
Arrest and Detention of Children Subject to Immigration Control

The Children's Commissioner for England has published a report titled 'The Arrest and Detention of Children Subject to Immigration Control'. The report's aim was to examine 'progress made in addressing concerns raised regarding children's experience of immigration removal process and detention'.

Although the report notes progress made in implementing some recommendations from the Commissioner's previous report, the recent report still finds areas of concern.

The arrest and detention of children subject to immigration control

Some of the important areas highlighted in the report are:

- while average length of detention for children was 14 days, some children were being held for longer
 - evidence was found (from examining files) that some of the required checks were either not made or made insufficiently well before arrest to minimise detention period for children
 - children in the detention centre complained about the arrest process. Children commented on the loud or violent ways in which homes were entered, rude behaviour or torment by officers, and the shadowing of children using the bathroom and toilet. Children also complained about being physically escorted from their homes, thereby making them feel and look like criminals
 - the use of 'caged vans' to transport children had stopped
 - infrastructure facilities in the detention centre had improved
 - number of improvements on healthcare were noted. Concerns nevertheless were noted on assessing emotional well being of children in detention. The report found GP's proforma used for initial medical examination was inadequate for a proper assessment of a child's physical and emotional needs
- Clare Sambrook, writing in *The Guardian*, raised her concern on government's criticism of the report. She also highlights that significant research in the damage that detention does to children was rubbished by the UK Border Agency director of criminality and detention.