



Dawn raids.
Detention.
Deportation.

Barnardon't.

BARNARDO'S COMPLICIT IN NEW CHILD PRISON

On March 9th Barnardo's announced that it would be running a new family detention centre in partnership with the UK Border Agency (UKBA). In a classic case of doublespeak, the centre, which will imprison up to 9 families at a time for the week before their forced deportation, has been called a 'pre-departure accommodation' unit, conjuring up images of departure lounges and airport hotels. In reality it will be a prison with a 2.3m palisade fence, electronic gates and 24 hour security with the power to use violent physical restraint techniques already condemned after resulting in deaths at other detention centres.

The young inmates at Pease Pottage, near Gatwick, will be among the most vulnerable people in the country. Many will have escaped unimaginable horrors in their countries of origin, and may face torture, persecution or death after their deportation from the UK. Technically the detained families are 'failed asylum seekers' but often all that means is that the famously cynical UKBA has refused their claim on the basis of tiny inconsistencies in their recollection of highly traumatic and confusing events, the lack of supporting documentation to prove that they were tortured (although many still bear the scars), or legal aid running out halfway through a perfectly valid appeal.

For young children, the results of being sent back to a hostile country can be horrific, and the stress of being imprisoned beforehand results in serious mental and physical health problems. In 'State Sponsored Cruelty', a 2010 report by Medical Justice, 74 out of 141 detained children surveyed had been 'psychologically harmed' by detention, resulting in food refusal, development regression and suicidal behaviour. 48% were born in the UK, and were at risk of deportation to a country they had never even visited.

Barnardo's claims that by helping to run the prison at Pease Pottage it will be in a position to care for the young detainees, and that it will speak up if the children's welfare is not prioritised. But how can it do this under the circumstances? The experience of being locked-up and the stress of impending deportation are inherently damaging to children's health, and with a lucrative government contract at stake it will not be in Barnardo's interest to rock the boat. By taking the Pease Pottage contract Barnardo's is legitimising an abusive system of dawn raids, detention and deportation of innocent and traumatised people which often ends in further persecution, torture and death in the country of origin. Surely caring people should resist the kidnap of children from their schools and communities, not comply with it?

Barnardo's has a long and proud history as one of the UK's oldest children's charities. Its complicity in the rebranding of child detention casts a sour stain on 145 years of good work, as well as the ethics of its new Chief Executive. Tell Barnardo's today that you expect it to uphold the rights of the child, not to help the UKBA rebrand itself as somehow more ethical. Tell them you don't want to donate money to an organisation that imprisons children. Tell them to pull out of the Pease Pottage prison!



Contact Barnardo's Today!

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Or complete a feedback form at:

www.banardos.org.uk/who_we_are/contact_us.htm



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