

# Get Involved: Pray

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## EMBRACE Prayer Group July 2011

On Tuesday 5th July 2011, in a small ceremony attended by a few invited guests and dignitaries, the Larne Immigration Detention Unit, known as the Larne House, was officially opened. Designed to house 21 detainees at any one time, it is based in the recently converted custody suite of Larne PSNI station. Now, for the first time, Northern Ireland has a 'fit for purpose' immigration detention unit. In principle, detainees should be held for no longer than seven days before being removed to longer term detention facilities in Scotland or England. It will also reduce the need for immigration detainees to be held in isolated custody suites across the Province. It will not be used for children.

EMBRACE has grave reservations about the principle, as well as the practice, of detention for immigrants who have not been convicted of any crime. (Those held on criminal charges are detained in prison accommodation.) EMBRACE accepts however that, at least for the time being immigration detention is a reality. Therefore, EMBRACE is supportive of a volunteer chaplaincy service being provided for the Larne House which will be largely composed of ministers from a spectrum of Christian Churches in the Larne area. Training for these chaplains is being provided in August with a view for them to start work at the Unit as soon as possible.

*Contributed by Rev Richard Kerr*

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### **This month we pray for the following.**

- We give thanks for the people who, either by choice or out of necessity, come to live in Northern Ireland and bring with them unique traditions and stories.
- We give thanks for the churches, organisations, and individuals who advocate for humane treatment for those being held by the UK Border Agency.
- We pray for the government who makes immigration laws and regulations, and that the individuals making important decisions regarding immigration might be mindful of the needs of people coming to and living in Northern Ireland.
- We pray for UK Border Agency officers who will work in the Larne House and that they might seek to reduce the amount of trauma and stress experienced by those being detained.
- We pray for the ministers who will train to volunteer in the Larne House and for the opportunities they might have to support and stand alongside those being detained.
- We pray that all of us might be open to ways in which we can advocate for justice for those who are marginalised in society and for those who do not have a voice in the immigration system.