

IMB Meeting - 14 November 2017

- GDWG, G4S and administration of Brook House
 - BH management suspicious that we give legal advice that we are not qualified to do, e.g. referral of detainees to other agencies; these should be referred to BH management; described as “insulting” and “patronising”
 - GDWG: why is BH so defensive about issues we raise?
 - IMB: BH management needs to have some of the information we give out (?)
 - GDWG: We are not really threatening
 - Culture of fear and insecurity among BH staff; lack of confidence in management
 - How to get staff to voice their concerns if a colleague does something inappropriate – complicity
 - IMB: G4S staff are more humane and have better social skills than prison officers; cooperation and openness
 - Targeted training: what else they need
 - Induction wing: detainees are told about different organisations, not mandatory, hence they do not hear about us in the first instance
 - GDWG receiving more calls and faxes from welfare officers (result of Panorama?)
 - Suggestion: keep a list of referrals that concern us, e.g. minors; ask who to contact
 - Welfare orderlies introduced ?
 - Ben Saunders was more open to IMB and staff (resigned post-Panorama)
 - Our contract with HO at BH: Paul Gaston closed and hostile
 - Lee – extensive programme of improvement; big recruitment campaign
- How IMB operates
 - Monitoring role; not there to help the detainees on an individual basis
 - Look at whole situation; very active and involved
 - Detainees treated fairly and humanely
 - Report to the Minister on state of BH
 - On occasion, make sure that certain things happen, e.g. detainees getting a visit, and that they get a positive outcome
 - Preserve their independence from centre management and outside organisations, like GDWG
 - There is a white box with forms on every wing for IMB - at least 50% are about immigration matters; GDWG can help detainee to fill in form; also Home Office complaints box
 - Rota: twice a week, not a constant presence
 - Steps they take when issue arises:
 1. Report to wing officer
 2. Raise with DCM
 - Three officers and a manager on each wing; now 150 detainees per wing with just two officers (?)
 - Complaint re staff member, they do a full-scale investigation if it's serious
 - Key issues: bail release, longer term in detention, sent back to home country

- Health care issues/ vulnerable detainees
 1. behaviour and attitude of medical staff are followed up with director
 2. IMB cannot intervene if medication not prescribed by a doctor
 3. Discussion re. Algerian detainee featured in Panorama
 4. Safeguarding referrals: copy emails to IMB
 5. Home Office training to use paperwork for Rule 40
- Introduction of body-worn cameras for all officers (post-Panorama)
- IMB “did not know” about Panorama issues raised (!). They felt that Panorama gave a distorted picture: in their (IMB’s) there were undoubtedly ‘a couple’ of serious incidents captured (including the strangulation) but much of the programme was dramatic music, blurry images giving an impression of chaos, and ‘fluff’.
- IMB news is posted on the Internet
- Suggested future referral process: IMB happy for us to copy the IMB chair into any emails we send raising concerns to the safeguarding team and management.

NEXT MEETING: May 2018 – date to be arranged. NB IMB chair will be Mary from January 2018; Jackie is stepping down.