



MHDVG

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group Annual Report 2019

Registered Charity no: 1174056
Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2019

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The annual report & accounts were formally accepted at the
AGM of MHDVG on 25 June 2020

MHDVG is currently supported by:

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
Souter Trust
Leigh Trust
Noel Buxton Trust
Swan Mountain Trust

Previous funders have included:

Allen Lane Foundation
Hilden Charitable Fund

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group Annual Report 2019

Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group: a brief history

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 nationally, 684 people were held in immigration detention for over 6 months in 2019¹.

Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre has a very diverse population, which varies frequently. In the fourth quarter of 2019 the H M Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) reported² that there were 49 different nationalities represented including Albania (19.7%), Pakistan (7.4%), India (8.6%), Bangladesh (6.1%), China (4.9%) Iran (4.5%), Iraq (3.7%) Poland (4.5%) Nigeria (3.5%) and Vietnam (2.9%). These figures change week to week. At the time of inspection 37 men had been held for more than 2 months, 6 for more than 10 months. 67% of the population had been held for under a month.

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.

In August 2019 we received our 500th referral as an organisation. 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. In November HMIP reported³ 33% of people identified themselves as having had mental health problems on arrival at the centre, increasing to 43% at the point of interview, which may go some way to indicate the impact of detention on people's wellbeing. 71% reported to have felt depressed whilst held at the centre whilst sadly 29% reported having felt suicidal.

A significant number have few friends or family in the UK. 70% of the people held in November 2019 had received no visits from friends or family - an issue often frustrated by the remoteness of the centre.

¹ Home Office "National Statistics How many people are detained or returned?" 27th February 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2019/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned>

² H M Inspectorate of Prisons "Report on an unannounced inspection of Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre 28 October - 15 November 2019" Appendix III Detainee population profile pp 65-67

³ Ibid Appendix VII Summary of detainee survey responses pp80-89

We build trust and friendship with the people in detention we support. We 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 people in detention to a range of specialist services. Where necessary we also provide phone cards and basic amenities.

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

Last year I began my report by sharing the key aims of the post to which Camille, our Project Co-ordinator, was appointed. It was an exciting time for our group.

In her report this year you will see that she has exceeded the expectations for the year and provided a much strengthened and trained group of visitors and supporters. It has been a joy to witness the increased confidence and number of visitors who are able to support detainees. In addition she has lead the group in educating a variety of individuals and groups about the detention system.

Camille has contributed massively to the efforts of our group to provide joined up support for those at Morton Hall IRC. By collaborating with The Association of Visitors to Detainees, AVID, and many other organisations supporting detainees and ex-detainees she has ensured that the offer we can make is relevant, timely and appropriate.

Ideally we would be working towards making the need for groups such as ours redundant but in 2019 more than 24,000 people were detained in the UK. Of these people 57% leaving detention were granted bail. Overall there was a drop of 8% of people being detained compared with 2018. This number is still far too high.

The trustees are very grateful to Camille, Stuart, our bookkeeper/administrator, Estelle Fischer, our examiner of accounts, and CA Plus who deal with salary payments. Together we have a strong team.

We are supporting some of the most vulnerable members of society at particularly stressful times and our actions can and do make a huge difference to their lives. To those of you who have volunteered in any way to support the group and detainees this year the trustees thank you.

Lynda Wilson
Chair

Coordinator's report

This year we launched our second branch, the Lincoln visitors group with regular meetings, events and visits to people in detention. This has enabled us to be more responsive, with support coming from volunteers who live very locally to the remote immigration removal centre. This year has also seen a continuation of the work we began last year, raising our profile with other organisations, increasing our volume of referrals and visits, and providing support to people at a very difficult point in their lives.

Camille Herreman, December 2019

Volunteers & visits

Due to the challenging nature of the work, there is an inevitable and regular turnover of volunteers. Following another successful recruitment drive in late 2018/early 2019 the total volunteer numbers over the year remained steady, going from 28 to 32. We focused on establishing the newly formed visitors group in Lincoln whilst also managing the turnover of volunteers through regular training and recruitment.

