



Home Office

Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 020 7035 4848
Fax: 020 7035 4745
www.gov.uk/home-office

Councillor Annwen Hughes
Council Chairman
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

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21 November 2018

Dear Councillor Hughes,

Thank you for your letter of 25 October to the Minister of State for Immigration about immigration detention. Your letter has been passed to me to reply.

The Government is committed to delivering an immigration system which encourages and supports migrants to comply with our immigration rules; this includes leaving the UK voluntarily where they do not have the right to be here. For those who refuse to comply with our rules, enforcement action, including detention where necessary, remains appropriate. However, the law does not allow for indefinite detention. Any decision to detain, or maintain detention of, an individual requires there to be a realistic prospect of the person's removal from the UK within a reasonable period of time. Current published policy in the UK already requires that detention is only used sparingly and for the shortest period necessary. Regular reviews of an individual's detention are undertaken to ensure that it remains lawful.

More broadly, the Home Secretary made a statement to Parliament on 24 July about immigration detention and the publication of the Stephen Shaw's follow-up review of welfare in detention of vulnerable persons, which you mention in your letter. In that statement, the Home Secretary made clear that he is committed to going further and faster with the reforms to immigration detention. The statement highlighted four main priorities: to encourage and support voluntary returns, including doing more to explore alternatives to detention; to increase transparency around immigration detention; to further improve the support available for vulnerable detainees; and to initiate a new drive on detainee dignity.

The Home Office is taking forward a wide range of activities in response to Mr Shaw's recommendations. A cross-Government programme board is overseeing work to implement the commitments made in the Home Secretary's statement and the Home Office is already implementing changes.

An Adults at Risk in Immigration Detention policy was introduced in September 2016, as part of the Government's response to Mr Shaw's previous review, to strengthen the pre-existing presumption against the detention of those who are particularly vulnerable to harm in immigration detention. In his more recent review, Mr Shaw recommended that the Independent Chief Inspector for Borders and Immigration should be invited to report annually on the implementation of policy. The Home Secretary has committed to do so and the Home Office is in discussion with the Chief Inspector about the scope and timing of the annual reviews.

Yours sincerely



Sheri Yusuf

Border, Immigration and Citizenship System Policy

Email: Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk