



THE DOVER DETAINEE  
**Visitor Group**

Annual Report  
**2009-2010**

Registered Charity No. 1106667

### **Vision Statement**

The aim of the Dover Detainee Visitor Group (DDVG) is to ease the consequences of indefinite immigration detention, the destitution of ex-detainees, and to raise awareness about these issues in order to support community cohesion and integration of those ex-detainees who remain in the UK.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to reduce isolation, increase motivation and self-esteem of immigration detainees held at the Dover Immigration Removal Centre (DIRC), to ease the effects of destitution on ex-detainees who are released into the community (nationwide), to raise awareness about indefinite detention in the UK, and to train and support the volunteers that make all these outcomes possible.

### **Core Values**

We are a non-political and non-campaigning charity that works with indefinite detention issues. Our work is inspired by:

- Justice
- Respect for human beings
- Freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas

### **Chair Person's Report**

Here we are at the end of my first year as Chair, and I can't quite believe how rapidly DDVG has developed. I would like to recount just a few highlights of the year, as it seems to me.

Once we knew we had the BLF (Big Lottery Fund) funding we so desperately needed, we recruited new staff, who have quickly become an essential part of the organisation. How would we manage without them all? It seems impossible to imagine now that a little over a year ago we were still in so much doubt about the next stage.

Instead, we have been able to develop both our core service and new ones. Our first reason for existence remains the same: to visit vulnerable people in DIRC. This is where most of that remarkable group of people, our volunteers, begin and often remain. And it's as important now as it was when I first joined DDVG in 2004. Our new ex-detainee project, begun this year, has already shown what a huge need there is among former detainees who still find themselves in the UK with little or no support. A great deal of planning went into preparing for our conference, which has since been held in June, with a focus on giving a voice to ex-detainees themselves. Already it has become apparent how



*Jerome Phelps (STANDING) Director of London Detainee Support Group speaks to attendees at DDVG's Annual General Meeting, Robin Saunders, Miriam Wood, Ann Whitbourn, Vebi Kosumi and Claire Parker*

much greater the need is than the help we can offer. The third project, visiting at HMP Canterbury, is a work in progress still. We have the volunteers in place, ready to start, but we know how long such things can take to get off the ground.

So we have: wonderfully dedicated staff; wider horizons; and an opportunity to communicate with, for example, church leaders such as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Dover, who we hope will be able to spread more widely our concerns for the welfare of detainees, foreign national offenders and ex-detainees.

A busy, indeed hectic year, in fact, and one I feel proud to have been involved in. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to our continued success - funders, volunteers, committee, and staff.

**Miriam Wood, Chair, July 2010**

### **Director's Report**

This is my 7th report for DDVG and my sixth year running the organisation. It has been a year of achievements, challenges, and successes.

In June 2009 we secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund for the charity to continue our core activities and we now have 3 full time and 3 part time members of the staff. We were delighted to be able to continue our work without having to reduce the service to our

detainees, their families, and ex-detainees. This funding has enabled us to expand and build on our existing work with the ex-detainee project, supporting ex-detainees with integration and an emergency fund. We also have started supporting the families of detainees by providing travel expenses to be able to visit family members.

We felt sad when we heard the news that three volunteers passed away during the past year, each of them was very committed to our cause. Dymphna Nevin was one of the pioneers who was involved in setting up our organization in 2002 and later on became a committee member, Chris Pilcher was so committed to our cause that she helped one of the ex-detainees to settle in the community and then started visiting at Dover with him and become a committee member. John Wilson, although 80 years old, continued to visit and support detainees regularly.

Samia Bezri, who volunteered with DDVG and became a committee member, was trying to settle in the UK with her two sons and husband. They lived in terrible conditions but was trying to give the best start to her two boys, one of them played for Dover football club. All the family integrated well and even with the difficult financial situation was full of hope that they would be granted leave to remain in UK. In late July 2009 just after the schools closed for the summer break they were asked to go all together to sign at an immigration office, within the next 10 days the family was removed to Algeria.



