likely to be incurred.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Signed: 

Date: 4 February 2019

Name: Lynda Wilson
Chair

Independent examiner's report to the trustees

of: Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group Registered Charity number 1174056
The Sycamore Centre, 33A Hungerhill Road, St Anns, Nottingham NG3 4NB

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group, for the year ended 31 December 2018.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible but not required, to be subject to an independent examination, it is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts did not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Estelle Fisher

Name: Estelle Fisher, Postgraduate Diploma in Audit Management and Consultancy, Institute of Internal Auditors, Advanced Diploma.

Address: 35, Mere Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7LH

Accounting policies

Basis of accounting

The trustees have taken advantage of section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 and have prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

There has been no change to the accounting policies since last year.

No changes have been made to the accounts for previous years.

Taxation

As a registered charity the organisation benefits from rates relief and is generally exempt from income tax and capital gains tax but not from VAT. Irrecoverable VAT is included in the cost of those items to which it relates.

Accounts

Notes to Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group accounts for the year ended 2018

**Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group
Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ending
December 31 2018**

	£	2018 £	£	2017 £
Receipts				
Donations		164		90
Grants				17,500
Notts County Council		500		
Total receipts		<u>664</u>		<u>17,590</u>
Payments				
Wages, NI, Pensions & Payroll	8,261		-	
Bank charges	10		-	
Insurance	277		-	
Office/Phones	630		108	
Visitors Travel/Expenses	576		627	
Staff Travel/Expenses	495		-	
Detainees Phone Cards	-		10	
Recruitment	85		-	
Membership/Subscriptions	60		25	
Publicity	-		256	
Equipment	385			
Events	35		20	
Misc Expenses	-		-	
Total payments		<u>10,813</u>		<u>1,046</u>
Surplus		(10,149)		16,544
Statement of Assets and Liabilities		2018		2017
Cash in bank		7455		17,636
Cash in hand		49		17
less Liabilities due in year		-		-
Total		<u>7,504</u>		<u>17,653</u>
Represented by bank balance b/f		17,636		1,076
Cash in hand b/f		17		33
Surplus income over expenditure		<u>(10,149)</u>		<u>16,544</u>
Total		<u>7,504</u>		<u>17,653</u>