

Understanding Immigration Detention: Welfare, Staff and the Quality of Life

Work by Mary Bosworth, Professor of Criminology, at the University of Oxford, has informed and influenced immigration detention policies relating to staff and welfare in the UK and to the development of minimum standards of care in Europe



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Professor Bosworth has been the sole academic with permission to conduct independent research inside British Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) since 2009. Her work has been funded by a range of sources including: the British Academy, the Nuffield Foundation, the Leverhulme Trust, the University of Oxford John Fell Fund, and the European Research Council. Professor Bosworth has provided expert evidence and opinion to the Home Office, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, the Council of Europe, the 2015 Independent Review of Welfare in Immigration Detention carried out by Stephen Shaw, the 2015 Independent Review into Yarl's Wood carried out by Kate Lampard, and to the private custodial firms running the centres. She was also invited to present on her research in immigration detention to a one-day workshop/roundtable for the Cabinet Office on some of the National Security aspects of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review.

From 2010-2012 Mary designed and implemented the Measure of the Quality of Life in Detention (MQLD). Results from this multi-site survey have been published in two separate reports. A third trial is under preparation and will be completed in 2016

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across 4 different IRCs, before being considered for sector-wide adoption by the Home Office.

In 2013, Professor Bosworth was invited to present on 'vulnerable people in detention' at the Council of Europe as part of a bid to design guidelines about minimum standards in detention. Her contribution was used to help revise the standards before they were sent out. Within the UK her 2014 book on immigration detention is used by HMIP in training of new members of the immigration detention inspection team. In 2015 Mary was commissioned to produce a literature review on Mental Health in Immigration Detention for the Independent Review of Welfare by Stephen Shaw, the former Prison and Probation Ombudsman. This document, tabled to Parliament, is currently under review by the Home Secretary.

Professor Bosworth is also Director of Border Criminologies, a large-scale international network of scholars and practitioners and a web-based platform, which showcases original research on the intersections between migration control and criminal justice. Border Criminologies, which founded and hosts the only open access SSRN journal on these issues, as well as an active blog, social media and teaching resources is supported by funding from the European Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust. Border Criminologies has given its name to a new subfield of criminology, with the first appointment recently advertised in it at Birkbeck Law School, in the University of London.