*A group of participants at the Annual General Meeting (29th September 2009)*

<sup>1</sup> Please note that when people are fleeing an oppressive regime it is difficult, if not impossible, for them to acquire official travelling documents.

The dedication that these volunteers have shown highlights the levels of commitment that ordinary people have to support and befriend detainees and we are grateful and moved by the continued commitment of all the volunteers who give their time to support detainees.

We can see some positive moves forward with the new government committing to ending child detention, an issue which the UK has been criticised by the international community for. We would also like to see a time-limit on detention as there is in almost all European Countries.

All that remains is for me to extend our sincere thanks to all of our volunteers, staff and trustees for their ongoing commitment to working with detainees and in particular a special thanks to those ex-detainees who come back to the organisation as volunteers to support others who are in the same situation they faced.

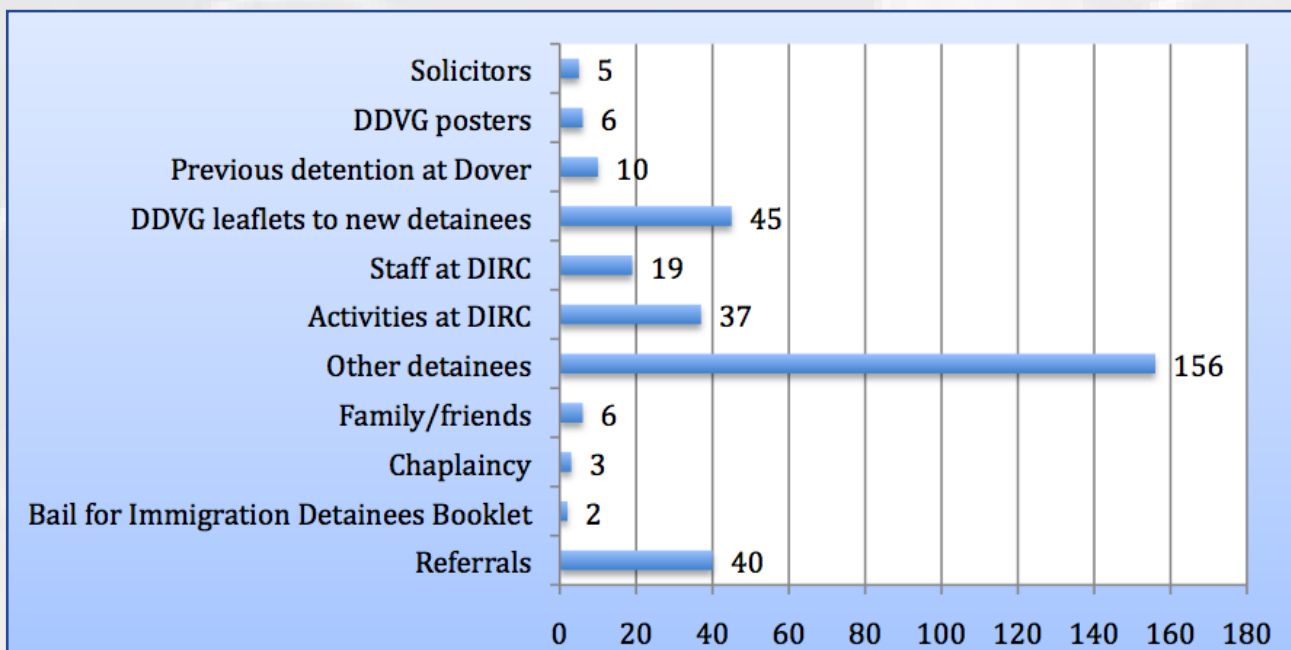
**Vebi Kosumi, Director, July 2010**

### Visiting Scheme at Dover

#### Detainees

The reasons why people are detained vary. Most commonly, detainees can be failed asylum seekers, asylum seekers waiting for a resolution to their case, or immigrants whose visas might have expired. In some

#### Access to the visiting scheme at Dover



cases, people are detained because they entered the UK with a false document. *In any case immigration detention is indefinite.*

Due to the isolation inherent to detention, and the fact that most detainees have no family or friends nearby to visit them, the unconditional friendship and information that DDVG volunteers and staff offer detainees, through regular visits, can be crucial to lessen anxiety and loneliness. In addition, we support detainees with clothing, medical requests, referrals for surety, personal belongings, complaints about the DIRC, passing messages to other bodies, and family issues among others.

During the last year we were in contact with 428 men held at the DIRC. Most of them were between 18-35 years old, and come from all over the world, the top countries being: Afghanistan, Algeria, China, Ghana, India, Iran, Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sri Lanka.

As a way of addressing our clients' communication needs, 2112 phone cards were sent to them along with monthly post cards to allow them to provide feedback about our services. We have also sent phone cards twice to the whole population at the DIRC during the course of this year.

In 2009-2010, DDVG staff and volunteers had the opportunity to spend quality time with detainees

at different events organised by the DIRC, the most significant being the lunch with detainees on the 24th of November 2009, and the Culture Day on the 22nd of September 2009.

In 2009, an 0800 number was made available to our clients in order to assure easy, costless, and direct contact with the organisation and thereby its services. A mobile phone for texting messages to both volunteers and detainees was also put into use this year. In this way, DDVG is using technology to increase the means of communication for both clients and volunteers.

Regarding the provision of clothes, statistics were collected from September 2009: we have provided detainees with 483 items of clothing including jumpers, shirts, t-shirts, trousers, jeans, shorts, coats, socks, hats, scarves, shoes, and others.

In February 2010 we surveyed our clients and a staggering 100% of service users agreed that "visits make them feel better" and that the phone cards sent were useful.

According to our constitutional objective, the DDVG supports not only detainees but also their families. With our new Detainees' Families Support Project, which started at the beginning of March 2009, we are

making a difference by reducing isolation and helping family reunion disrupted by detention. The idea is to issue travel warrants to families for one trip only to visit their relatives held at the DIRC, allowing flexibility in case of emergencies. By the end of March 2010 we had received 15 applications.

**Quotations from post-cards by detainees 2009-2010**

**“... It is refreshing to know there are people out there who care ...”**

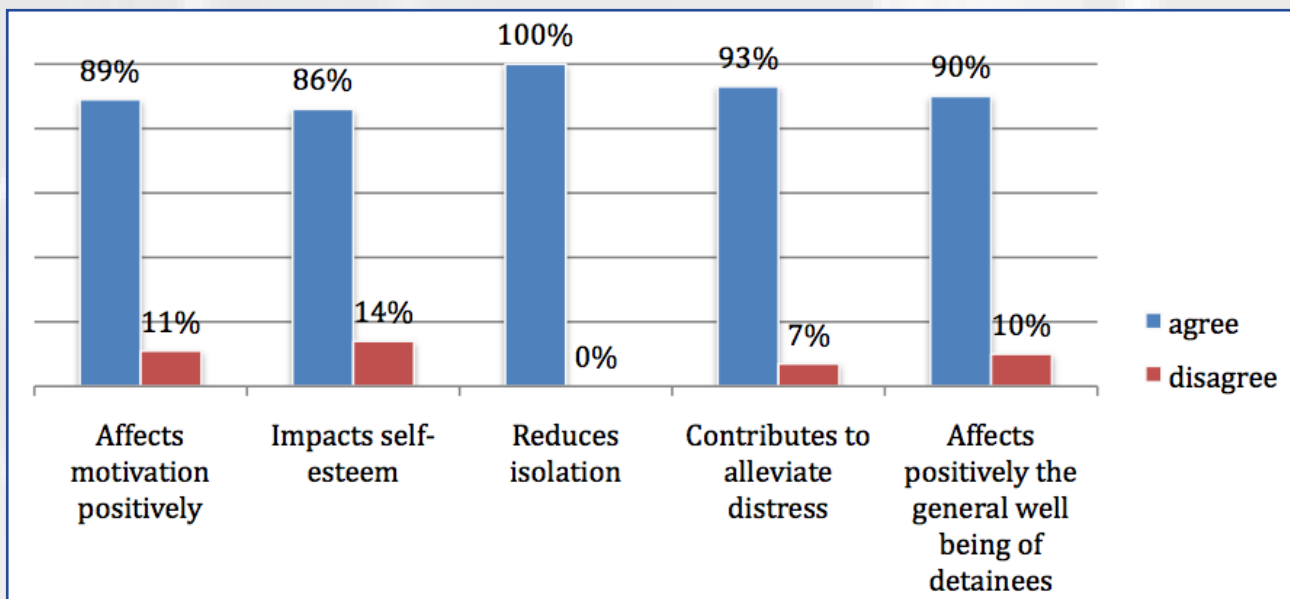
“Keep the good job you are doing. It is refreshing to know there are people out there who care, like you. The phone cards are quite useful too.”

“On behalf of myself and other detainees I would like to thank you all for your adequate support and good service...I will also like to use this opportunity to thank X for her great visits and her concern she is such a nice caring woman. May the almighty God continue to bless you all.”

**“... she is such a nice caring woman.”**

“People like you restore my faith in humanity and I am very grateful for all the help.”

**Benefits to detainees of visiting scheme according to volunteer visitors (taken from Survey 2009)**





**From follow-up forms by volunteers 2009-2010**

(Aug 2009) "X quiet and soft spoken (...) he opened up more about his life (...) X now seems more comfortable talking to me and sharing thoughts, especially life goals and dreams. X seems to look forward to our visits a lot. Overall big improvement in his sense of self."

(Sep 09) "X looked a bit low today but cheered up when talking about general things"

(October 2009) "X seems shy (...) this session was a lot less awkward (...) X started singing Hindi songs!"

(Feb 2010) "X is feeling down (...) He appears to be more optimistic about the future (...) he has increased his self-esteem and his general state of well-being."

*To preserve the identity of our clients we have anonymised their names with an "X" and likewise used (...) to indicate the passing of time between visits.*

**Volunteers**

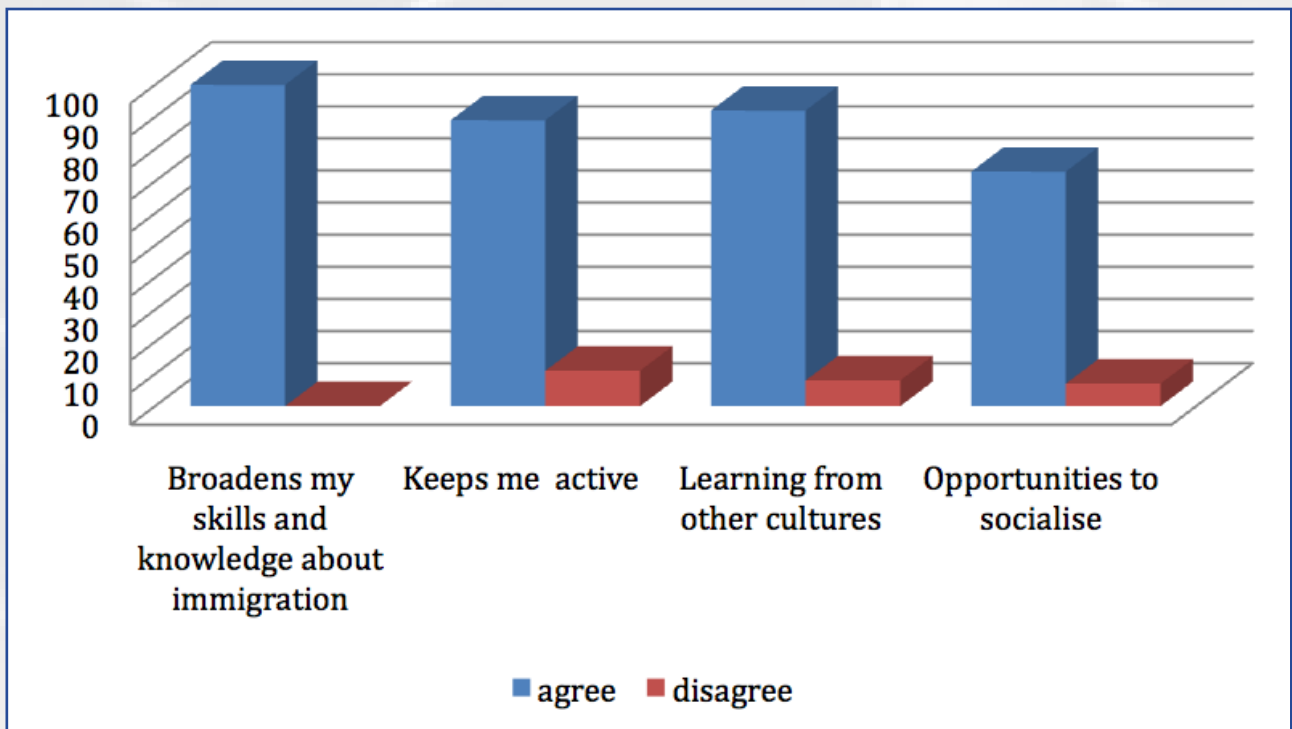
In 2009-2010 we had 92 volunteers of which 55 were active visitors. Our volunteers have undoubtedly increased our service delivery by bringing new skills to our group and improving our performance. Their work has developed our relationships, attracted more funding and consolidated our working networks.

Training was provided for our volunteers in subjects such as suicide prevention, bail for detainees, diversity, asylum process, and legal issues. Refugee and Migrant Justice, Bail for Immigration Detainees, Refugee Action and the DIRC were the providers.

Extra support to our volunteers was offered via meetings and other volunteers' events, including DVD nights and a Christmas party.

