

No. 617/18

5<sup>th</sup> November 2018

**To: All Branches**

Dear Colleague

**Yarl's Wood Detention Centre - A Political Protest by CWU Women  
Saturday 24th November 2018**

Yarl's Wood Detention Centre opened in 2001 and is one of the largest detention centres in Europe, holding over 400 people - mainly women and children.

A protest has been organised outside Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in Bedford on **Saturday 24th November 2018**.

Controversy has never been far from Yarl's Wood. Allegations of mistreatment against women being held include sexual abuse, racism and violence. Some women have also committed suicide. There is no doubt that the women being held here, through various hunger strikes, have suffered through their incarceration, as they continue to face indeterminate periods of detention.

When the most recent hunger strike came to an end, a tweet from 'Detained Voices' read "The hunger strike is now over but we are still hungry for our freedom and justice. We will continue to protest and fight for our human rights, and will not participate in detention."

There is no doubt that the fight for these women and children to get their freedom, their dignity and respect, is a cause of great interest to CWU women - this is an important opportunity to show solidarity to these detained women.

The origins of this solidarity protest stem from the Eastern region and their Regional Women's Committee. They are keen for women all over the UK to come to Bedford and join them in what is a wider protest where demonstrators plan to link arms and surround the detention centre. We are liaising with Paul Moffat - Eastern Regional Secretary and Laura Snell Chair of the Eastern Region Women's Committee and full logistics will be communicated in the week leading to the demo.

The nearest hotels to the detention centre are the Travelodge and Premier Inn (post code MK41). In terms of travelling from Bedford train station to Yarl's Wood details can be found [here](#):

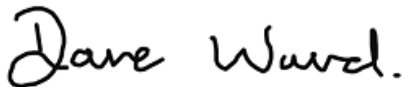
<http://www.yarlswood.co.uk/contact-us>

Branches should note that attendance shall be covered by the Branch or relevant Regional Women's Committee.

Yarl's Wood is one of 11 immigration detention centres in Britain, run by a private sector company. It holds up to 410 people, mostly women, some pregnant, who are awaiting and often fighting deportation. Many of these women have done nothing wrong. Around half of the women in Yarl's Wood have claimed asylum and many are still waiting for decisions and appeals to be heard. But, even if they aren't criminals they are detained as though they are, in a place which feels like a prison.

Any enquiries should be referred to the Equal Opportunities Department in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ward  
**General Secretary**