With a total of 110 visits this year we have an estimated presence in the Centre of one visit every 3.3 days.

	2017	2018	2019
Active volunteers over the year	11	28	32
New volunteers trained/inducted		16	9
Volunteers in Lincoln	0	7	10
Currently active volunteers		18	22
Non visiting volunteers	2	3	3
Client referrals		45	68
Number of visits	62	94	110

In December 2019 we launched a New Year recruitment drive for 2020 (see below).



Looking for a more meaningful New Year's resolution?
Extend the hand of friendship to people being held in an Immigration Detention Centre

Imagine being held in prison like conditions, indefinitely, because of your immigration status.
Imagine being isolated from friends and family, with very little certainty about what your future will look like.
Imagine fleeing violence and persecution only to spend months or even years in limbo; a victim of the 'hostile environment'.

Now imagine what a difference regular contact with a friendly, non-judgmental person could make....

We're the Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group and we need volunteers with good listening skills to provide friendship and emotional support, in addition to casework/signposting services, to people being held at Morton Hall IRC, near Lincoln.

No direct experience is necessary and full training is provided, although we do ask for a minimum six month commitment, with one visit every two to three weeks.

For more information about volunteering with us in 2020, please send an email to:
volunteer@mhdetentionvisitors.org

Happy New Year from all of us at Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group!



Our support to clients is person-centred and designed to empower people to make their own decisions about their own cases and the type of support they need. We have made countless referrals to partner organisations, and have provided information about the many services and entitlements people in detention can access.

As a result of our work, clients have been able to access age assessment services, support with bail applications and other legal matters, advice from independent doctors, LGBTQI+ specialist advice, safeguarding services, and post-detention support.

This year we established monthly visitor group supervision sessions in Lincoln alongside our meetings. This enables visitors to share difficult experiences they are having supporting people in challenging situations. We are able to share knowledge as well as guide next steps with individual cases. Visitors receive regular one-to-one supervision from staff based on the complexity of the cases of the people they are supporting and how they are managing. This complements long-running monthly visitor meetings in Nottingham.

Training

In 2019 our training team received several sessions of training on 5 specialised subjects. These were then incorporated into our general volunteer training to ensure we deliver up to date and accurate information.

In collaboration with a variety of organisations, the MHDVG visitor team attended 13 trainings or ‘info shares’ on the following subjects:

- Introduction to immigration detention (with AVID)
- Immigration detention policy and practice (with AVID)
- Access to health and legal services in detention (with AVID)
- Self care (independent psychotherapist)
- Working with people with PTSD (independent psychotherapist)
- Anxiety and depression (independent psychotherapist)
- Working with age-disputed young people (Refugee Council)
- How bail works (independent solicitor)
- How to refer to family tracing (British Red Cross)
- Introduction to hearing voices (Mind)
- Developing an equality and human rights framework (NCVO)

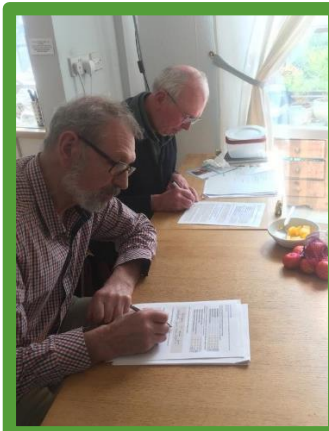


Figure 1 MHDVG and AVID staff deliver training to volunteers in Lincoln and Nottingham 2019

Partnership work and organisational profile

Through the recruitment of volunteers and promotion of events we have continued to extend our reach. This year we have:

- Met and networked with over 30 partner organisations;
- Developed and strengthened our relationships with other organisations working in the field, and specifically those in Lincolnshire (for example Lincoln City of Sanctuary, Justice Arts and Migration Network). This has led to an improvement in services we offer and a greater visibility and knowledge of the organisation.
- Continued to develop our relationship with the management of Morton Hall IRC and the welfare team, with regular meetings taking place between MHDVG, IRC management, and the IRC welfare team. In addition, new contacts were made with the IRC communities teams and chaplaincy teams, which have helped to facilitate communication and improve our service;
- For the first time we have been recognised by the IRC management, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP), and a leading immigration solicitor's firm as providing a "valuable", "useful" and "invaluable" service respectively. Whilst we are glad for recognition from all partner organisations we remain staunchly independent in order to provide the best service possible to our clients;
- Worked with a wide range of partner organisations e.g. Detention Action, Medical Justice, other Visitors Groups across the UK, UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG), the British Red Cross, and Host Nottingham, to name but a few;
- We participated for the first time in an HMIP inspection, and have established the beginnings of a closer working relationship with the Independent Monitoring Board. These organisations act as human rights monitors and we aim to increase the support we are able to give to their work through our day-to-day witnessing of people's experiences in detention.

We already have a very good ongoing relationship with AVID, and we have attended 7 AVID conference days and training events where we can network with all other visitors groups (15+) from across the UK.

Refugee Week and other events

We organised and/or participated in 16 local and national events. 9 of these were advocacy and info sharing network events and meetings. 7 of these were public awareness raising events. We held information stalls, hosted and attended film screenings and gave brief talks raising the profile of immigration detention and its injustices. We participated in 2 'community day' events organised by the IRC, which give opportunities to external organisations to have stalls in the detention centre and promote their work to the detainees. We also met with different IRC staff on an approximately monthly basis.

In June we hosted or presented at 3 Refugee Week events in Nottingham and Lincoln:

- We had a stall at the Nottingham Refugee Week launch attended by several hundred people;
- We hosted a film screening followed by a talk at the Nottingham Playhouse during Refugee Week itself. We spoke of our work at Morton Hall and screened the moving documentary 'Island of the Hungry Ghosts', in which detainees from the

detention centre on Christmas Island (just off the coast of Australia), recount their heart-breaking stories to trauma therapist Poh Lin Lee, the only visitor allowed to set foot on the island;

- In Lincoln, in conjunction with the Welcome Town Project we also participated in a public art and music event held outside the Lincoln bus station to raise awareness of Morton Hall IRC and immigration detention in general.

In September, we had a stall at the Nottingham Green Festival, which was attended by 5000+ people.

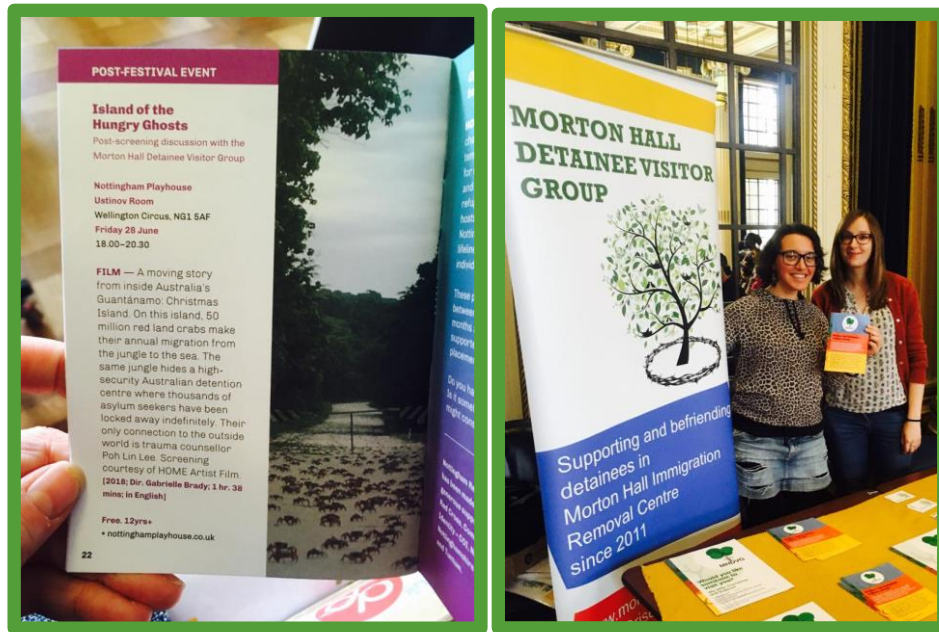


Figure 1 Programme advertising MHDVG film screening & volunteers at the Refugee Week MHDVG stall