A new volunteer recruitment poster was designed to portray our inclusion and diversity policy (health, age, race, etc). We have contacted four volunteer bureaus (Folkestone and Shepway, Canterbury, Thanet and Dover), conveyed our recruiting needs, and specified our inclusion policy.

**Volunteering for DDVG (benefits)**



**Volunteers have said**

"I have never done anything like this before. I find it very knowledgeable; also it keeps me active, meeting people."

**“... It has increased my admiration for the resilience of the human spirit ...**

**”**

"It has increased my admiration for the resilience of the human spirit. Almost without exception the detainees I have visited have been young men."

**“... allowed me to be more sympathetic instead of judgemental ...**

**”**

"It has allowed me to realise the problems that immigrants face and so allowed me to be more sympathetic instead of judgemental."

"Seeing detainees as individuals puts a different perspective on the whole immigration bad press."

**Community Awareness Raising Project (Outreach)**

The community is largely unaware of the reality of indefinite detention in the UK. In order to contribute to address this fact, during the period of this report we provided free talks in the community, and our brochures were distributed at all the events DDVG participated in this year, thus reaching secondary audiences: those who will read the informative brochures afterwards.

An impressive 100% of feedback forms have declared that the presentation clarified knowledge about refugees, asylum seekers, and immigration detainees; has contributed to a more balanced perception of asylum seekers and refugees in the community; and finally has contributed to raising awareness of detention issues.

Our website was updated and modified at the beginning of March 2010. The main changes were the creation of sections on ex-detainees, awareness raising, and the help we provide to detainees' families. Resources such as videos, application forms (section 4 and bail), and leaflets about DDVG and immigration detention were included.



