

Leading detainee rights charity calls on the government to make UN commitment real

The charity Bail for Immigration Detainees welcomes the government's announcement on removing its opt-out to the UN Convention on the Rights of Child, but calls on the government to make this commitment real by ending the detention of children for immigration purposes.

Amanda Shah, Assistant Director of Bail for Immigration Detainees, commented:

'Today, the government has made a commitment to put children's welfare first. But to transform this rhetoric into reality, the government must now end its policy of indefinitely locking up minors as immigration detainees.'

'In our work we see the serious mental and physical damage done to children by detaining them. One child that we supported lost a third of her body weight while in detention. Others have developed symptoms of depression and anxiety including bedwetting, insomnia and difficulties relating to other children.'

'It is a national scandal that 2,000 children are being detained every year in the UK for the purposes of immigration control. These are the only children in the country who can be locked up indefinitely without the oversight of the courts and without having ever committed a crime.'

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Notes for editors

1. Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) www.biduk.org is an independent charity working with asylum seekers and migrants in removal centres and prisons to secure their release from immigration detention. It runs a specific project to support families with children.
2. A briefing paper on children and immigration detention is available on BID's website

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