Figure 2 MHDVG volunteer raising awareness and recruiting volunteers at a Lincoln Bishop Grosseteste University's Freshers Week

Our volunteers spoke at three public events on the subject of immigration detention:

- A Nottingham week-long book sale launched by The Masked Booksellers, from which a third of the profits were donated to MHDVG;
- The Lincoln Bishop Grosseteste University Volunteering Fair;
- And on the Rebel Soul stage at the Shambala Music Festival in Northamptonshire, where a fifth of the profits were donated to MHDVG. 15,000 people attended.

Fundraising

Grants received in this financial year comprised £7,500 from The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, £5,000 from The Souter Trust, £2,000 from The Leigh Trust, £3,000 from The Noel Buxton Trust, £4,000 from the Swan Mountain Trust, and £400 from the Marsh Christian Trust. Donations were received from the Masked Booksellers (£905), the Refugee Campaign Group (£26), and the Shambala Festival (£439).

Trustees report for the year ending 31 December 2019

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	Reappointed Feb 2019
James Moulton	Trustee	Appointed Feb 2019

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

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4J

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.

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.

Trustees report (continued) for the year ending 31 December 2019

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 2019 achievements and performance section (see contents page)

Financial review

We started the year with £7,455 in the bank. The net payments for the year were £14,749 and net receipts were £23,270. Grants received in this financial year comprised £7,500 from The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, £5,000 from The Souter Trust, £2,000 from The Leigh Trust, £3,000 from The Noel Buxton Trust, £4,000 from the Swan Mountain Trust, and £400 from the Marsh Christian Trust. Donations were received from the Masked Booksellers (£905), the Refugee Campaign Group (£26), and the Shambala Festival (£439). The main items of expenditure were the Project Coordinator's wages and travel, publicity, office rent and mobile phone usage. At the end of the financial year our closing balance was £15,883 with a further £141 in petty cash.

Reserves policy

Last year we adopted a 'reserves policy', which sought to ensure that winding-up costs are covered should it be desirable or necessary to cease activity. These will be sufficient to cover staff redundancies, rent and utility costs and any professional fees likely to be incurred. The reserves target has been met for this financial year.

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees:

Signed: .....

Date: 25/06/2020

Name: Lynda Wilson, Chair

Independent Examiner's Report

**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 2019.

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

**Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group
Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ending
December 31 2019**

	2019		2018	
Receipts	£	£	£	£
Donations		1,370		164
Masked Booksellers	905			
RCG	26			
Shambala Festival	439			
Grants		21,900		500
29th May 1961 CT	7,500			
The Souter Trust	5,000			
The Leigh Trust	2,000			
The Noel Buxton	3,000			
Swan Mountain Trust	4,000			
Marsh Christian Trust	400			
Total receipts		<u>23,270</u>		<u>664</u>
Payments				
Wages, NI, Pensions & Payroll	12,434		8,261	
Bank charges	60		10	
Insurance	265		277	
Office/Phones/Website	804		630	
Visitors Travel/Expenses	177		576	
Staff Travel/Expenses	387		495	
Detainees Phone Cards	-		-	
Recruitment	-		85	
Membership/Subscriptions	60		60	
Publicity	362		-	
Equipment	-		385	
Events	110		35	
Misc Expenses	90		-	
Total payments		<u>14,749</u>		<u>10,813</u>
Surplus		8,521		(10,149)
Statement of Assets and Liabilities		2019		2018
Cash in bank		15,883		7,455
Cash in hand		141		49
less Liabilities due in year		-		-
Total		<u>16,024</u>		<u>7,504</u>
Represented by bank balance b/f		7,455		17,636
Cash in hand b/f		49		17
Surplus income over expenditure		8,521		(10,149)
Total		<u>16,024</u>		<u>7,504</u>

Notes to Morton Hall Detainee Visitors Group accounts for the year ended 2019

1 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.