

## **BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY**

---

### **First Witness Statement of Ms Sile Reynolds on the behalf of Freedom from Torture**

---

I, Ms Sile Reynolds, provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 30 July 2021. I have been authorised by Freedom from Torture, (Freedom from Torture, 111 Isledon Road, London, N7 7JW) to provide this witness statement.

1. I am the Head of Asylum Advocacy with Freedom from Torture. I have held this role from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. Previous to this role, I was the Senior Policy Advisor from May 2015.
2. Freedom from Torture is a UK-based human rights organisation and one of the largest torture rehabilitation centres in the world. Each year we provide clinical and legal services including medico-legal reports to more than 1,000 survivors of torture in the UK, the vast majority of whom are asylum seekers or refugees. We also have a Legal Advice and Welfare Service that provides support to torture survivors in treatment at a Freedom from Torture centre.

#### **Submissions**

3. I submit in evidence, on behalf of Freedom from Torture, the document 'Freedom from Torture submissions to Brook House Inquiry' (**The Submissions**), which are enclosed with this statement and marked Exhibit 1. The Submissions were prepared by myself and Ms Zoe Cross (Policy & Advocacy Administrator for Freedom from Torture) in response to the Inquiry's request for an interview and witness statement, dated 24 December 2020.

4. The Submissions were provided to the Brook House Inquiry via email on the 19 March 2021 at 13:05 by my colleague, Ms Zoe Cross.
5. In the submissions Freedom from Torture presented conclusions and recommendations drawn from our interaction with the Home Office on the treatment of vulnerable detainees and our extensive clinical experience of documenting the effect of immigration detention on survivors of torture. These conclusions and recommendations were illustrated using two cases, which explore the lack of effective safeguards in detention, looking in particular at the following sources where they were available:
  - Rule 35 reports;
  - Home Office response to Rule 35 reports;
  - Letters submitted by our clinicians to the Home Office outlining individuals' vulnerability/risk of harm in detention;
  - and; all other available information relating to the clinical impact of the period of time in detention on the individual's mental health. Such information includes; independent psychiatric reports, Freedom from Torture medico-legal reports, and correspondence between Freedom from Torture clinicians and solicitors detailing their professional opinion on their client.
6. The case studies that we relied upon in the submission relate to two former Freedom from Torture clients who gave consent for their anonymised data to be used in a non-identifiable manner for research purposes. This consent covered use for the Brook House inquiry submission. This consent does not cover disclosure of identifiable details to the inquiry or any other third party.

<b><u>Statement of Truth</u></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	Sile Reynolds
Signature	<b>Signature</b>
Date	17.11.21