

LIBERTY

PROTECTING CIVIL LIBERTIES
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Summary of substantive policy discussions **at Liberty Council meeting** **December 2016**

The Policy Officer gave an overview of recent changes to law and policy around immigration detention and a summary of Liberty's past interventions and policy asks. She sought Council's views on areas of focus for Liberty's opposition to immigration detention in 2017.

Council discussed a number of discrete issues Liberty could highlight in its campaigning work against immigration detention, including:

- the number of individuals being unlawfully placed in immigration detention, including British citizens and EU nationals;
- the cost implications of immigration detention;
- detention in prisons as a particularly problematic aspect of immigration detention which exacerbates concerns about cost and restrictions on liberty;
- the issue of segregation within the detention estate and the lack of due process protection against this punitive measure; and
- the complete failure of Government to make provision for those within the immigration detention estate who lack capacity.

Council considered securing a 28 day time limit a realistic and proper target for Liberty's work in 2017 and highlighted evidence demonstrating the detrimental effect of long-term detention on health. Council considered that compelling costs arguments could also be made against protracted detention.

The meeting considered that it was important to show that indefinite detention is a human rights issue separate from the often toxic debate on immigration. Council agreed that Liberty's interventions should focus on human rights violations surrounding the treatment of individuals and should not stray into the realms of broader immigration policy.

Council addressed the importance of emphasising the human side of immigration detention including by highlighting the plight of vulnerable people held in detention. The closure of Cedars and the decision to hold children and families in a less appropriate and more secure facility was raised an important development to highlight in this context. The meeting agreed on the need to tell the personal stories of those subject to immigration detention to help people relate to the issue.