



Samphire

Annual Report 2015-2016

From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016



Registered Charity: 1106667

Thanks to our funders

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*and our generous
individual donors*



Staff

Christine Oliver

**Operations Manager &
Ex-Detainee Project Manager**

Brenda Hounsell

Finance and Administration Manager

Angie Murphy

Ex-Detainee Caseworker

Caroline Browne *(joined Samphire this year)*

Community Engagement Coordinator

Indre Lechtimiakyte *(joined Samphire this year)*

Ex-Detainee Caseworker

Fraser Paterson *(left Samphire this year)*

Detention Support Project Manager

Rosa Potter *(left Samphire this year)*

Detention Support and Awareness Officer

Trustees

Soeren Keil (Chair)

Philippa Paine

(Vice-Chair)

Lily Parrot (Secretary)

David Bates

Elvis Ngatom

Eve Clark

Hannah Ambriz

Juliette Wales

Liz Whelan

Liza Seed

Neil Calver



Chair's report

The last 12 months have in many respects been very challenging for Samphire. The closure of the Dover Immigration Removal Centre (DIRC) at the end of 2015 meant an end to our Detention Support Project. As this project was the main reason Samphire was created in 2002 (under the name “Dover Detainee Visitor Group”), its ending meant that Samphire had to engage in serious “soul-searching.” We consulted widely with volunteers, associates, staff and the Trustees, and came to the conclusion that Samphire should continue the very successful and well received work of the Ex-Detainee Project, but that it should also shift its focus to community engagement in Dover. Hence, we recruited a Community Engagement Project Coordinator and expanded our activities in Dover and the local area to provide talks, show movies, organise events and engage with other local groups, all with the aim of raising awareness about the benefits of migration and busting myths about asylum seekers and refugees.

I am happy to say that in the summer of 2016 Samphire has found its new mission, continuing its work through the Ex-Detainee Project and engaging more strongly in community cohesion. As the Chair of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank all volunteers, associates, other Trustees and the Samphire staff for their hard work and their dedication to Samphire.

Dr Soeren Keil, August 2016

Detention Support Project

2015-2016 was the third and final year of Big Lottery funding of the Detention Support and Awareness Project, providing emotional and practical support to people detained in Dover, and feeding our insights and experience into Samphire's awareness raising and advocacy work. The end of funding coincided with the abrupt closure of the Centre in November 2015.

Assisting people detained

Detention Support assisted 246 people detained in Dover from 1 April 2014 to the date of closure. Of these, 141 contacted us for the first time in this period. 13% of the people assisted were detained for over a year.

Detention is a very lonely place – detainees are out of sight and out of mind. The work our Detention Support team – Fraser, Rosa and Samphire's volunteer visitors - made a real difference to the lives of people in detention in Dover.

You folk are like a lighthouse sending out a beacon of light to we folks shipwrecked on the "Home Office sucks".

Raising Awareness

Our 2015 AGM combined our charity's formal business with a community event - 'Facts over Fear'. A large group of local people came together to discuss issues relating to migration affecting the town and to enjoy food and music. Increased interest in migration issues meant that Samphire was featured in a variety of local, national and international media, allowing us to counter some of the damaging myths that continue to be propagated about migration.

What the Detention Support and Awareness Project learned

The end of detention in Dover is of course welcome, however, indefinite immigration detention continues to be utilised in the UK. It is important that the learning from our experience is shared so that other groups may benefit from it. We have published and circulated our Detention Support Manual and continue to support organisations working with detainees.

Casework to help people secure release, in tandem with a volunteer visiting scheme to reduce isolation, had the

greatest impact on detainee well-being. Public events and talks to young people and community groups are most effective in engaging local people on migration issues.

Key achievements

- We were independent and advocated in the best interests of detainees:

"I think Samphire were the only group of people encountered by people in detention who really were on their side. Offering emotional support, friendship [and] non-legal casework." **Evaluation Survey respondent 2015**

- 1298 detainees supported over the last three years.

- 91% of detainees assisted reported an improvement in well-being.

- Supported and trained 415 volunteers (mostly visitors to detention).

-418 young people reached by talks in schools and colleges.

I so much appreciate your visit yesterday.
Samphire you people really give me joy and happiness
which I couldn't believe it. am happy to say thanks
to Samphire.

Ex-Detainee Project

The project completed the second year of Big Lottery Reaching Communities funding, allowing us to continue advising, enabling, and empowering ex-detainees, as well as influencing policy to improve life after detention. Between 01/04/2015 and 31/03/2016:

- We have taken on 129 new ex-detainee clients.
- Assisted people from 72 countries (and stateless individuals).
- Dealt with 2856 individual requests for assistance.
- Had contact with 607 individual ex-detainees.
- Increased the proportion of female clients to 10% (up from 9%).

The requests for assistance we received covered a wide range of problems. Our top 3 requests in order were once again for emotional support, emergency support and telephone cards to facilitate communication.

Emotional support

We provided emotional support to ex-detainees 500 times in the 12 months this report covers. The positive impact of this support during times of crisis cannot be quantified.

At a time in my life where I had no friend nor family, you stepped in as a friend\family and your words of encouragement kept me alive till this date...This one-to-one conversation on the telephone helped me massively, please continue to do the good work that you've started. The next time you are probing whether your work matters believe me it does. You never judged me or was mean. Your voice was the only compassionate sound I heard, during some of my darkest and confusing struggling hours. (Email from an ex-detainee who called when contemplating suicide)

Emergency support

Destitution amongst ex-detainees remains a huge problem and looks set to increase when provisions in the Immigration Act 2016 take effect. Individual donations and grants from small funders allow us to provide essential emergency support to stave off destitution whilst we try to find longer term solutions

for people. This year we provided emergency support on 329 occasions.

'Thanks for the support, it came just when I needed it most.' (Text message from ex-detainee who had received emergency financial support).

Telephone cards

The calling credit we provide to ex-detainees is a lifeline, allowing people to remain in contact with family, friends and solicitors. We provided 301 phone cards this year.

Ex-Detainee Conference 2015

The 2015 Conference was a great success, with knowledgeable speakers and practical workshops. We received lots of positive feedback from ex-detainees and stakeholders who attended. People enjoyed listening to ex-detainee speakers and attending the workshops.

'I always learn a lot from the presentations anytime I attend the conference.'

'The conference has lifted my life up.'

'Lovely atmosphere, great to hear former detainees speaking.' (Conference feedback forms)

Community Engagement & Awareness Raising

Following the closure of Dover IRC and Samphire’s “soul searching”, Samphire employed a full time Community Engagement Coordinator – Caroline Browne - who started work in February 2016. This post was generously funded for a four month pilot project by The Port of Dover Community Fund, with commitment by Samphire to fund the project for a further eight months.

This decision reflected that fact that this period saw the media and politicians continue a worsening spiral of negativity on migration that has ignored the long history of immigration to Britain and the material and intangible ways it enriches our society. We have seen the effect of this in increasingly draconian immigration laws. We have also seen it in Dover where the far right have marched almost monthly on our streets. It’s for this reason that Samphire’s Community Engagement & Awareness Raising Project tries to bring a balanced view on migration, both locally and nationally, and works in Dover to facilitate integration and community cohesion.

The new Community Engagement Coordinator began by engaging volunteers and supporters in a conversation about what we could achieve. We wanted to see a Dover which: was well-informed; recognised and responded to the needs of migrants and refugees; celebrated multiculturalism and diversity; and developed a culture of welcome. From this we have worked to build on the great success of the awareness raising elements in the Detention Support Project by:

Offering talks in the community

We continued our work giving talks to schools, universities and local groups with the aim of reaching out to those who wouldn't traditionally engage in conversations about migration. We established a specialist volunteer focus group to develop a migration education strategy and began to build stronger relationships with local schools.

Organising awareness raising and community building events

The project aims to build on the great success of *Against the Tide* and *Facts over Fiction* by organising events locally which encourage a wide range of people to

engage in learning about and celebrating the impact of immigration and diversity.

Maintaining an alternative voice

We maintained an alternative voice of positive and fact driven stories about migration. We continue to use social media and the local press to reach different groups of people. We released a new blog of migrant stories: <https://letstalkaboutmigration.wordpress.com>. The blog was launched at the University of Kent's Projections Festival where Bamidele (an ex-detainee, refugee and our first blog contributor) told his story to a human megaphone and had his voice amplified by the crowd.

Creating spaces for engagement

We established a weekly community drop-in at the Big Local Hub in Dover to provide a public facing space for migration questions and concerns. We engaged with Dover District Council (DDC) and began talks to work in partnership on the Folkestone Road Hub, a community engagement space in Priory ward and were invited by the council to sit on the Priory Together Community Task Force to advise on migrant issues.

The Future

Our vision: changing attitudes to, and improving the lives of, ex-detainees and migrant communities.

Our mission: to improve the lives of people released from immigration detention and experiencing destitution in the UK, and to support the development of well-informed, cohesive and diverse communities in the Dover area and beyond

2015-2016 was a year of great change for Samphire – with our original reason for being vanishing and our work evolving into new areas. We hope that 2017 will be a year of consolidation for our new Community Engagement Project, where we can continue to build on the excellent work of the pilot project.

Securing continuation funding for the very important work of the Ex-Detainee Project and the Community Engagement Project are the priorities for Samphire going forward. We feel confident that these successful projects will attract the necessary funding to continue, but, like all charities, we are aware of how precarious a

situation we face without it. With financial security Samphire will be able to have the maximum impact to achieve our objectives.

Aims for 2016-2017

1. Bring financial stability to the Ex-Detainee project to allow it to continue providing practical and emotional advice and support to people affected by immigration detention.
2. Consolidate and strengthen the reach, and increase the impact, of the Community Engagement Project to engage harder to reach groups locally.
3. Utilise Samphire's unique experience and voice to bring a greater degree of humanity to the conversation about migration at both local and national levels.

We look forward to the year ahead and hope to have made great progress towards achieving our shared vision by next year.



Samphire 2015-2016



Our Detention Support Project

Ended this year following the closure of Dover Immigration Removal Centre in November.

In the last three years

- We assisted 1,339 detainees.
- 93 % of clients reported improved welfare.
- 93 volunteers gained new skills.

You folk are like a lighthouse Sending out a beacon of light to we folks shipwrecked on the "Home Office rocks".

Samphire is an independent charity based in Dover that supports those released from immigration detention and engages with local communities on migration issues.

Our Ex-Detainee Project

Supports a nationwide network of migrants facing hardship after release from immigration detention.

This year

- We supported 607 ex-detainees.
- We took on 129 new clients.
- We dealt with 2856 requests for assistance.
- We assisted people from 72 countries.



Our Community Engagement & Awareness Raising Project

Supports the development of well informed, cohesive and diverse communities in Dover and beyond.

This year

- We ran two successful community events.
- We employed a new full time member of staff who began in February to develop this work.

So watch this space!

www.samphireproject.org.uk

Contact

Community Engagement

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Ex-Detainee Project

Mon/Tues/Thurs/Fri

Helpline open 10am-1pm

01304 201 535

0800 917 9397

"The existence of this project gives hope to all who are involved in this area of work."

Community Engagement Project

"I cannot tell you how thankful I am for you and all

Samphire have done to help me."
Ex-Detainee Project

Find out more...



@samphire_



samphireproject

samphireproject.org.uk



LOTTERY FUNDED

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