*Associations of Visitors to Immigration Detainees "Coordinator's Conference"*

We have published (4) articles: on the 13/06/09 in the Dover District Voluntary Sector Network Newsletter; on the 5/07/09 at [www.Kentnews.co.uk](http://www.Kentnews.co.uk) by Jenna Pudelek; on the 19/11/09 London Refugee Voice newsletter; and on the 26/3/10 in the Church Times by Robin Saunders.

DDVG participated in different events in the community, including the Dover District and Community Sector Network Compact, Dover Asylum and Immigration Forum, Canterbury Christ Church volunteer fair etc.

DDVG attended an AVID 'Director's Coordinators Conference' in June 2009 in Birmingham which is an opportunity for groups to share experiences regarding the detention.

In September 2009, DDVG was awarded a certificate and a small grant by Eastern and Coastal Kent NHS Link, in recognition of its contribution to Health and Social Care Services.



*Away Day, From left Marianela Clayton, Claire Parker, Miriam Wood, Vebi Kosumi, Sören Keil, Jenny Davis, Eve Clark, Victor Fiorini, Brenda Hounsell and Beatriz Fernandez (Refugee Action).*

### **Organisation and Capacity building**

An "away day" on the 9th of December 2009 was organised by DDVG and Basis Project from Refugee Action. During this day, DDVG trustees, some volunteers, and members of staff met to review DDVG aims and the way forward for the next few years.

A new brochure featuring all the projects DDVG is managing was created as a way to give very succinct information about the whole work of the organisation.

Envisioning long term planning and potential partnerships, DDVG joined the London Refugee Voice and Kent CAN in 2009.

DDVG participated in and contributed to the "Peer to Peer" support scheme under the umbrella of the Basis Project. We were able to share skills, good practice, and expertise in fundraising with another Refugee Community Organisation (RCO).

### **Ex-detainees**

Detainees can be freed into the community. When ex-detainees are released on bail, they can apply for some public funds. If they are released on Temporary Admission (TA) they have no recourse to public funds, and this makes them vulnerable to become destitute. Even some people who have been granted refugee status can suffer from destitution in the first six months



after the decision has been taken. This is why we redesigned our ex-detainee project to concentrate, from November 2009 onwards, on these people who remain in the UK but have limited support or none.

Since the re-launch of this project, it has helped ex-detainees being released not only from the DIRC but detention centres nationwide, increasing their chances of a better life.

We have provided assistance to ex-detainees on a range of issues. These include providing vital information about solicitors, other organisations, referrals to doctors, education and voluntary work, as well as signposting for other organisations which assist with essentials such as food (i.e soup/food kitchens) or clothes (i.e Red Cross).

During the period of this report we have been in contact with 80 ex-detainees. We have provided emergency support to 7 people that had no accommodation, 12 with food vouchers, and 21 with clothes vouchers. The help and aid the project provided has relieved these ex-detainees from immediate destitution.

From November 2009 until the end of March 2010 we have reimbursed travel expenses 45 times. We have also set up an Oyster Card Scheme, handing out 20 Oyster Cards to London based ex-detainees, which are topped-up with £20 per month. This Scheme is highly successful and gives these ex-detainees the possibility to travel in London without having to borrow money from friends. It allows DDVG to support these ex-detainees without requesting them to send in their travel tickets every month.

### **Dover Immigration Removal Centre**

The Diversity Team inside the DIRC invited the DDVG to form part of the training sessions that are provided to the Peer Support/Helping Hands (a team of detainees trained in diversity issues and who can help other detainees cope with detention issues).

The DDVG now has a fixed slot in these training sessions where members of the Helping Hands group learn about what we can do to support immigration detainees and how they can refer people to DDVG.

We continue to attend the bi-monthly diversity meetings organised by DIRC and the quarterly meeting with the centre manager, which have allowed us to advocate constantly for our most vulnerable clients.

