

## **BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY**

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### **Second Witness Statement of Ms Anna Marie Pincus**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12 July 2021. I provided an earlier statement in response to a request under Rule 9 dated 27 April 2021.

I, Anna Marie Pincus, Director of Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group, The Orchard, 12 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD, will say as follows:

1. I am the Director of Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (“GDWG”). Between April 2017 to August 2017 (“the relevant period”) I was employed as the Senior Advocacy Co-ordinator and Outreach Manager of GDWG. From 1 January 2019 I was Acting Director of GDWG. I became Director of GDWG on 1 April 2019.
2. I refer to my first statement, which responds to a Rule 9 request dated 27 April 2021 and contains most of my answers to the questions now asked in the Rule 9 request of 12 July 2021. This statement is intended only to deal with some brief additional points.
3. In my first statement I referred to our clients’ descriptions of the cramped and very unpleasant prison-like conditions of the rooms where they slept. In the relevant period people also spoke of the overcrowding of communal areas, queues to be allowed to pass through locked doors to reach communal areas in other parts of the IRC, queues for food, poor quality food, high levels of tension and the almost constant noise of people shouting and banging on doors and of doors clanging shut. People often described feeling ‘like criminals’ due to the prison architecture. Those who had not experienced prison were frequently shocked at finding themselves within prison architecture and described it as having a severe impact upon their ability to function in detention, with

some people too scared to venture from their cells. People also complained of a lack of facilities, activities and opportunities for education; of having little to distract themselves from their anxieties; and generally, of there being few constructive ways for them to get through their time at Brook House. This frequently led them to conclude that, in these respects, Brook House was ‘worse than prison’. In my view, the Verita report was correct in concluding, *“The lack of activities and opportunities for exercise present a risk to detainees’ welfare and wellbeing and to the general safety and security of the centre..... The size and layout of Brook House, its lack of a sports hall and its limited outside space make it unsuitable to accommodate as many detainees as it does. It is also an unsuitable environment in which to hold detainees for more than a few weeks.”*<sup>1</sup> Many of the complaints described above remain ongoing concerns for people detained at Brook House after the relevant period and were identified as such by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in his latest July 2019 report on Brook House.<sup>2</sup>

4. Detained people were also treated poorly on release from Brook House. Volunteer Visitors reported encountering released men walking the perimeter road or stuck at Gatwick not knowing how to use the travel warrant for public transport, or with a warrant that would only get them so far. Many were released late in the day, needing to travel across the UK to their Section 4 address or other accommodation. Other detained people were released to no address at all. Homelessness after detention is still an issue and we supported four people in 2020 who had no address on release from detention.
5. I have been asked about new training for the Brook House IMB members. We are aware that there was a move towards greater training in late 2020. I understand that happened online. I cannot say whether I saw any changes of approach after that due to relatively little contact with the service the IMB provide in the centre, which makes it difficult to give an informed view. I am aware of our clients expressing reticence to sharing a complaint with the IMB, saying if they do it ‘won’t make a difference’.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.verita.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/G4S-version-report.pdf> at paragraphs 1.56 & 1.57 [CJS0073709].

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/09/Brook-House-web-2019.pdf>

<b>Statement of Truth</b>	
<p>I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.</p> <p>I am content for this witness statement to form part of the evidence before the Brook House Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.</p>	
Name	Anna Marie Pincus
Signature	<b>Signature</b>
Date	18/11/21