The DDVG continues to meet quarterly with the Centre Management to raise issues and advocate for detainees.

The relationship with the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) has continued to strengthen and one of their representatives attended one of our support meetings and gave an insight into their work at the DIRC.



**Our last year's aims:**

- We finalised our business plan as a strategy document for the next 5 years.
- We developed the ex-detainee project, which is settled, and running.
- We designed a project for a visiting scheme at Canterbury Prison and are currently in the process of fundraising for it.

**Next year's aims:**

- Start the Canterbury Prison Visiting Scheme once funding is secured.
- Expand the Community Awareness Raising Project.
- Concentrate efforts in fundraising beyond 2012.



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST MARCH 2010

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £	2009 £
<b>Incoming resources:</b>				
Donations and gifts	479	0	479	2,624
Grants	24,500	157,500	182,000	107,415
Other income	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>24,979</b>	<b>257,500</b>	<b>182,479</b>	<b>110,107</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>				
Direct Charitable expenditure	8,087	106,166	114,253	102,036
<b>Other expenditure</b>				
Management and administration	3,231	16,376	19,607	10,823
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>11,318</b>	<b>122,542</b>	<b>133,860</b>	<b>112,859</b>
<b>Net movement in funds for the period</b>	<b>13,661</b>	<b>34,958</b>	<b>48,619</b>	<b>-2,752</b>
<b>Total opening funds</b>	<b>17,299</b>	<b>10,511</b>	<b>27,810</b>	<b>30,562</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>30,960</b>	<b>45,469</b>	<b>76,429</b>	<b>27,810</b>

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2010

	£	2010 £	£	2009 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
Tangible assets		2,498		399
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Cash at bank and in hand	79,260		28,586	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	5,329		1,175	
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>73,931</b>		<b>27,411</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>76,429</b>		<b>27,810</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>		<b>30,960</b>		<b>17,299</b>
<b>Restricted funds</b>		<b>45,469</b>		<b>10,511</b>
		<b>76,429</b>		<b>27,810</b>

The full set of accounts for the year can be obtained from DDVG. The accounts have been audited by Higson APS Ltd

## TRUSTEES AND MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE (From September 2009)

Miriam Wood (Trustee – Chair)  
Ann Whitbourn (Trustee-Treasurer)  
Robin Saunders (Trustee)  
Alan Ramsay  
Lazarus Banda  
Denis Komakech  
Liz Wheelan  
Eve Clark  
Margaret Pietroforte  
Charlotte Dunne  
Sylvia Gilham

## CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Roy Millard from Migrant Helpline/  
Susan Fawkus from January 2010  
Chris Lewis from Refugee and Migrant Justice/Michael  
Watkins from January 2010  
Tony Fuller from Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN)

## STAFF (2008-2009)

Vebi Kosumi (Director)  
Marianela Clayton (Strategic Planning and  
Development Manager)  
Victor Fiorini (Volunteer-Detainee Manager)  
Brenda Hounsell (Finance Manager)  
Sören Keil (Ex-Detainee Manager)  
Claire Parker (Project Administration Worker)

## FUNDERS (2008-2009)

Big Lottery Fund  
Allen Lane Foundation  
Bromley Trust  
Eleonor Rathbone Charitable Trust  
J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust  
Norda Trust  
Lloyds TSB  
Pfizer Ltd  
Truemark Trust  
The Lankelly Chase Foundation  
The Henry Smith  
The Woodward Charitable Trust  
Nicky and Eileen Barber (Barclays Wealth)  
Jill Franklin Trust  
The Cole Charitable Trust



We have also received funding from individuals and other sources

## AUDITORS

Higson APS Ltd



THE DOVER DETAINEE  
Visitor Group

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**Charity No:** 1106667 (Governed by Constitution)  
**Patron:** The Most Revd Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury