

<p>1 Thursday, 17 March 2022</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 MR ERDUNAST: Good morning, chair. We will now be hearing</p> <p>4 evidence from Stewart Povey-Meier.</p> <p>5 MR STEWART MICHAEL POVEY-MEIER (sworn)</p> <p>6 Examination by MR ERDUNAST</p> <p>7 MR ERDUNAST: Good morning.</p> <p>8 <b>A. Good morning.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Can you give us your full name, please?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Stewart Michael Povey-Meier.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Thank you. Mr Povey-Meier, you gave a statement to the</p> <p>12 inquiry which is at &lt;SER000456&gt;. Chair, if I can ask</p> <p>13 for that statement to be adduced in full?</p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: Thank you, indeed.</p> <p>15 MR ERDUNAST: Mr Povey-Meier, what that means is that the</p> <p>16 whole statement is in evidence before the inquiry, so</p> <p>17 I don't have to take you through every line and every</p> <p>18 word of that statement.</p> <p>19 Just to confirm, you started at Brook House on</p> <p>20 23 May 2011 as a DCO?</p> <p>21 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>22 Q. In activities?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>24 Q. In 2015, you were promoted to DCM?</p> <p>25 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>1 department as a manager for three years; is that right?</p> <p>2 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>3 Q. When did that start?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I cannot remember the exact time of that. It could have</b></p> <p>5 <b>been 2018, around about the summer.</b></p> <p>6 Q. As part of this job, you have said that you were in</p> <p>7 charge of front-of-house visits?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Not as part of that role. That's my current role.</b></p> <p>9 Q. That's your current role. So, going back to the audits</p> <p>10 and compliance department as a manager for three years,</p> <p>11 would you have been working on the wings as well during</p> <p>12 that role?</p> <p>13 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>14 Q. In May 2020, you started working for Serco under the new</p> <p>15 contract as a duty operations manager at Brook House?</p> <p>16 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>17 Q. What is the role of a duty operations manager?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Managing operational needs depending on which department</b></p> <p>19 <b>you're in.</b></p> <p>20 Q. How similar is this role to your roles as a DCM at</p> <p>21 Brook House?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Very similar in terms of duty operations manager and the</b></p> <p>23 <b>detainee custody manager, they are predominantly the</b></p> <p>24 <b>same.</b></p> <p>25 Q. That means, in this role, you're also working on the</p> <p>Page 3</p>
<p>1 Q. As a DCM, you say that you worked mainly on residential</p> <p>2 for four years?</p> <p>3 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Does that mean working on the wings?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, it does.</b></p> <p>6 Q. The relevant period was within those four years?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Part of that, yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. You say "part of that", as in --</p> <p>9 <b>A. As in --</b></p> <p>10 Q. -- the relevant period was part of the four years?</p> <p>11 <b>A. The relevant part was part of the four years, yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. During the four years, you went on secondment as head of</p> <p>13 safeguarding before returning to your position as a DCM?</p> <p>14 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>15 Q. That's secondment was for four to five months?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Roughly, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Starting around May 2017?</p> <p>18 <b>A. May/June 2017, yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. You have said you spent a week with Michelle Brown, who</p> <p>20 was former head of safeguarding, to learn about the</p> <p>21 role; is that correct?</p> <p>22 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>23 Q. But you didn't have any formal training on safeguarding?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>25 Q. You say you then went to the audits and compliance</p> <p>Page 2</p>	<p>1 wings?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Currently? From time to time.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Going now to training, you have said that you had no</p> <p>4 mental health training under G4S, even though you were</p> <p>5 working on the wings where detainees with potentially</p> <p>6 serious mental health issues were living; is that right?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I had one day training after the relevant period, and</b></p> <p>8 <b>that was to do with mental health first aid. So it's</b></p> <p>9 <b>recognising the signs and symptoms, but that was after</b></p> <p>10 <b>the relevant period.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Since then, also, you had a two-day course with Serco,</p> <p>12 on 10 and 11 March 2021; is that right?</p> <p>13 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>14 Q. I want to ask you about those sets of trainings.</p> <p>15 Firstly, the one in 2018. I think you're alluding to</p> <p>16 3 August 2018. I wanted to ask, was that training just</p> <p>17 you, or were other people there?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No, there was other people there.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Was that just, for example, DCMs or were there DCOs</p> <p>20 there?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I cannot remember whether it was just DCMs or DCOs, but</b></p> <p>22 <b>I believe it might have been a mixture of.</b></p> <p>23 Q. What about the two-day course with Serco?</p> <p>24 <b>A. The two-day course with Serco was a mixture.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Is mental health training now undertaken on the initial</p> <p>Page 4</p>

<p>1 training course?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I haven't taken the initial training course, so I cannot</b></p> <p>3 <b>answer that.</b></p> <p>4 Q. During the relevant period now, do you consider that you</p> <p>5 and other DCMs and DCOs that you came into contact with</p> <p>6 were well-equipped to manage mentally unwell detainees?</p> <p>7 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you think the lack of training meant there were</p> <p>9 issues with staff ability to distinguish between someone</p> <p>10 being disruptive or someone with a mental health</p> <p>11 condition or in distress?</p> <p>12 <b>A. That is possible.</b></p> <p>13 Q. In the interview with Verita that you gave on</p> <p>14 19 January 2018, you discussed shift handovers; that's</p> <p>15 right?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I believe so, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. I'm just going to paraphrase. You said there's a brief</p> <p>18 handover but that's not good enough. You said that you</p> <p>19 and Steve Skitt, the deputy director, suggested there</p> <p>20 should be a morning meeting where you go through the</p> <p>21 handover: "This is the person, this happened yesterday</p> <p>22 about him, we have these SDTs, these observations, what</p> <p>23 are the trigger points for this person?" Do you</p> <p>24 remember saying that in the interview?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I don't remember saying that in the interview, but it is</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 colleagues if you see that there's a professional issue.</p> <p>2 Now, my question is, what would you say was the</p> <p>3 approach during the relevant period regarding whether</p> <p>4 staff were supposed to report colleagues if there is</p> <p>5 a professional issue regarding security?</p> <p>6 <b>A. My approach is always to report staff.</b></p> <p>7 Q. But in terms of what the general approach was during the</p> <p>8 relevant period. I appreciate what your approach would</p> <p>9 have been, but I don't know whether you might be able to</p> <p>10 say what was perhaps understood by the generality?</p> <p>11 <b>A. I cannot answer for the generality, I'm afraid. I can</b></p> <p>12 <b>only answer for myself.</b></p> <p>13 Q. That sounds like what you're saying, also, is that,</p> <p>14 then, if your approach has always been to report staff</p> <p>15 in that way, then there wouldn't be a difference between</p> <p>16 before and after Panorama, but can you just help me on</p> <p>17 that, please?</p> <p>18 <b>A. For myself, no.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Were you aware of staff bringing in drugs during the</p> <p>20 relevant period?</p> <p>21 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Were there searches of staff for drugs during the</p> <p>23 relevant period, as far as you were aware?</p> <p>24 <b>A. I cannot remember whether there was searches, but I've</b></p> <p>25 <b>always been subjected to searches throughout my 11-year</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 <b>transcribed, because, obviously, this was a period</b></p> <p>2 <b>a while ago.</b></p> <p>3 Q. What I was wondering is, firstly, you referred to</p> <p>4 something called an SDT. What is an SDT?</p> <p>5 <b>A. I don't believe it was SDT. It might have been an ACDT</b></p> <p>6 <b>or SLP.</b></p> <p>7 Q. This is what I was getting at, because the actual</p> <p>8 letters in there are "SDT". So you think that that</p> <p>9 might be ACDT, which we all know about, or SLP?</p> <p>10 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>11 Q. And SLP is supported living plan?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Correct.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Why did you think that the handovers during the relevant</p> <p>14 period were, and I quote, "not good enough"?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I believe they could have been beneficial to the</b></p> <p>16 <b>individual departments, rather than general.</b></p> <p>17 Q. With handovers, comparing the relevant period to today,</p> <p>18 has anything changed to today?</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes. They are done in the relevant departments.</b></p> <p>20 Q. You informed Verita in that same interview that more</p> <p>21 recently, at least as of 19 January 2018, there has not</p> <p>22 been as much in terms of drugs at the centre as</p> <p>23 previously. You additionally told Verita, in terms of</p> <p>24 security, that if there is a professional issue, that</p> <p>25 post Panorama you're supposed to report one of your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 <b>career at Brook House.</b></p> <p>2 Q. In terms of detainees who took spice, was there a system</p> <p>3 to ensure all staff, particularly DCMs, knew who on</p> <p>4 a shift was vulnerable to a spice attack?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>6 Q. I'm now going to come on to a use of force incident in</p> <p>7 relation to detainees D390 and D1851 on 5 June 2017,</p> <p>8 which you have addressed in your witness statement.</p> <p>9 Firstly, you were the supervising officer on this</p> <p>10 incident?</p> <p>11 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>12 Q. The other officers were DCM Ben Shadbolt,</p> <p>13 DCM Sean Sayers and DCO Ryan Bromley allocated to D390</p> <p>14 and DCM Shane Farrell, DCM Darren Bulled and</p> <p>15 DCO Neil Timms, allocated to D1851, with DCM Nick London</p> <p>16 as the camera officer. Is that right?</p> <p>17 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Please could we put up on screen the use of force report</p> <p>19 form DCF02, part of which you filled in. The reference</p> <p>20 to that, and in particular it's the reasons for</p> <p>21 authorising force, is at &lt;CJS005624&gt; and the page is 4.</p> <p>22 I'm not going to read it out in full, but I will give</p> <p>23 a summary. D390 did not go of his own accord to escorts</p> <p>24 upon a request to speak to him. He had been explained</p> <p>25 that use of force would be used as a last resort if he</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 did not go. D1851 refused to leave the room after being</p> <p>2 asked. D390 was seen boiling a kettle of water. Do you</p> <p>3 agree that's a fair summary?</p> <p>4 <b>A. That is a fair summary, yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Then going to &lt;CJS005624&gt;, page 15, please. This is</p> <p>6 where, after the incident, you record what you say</p> <p>7 occurred. That is at annex A of the form which also</p> <p>8 confirms that use of force can only be used when it's</p> <p>9 reasonable in the circumstances, an absolute necessity,</p> <p>10 no more force than necessary and proportionate to the</p> <p>11 seriousness of the situation. Again, I will summarise</p> <p>12 what is written and then you can tell me whether that's</p> <p>13 a fair summary.</p> <p>14 You were told by DCO Moshari that D390 had an</p> <p>15 escorted move to Harmondsworth. After DCO Opoku, on</p> <p>16 your instructions, informed D390 of this, D390 came to</p> <p>17 you. He said he was advised by his solicitors to stay</p> <p>18 at Brook House as he had legal representation in the</p> <p>19 Upper Tribunal and an upcoming bail hearing. After</p> <p>20 conversations between the tribunal and Heenaxi Patel of</p> <p>21 the Home Office, she told you that the move would go</p> <p>22 ahead and, if he did not want to claim asylum, he needed</p> <p>23 to tell them that and request a transfer back. She</p> <p>24 said, wherever he is, they would ensure his bail hearing</p> <p>25 is facilitated at Harmondsworth. He said the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 <b>A. It's a fair summary.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Going now to page 21 of that document, please. This is</p> <p>3 Ryan Bromley's report, and I only want to highlight one</p> <p>4 sentence from it. It is in the middle of the bottom</p> <p>5 paragraph:</p> <p>6 "Upon entering, D390 continued to ignore</p> <p>7 instructions from DCO Sayers, for the safety of the team</p> <p>8 DCO Sayers advanced placing the shield onto detainee</p> <p>9 D390's chest, placing him onto the bed on the room's</p> <p>10 left side."</p> <p>11 Now if we could move on to page 26 of that document.</p> <p>12 This is Sean Sayers' report and, again, I only want to</p> <p>13 highlight one sentence at the bottom of the -- it is the</p> <p>14 bottom paragraph in the middle of it again:</p> <p>15 "The team led by DCO Sayers on the shield and</p> <p>16 DCO Shadbolt and Bromley as arm officers entered the</p> <p>17 room. D390 continued to stand at the far end of</p> <p>18 the room next to the desk and kettle. D390 didn't</p> <p>19 listen to me asking him to sit on the bed as I entered</p> <p>20 the room."</p> <p>21 Thank you. That can now be taken down. Chair,</p> <p>22 I now want to play some footage. There are a couple of</p> <p>23 issues which we will consider, Mr Povey-Meier, that</p> <p>24 I would like you to keep an eye on, and an ear out for,</p> <p>25 when it is being played. One is whether, and, if so, to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 information sounds sensible but he would take his</p> <p>2 solicitor's advice and he said he would not walk with</p> <p>3 them to Tascor.</p> <p>4 A team was assembled to prepare for any planned C&amp;R</p> <p>5 intervention. D390 was in the left-hand bed and D1851</p> <p>6 was there as well. The team were briefed that D390</p> <p>7 would get a further opportunity to walk with the team</p> <p>8 before a planned C&amp;R would occur. When officers</p> <p>9 approached the room, a puddle of water was spotted on</p> <p>10 the floor outside the room. You looked into the room</p> <p>11 and the sink showed nothing of risk to the team. D1851</p> <p>12 was in bed, while D390 was in the middle of the room, at</p> <p>13 the back by the desk, boiling a kettle of water with the</p> <p>14 lid open. D1851 was asked to come to the door and leave</p> <p>15 the room, which he refused to do and he returned to his</p> <p>16 bed. The teams were instructed to take control. Force</p> <p>17 was used on D390, who was removed from the room and his</p> <p>18 head was released as he wanted to comply. D1851 had no</p> <p>19 force used on him and the team made sure he did not put</p> <p>20 anyone's safety at risk, including his own. D390 was</p> <p>21 moved to the Tascor team. No-one was injured and</p> <p>22 healthcare were not concerned. D1851 was met</p> <p>23 afterwards. He appeared calm and had no issues with</p> <p>24 what had happened.</p> <p>25 Is that a fair summary of what's there?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 what extent, force was used on D1851, so it is worth</p> <p>2 keeping an eye out for that while watching the video.</p> <p>3 The second is what, if anything, the officers entering</p> <p>4 the room, particularly Sean Sayers, say to D390 before</p> <p>5 they engage in force. And a third is where you were</p> <p>6 when force was initially being used. That will be</p> <p>7 &lt;CJS0074063&gt;, from the start to 01:47. Then there is</p> <p>8 another video called UOF 137.17 BWC.MOV from 01:23 to</p> <p>9 01:27. Now, that needs to be closed session,</p> <p>10 unfortunately, so please may I have confirmation of when</p> <p>11 that's been done?</p> <p>12 IN CLOSED SESSION</p> <p>13 MR ERDUNAST: It looks like we are closed session now.</p> <p>14 Could we put up the first of the two videos, from the</p> <p>15 start to 01:47, please. That's &lt;CJS0074063&gt;, please.</p> <p>16 (Video played)</p> <p>17 MR ERDUNAST: Can we just play five more seconds, please.</p> <p>18 (Video played)</p> <p>19 MR ERDUNAST: Now we are ready, I think, for the next one,</p> <p>20 which is UOF 137.17 BWC.MOV, starting at 01:23, please,</p> <p>21 and stopping at 01:27.</p> <p>22 (Video played)</p> <p>23 MR ERDUNAST: Thank you very much. I think we can now go</p> <p>24 back to open session.</p> <p>25 IN OPEN SESSION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 MR ERDUNAST: Mr Povey-Meier, you have now watched the</p> <p>2 videos. In terms of the first video, you can see</p> <p>3 yourself walking to the left of the door, away from the</p> <p>4 room, once you have opened the door for the officers to</p> <p>5 enter. This means that you wouldn't have seen the use</p> <p>6 of force particularly initially; is that right?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Not necessarily, because I believe I came back around</b></p> <p>8 <b>behind the team.</b></p> <p>9 Q. But at least for that first bit, where you were to the</p> <p>10 left of the door, you would not have been able to see</p> <p>11 that use of force, would you?</p> <p>12 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>13 Q. So when you wrote in the use of force report, "D1851 had</p> <p>14 no force used on him", what gave you that impression?</p> <p>15 <b>A. Because no force was used on him.</b></p> <p>16 Q. How did you know that?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Because the team reported back no force was used on him</b></p> <p>18 <b>and then, when I went behind DCM Nick London, the team</b></p> <p>19 <b>were just about to go into position because they were</b></p> <p>20 <b>slightly behind the other two -- the other team.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Having watched the video, do you accept that D1851, in</p> <p>22 fact, did have at least some use of force on him?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>24 Q. That, perhaps, may answer my next question, but I will</p> <p>25 still ask it. Do you know why the officers assigned to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 Q. You saw, I think, that Mr Collier criticised your</p> <p>2 handling of the incident, stating that you should have</p> <p>3 given D390, and now I quote, "a further and last</p> <p>4 opportunity ... to walk from the room". For the record,</p> <p>5 I don't propose, unless you want me to, to put it up on</p> <p>6 screen. For the record, it's &lt;INQ000111&gt; page 63.</p> <p>7 You said in your witness statement, in response to</p> <p>8 this, that you did not give him such an opportunity</p> <p>9 because, when D1851 was not willing to come out of</p> <p>10 the room, water lying on the floor in front of the room</p> <p>11 and the resident boiling a kettle of water with the lid</p> <p>12 up, you confirmed that the risk assessment and the</p> <p>13 dynamic had changed.</p> <p>14 Now, giving him another opportunity to walk while</p> <p>15 your team and yourself were still outside the room with</p> <p>16 the door shut, that would have taken a matter of, what,</p> <p>17 10 seconds?</p> <p>18 <b>A. The risk factors had changed, so that was my risk</b></p> <p>19 <b>assessment at the time, due to the boiling kettle of</b></p> <p>20 <b>water, the water on the floor and that the other</b></p> <p>21 <b>resident was not complying with coming out of the room.</b></p> <p>22 Q. My question is, that would have taken about 10 seconds?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Quite possibly.</b></p> <p>24 Q. And that, itself, wouldn't have put your team at risk,</p> <p>25 would it? Because there would be a door between you and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 D1851 -- that's Shane Farrell, Darren Bulled and</p> <p>2 Neil Timms -- did not produce a use of force or incident</p> <p>3 report for D1851?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Because no force was used on the resident.</b></p> <p>5 Q. In the second video, you said, "Be careful. It's really</p> <p>6 slippery near the doors". There is an issue as to what</p> <p>7 was alleged to be being done by D390 with the kettle.</p> <p>8 What was your understanding of what he was doing with</p> <p>9 the kettle before you and the officers came to his room?</p> <p>10 <b>A. He had been boiling the kettle.</b></p> <p>11 Q. What gave you that impression?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Because when I looked through, I could see steam coming</b></p> <p>13 <b>from the kettle and the lid was up.</b></p> <p>14 Q. That sounds like the first point at which you saw him,</p> <p>15 as you say, boiling the kettle was right when you were</p> <p>16 at the room. You and the team didn't have any inkling</p> <p>17 of that before?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Until I opened up the flap.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Now, all officers were in full PPE before you say you</p> <p>20 saw D390 boiling the kettle. Before that occurred, so</p> <p>21 they were still in PPE, and my question is, looking back</p> <p>22 on it, do you think full PPE was necessary before you</p> <p>23 knew that he was boiling a kettle?</p> <p>24 <b>A. We have always been taught, if it's a planned use of</b></p> <p>25 <b>C&amp;R, then full PPE is to be used.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 him?</p> <p>2 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>3 Q. So would you accept that your answer in the witness</p> <p>4 statement and also your earlier answer to my initial</p> <p>5 question doesn't fully address the point of why no</p> <p>6 opportunity was used?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I would still say that the risk factors had changed and</b></p> <p>8 <b>that there was a boiling kettle of water there that was</b></p> <p>9 <b>a risk to everybody in the room and my officers on the</b></p> <p>10 <b>team.</b></p> <p>11 Q. In light of the two points that it would have taken</p> <p>12 about 10 seconds to do and that the door would have been</p> <p>13 shut between you, the officers and D390, would you, in</p> <p>14 hindsight, accept that a final opportunity to walk</p> <p>15 should have been offered?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but that was my dynamic</b></p> <p>17 <b>risk assessment at the time.</b></p> <p>18 Q. DCO Sayers and DCO Bromley both wrote in their use of</p> <p>19 force reports that D390 refused instructions from</p> <p>20 Sean Sayers, so Sean Sayers placed a shield on him. You</p> <p>21 have watched the footage and hopefully you have kept an</p> <p>22 ear out, as I suggested. Do you accept that DCO Sayers</p> <p>23 did not give instructions when entering the room which</p> <p>24 D390 refused to follow?</p> <p>25 <b>A. We write a report based on what we see, so that was --</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 obviously, DCO Sean Sayers wrote his report based on</p> <p>2 what he believed he'd done and I wrote my report</p> <p>3 believed on what happened when -- what I saw.</p> <p>4 Q. In terms of what you just heard then, I was wondering</p> <p>5 whether, based on what you have heard just now, do you</p> <p>6 accept, having heard that, that DCO Sayers didn't, in</p> <p>7 fact, give those instructions when entering the room to</p> <p>8 D390?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Obviously, there was a lot more footage than that of</b></p> <p>10 <b>that incident and, without reviewing it again, I could</b></p> <p>11 <b>not comment on that.</b></p> <p>12 Q. That sounds like your answer to my question is that that</p> <p>13 footage alone doesn't allow you to answer my question.</p> <p>14 Is that your answer?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I cannot remember from seeing that footage, sir.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Is it a supervising officer's role to collate the use of</p> <p>17 force forms from all the officers?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. But, as a supervising officer, perhaps you would look</p> <p>20 over the DCMs' and DCOs' reports for errors?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Potentially, but that is predominantly done by the</b></p> <p>22 <b>Oscar 1.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I ask this because Ryan Bromley -- I don't propose to</p> <p>24 put this up, but Ryan Bromley suggested in his witness</p> <p>25 statement that you did this -- you checked his report</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 time, he did not propose any concerns to me. We had</p> <p>2 a two- to five-minute conversation and I did ask him to</p> <p>3 come to me if there was any concerns.</p> <p>4 Q. My question was ever so slightly different. It was</p> <p>5 whether you considered whether he might not open up to</p> <p>6 you, if it was you that was giving him that talk, given</p> <p>7 that from his perspective?</p> <p>8 <b>A. He did not give me that impression when he was talking</b></p> <p>9 <b>to me afterwards.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Did you consider a different member of staff not</p> <p>11 involved in the use of force speaking to him?</p> <p>12 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>13 Q. My final question on this incident: is there anything,</p> <p>14 in hindsight, that you would do differently in relation</p> <p>15 to this incident, and particularly given the impact</p> <p>16 which it clearly had on D1851?</p> <p>17 <b>A. No, sir.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Let's now go to the next element, which is a supported</p> <p>19 living plan which you opened for D1275 on</p> <p>20 4 September 2017, after interviewing him. Do you</p> <p>21 remember that?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I remember what I was tasked to do, but I can't remember</b></p> <p>23 <b>specific.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You accept that you opened that supported living plan?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I accept that, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 for errors and then, after that, he made handwritten</p> <p>2 amendments?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I cannot remember this, sir.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Do you accept that it's possible that you would have</p> <p>5 checked on this occasion the DCOs' and DCMs', who were</p> <p>6 involved, use of force reports for errors?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>8 Q. I don't know whether that may answer my next question,</p> <p>9 but, again, I will ask it in case it rings any bells.</p> <p>10 Firstly, in terms of Sean Sayers and Ryan Bromley,</p> <p>11 I adverted you to the point that they both wrote</p> <p>12 basically the same thing, that Sean Sayers had told --</p> <p>13 had given instructions to D390 upon entering the room,</p> <p>14 which D390 refused. Do you know why they both wrote</p> <p>15 that same information on the form?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I would not know, sir.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Did you discuss with them what to write on the form?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I cannot remember.</b></p> <p>19 Q. You said that you checked on D1851 afterwards to ensure</p> <p>20 he was okay, and at the time you said you had no</p> <p>21 concerns after speaking with him. Did you consider</p> <p>22 whether he might not open up to you as the man who, from</p> <p>23 his perspective, authorised use of shields, if not in</p> <p>24 your opinion on him, at the very least, right by him?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I remember having a conversation with him and, at the</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 Q. Was this part of your role as temporary safeguarding</p> <p>2 lead at Brook House?</p> <p>3 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Now, I will ask you a few direct questions, because in</p> <p>5 early 2018, D1275 was assessed as lacking capacity.</p> <p>6 I just want to understand what you may have known at the</p> <p>7 time which may have indicated to you that he might have</p> <p>8 lacked capacity.</p> <p>9 You said that you didn't have any training for your</p> <p>10 role as temporary safeguarding lead at Brook House. At</p> <p>11 any point in your time at Brook House, did you have any</p> <p>12 training on issues relating to capacity?</p> <p>13 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>14 Q. So at that interview with him before you opened the</p> <p>15 supported living plan, was anyone else there with you,</p> <p>16 alongside you and D1275?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>18 Q. So you wouldn't know whether, for example, a mental</p> <p>19 health nurse or any medical staff or anyone like that</p> <p>20 was with you?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>22 Q. The reason you gave on the supported living plan when it</p> <p>23 was opened was that there was a safeguarding concern in</p> <p>24 light of the BBC Panorama programme -- is that right?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes, sir.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 Q. Essentially, you were concerned for him, in light of his</p> <p>2 vulnerabilities, because of the programme, which</p> <p>3 included his spice attack, officers and managers calling</p> <p>4 him "div" and "scrotum", suggesting "If he dies, he</p> <p>5 dies"; that's right?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I don't remember those comments, sir.</b></p> <p>7 Q. But you were concerned about his vulnerabilities owing</p> <p>8 to the programme being aired, at least that much is</p> <p>9 true?</p> <p>10 <b>A. That's true.</b></p> <p>11 Q. On 5 September 2017, a day after opening the supported</p> <p>12 living plan, you had an interview with him, and you</p> <p>13 note, "Remains in BH. No social care issues. RMNs are</p> <p>14 aware of this detainee. No diagnosed MH issues. Has</p> <p>15 literacy issues and has been linked into education</p> <p>16 services in BH". Do you recall that?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I don't recall that, but that is what is on the</b></p> <p>18 <b>document, sir.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Can you just help me: RMNs, who are they?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Registered Mental Nurses.</b></p> <p>21 Q. And presumably "MH" is "mental health"?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I would presume.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Perhaps you can help me, the issues you identified then,</p> <p>24 on that date, or indeed in your interview with him</p> <p>25 beforehand, before opening it, did any of those raise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 Q. In which case, perhaps this answers my next question,</p> <p>2 but I will ask it anyway: were you aware that on the</p> <p>3 plan it was noted that the staff member who filled it</p> <p>4 out noted that it appeared that D1275 did not have the</p> <p>5 mental capacity to know when his appointments are and to</p> <p>6 attend them?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>8 Q. And that the same staff member noted that the answers to</p> <p>9 his questions made no sense in relation to the question?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>11 Q. In terms of answers not making sense, and I don't know</p> <p>12 if you can assist me, if you recall the interview on</p> <p>13 5 September, but did you have that same experience with</p> <p>14 him regarding his answers not making sense?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I do not recall that, sir.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Did any of those -- well, presumably, then, if you</p> <p>17 recall none of those things, then you might not be able</p> <p>18 to tell me that any of those things may have indicated</p> <p>19 to you that D1275 might lack capacity?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Unfortunately, sir, it is quite a long time ago. I do</b></p> <p>21 <b>not recall these incidents or any of those incidents you</b></p> <p>22 <b>are referring to.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Do you know whether any of the documents that I have</p> <p>24 mentioned were available to you when opening the</p> <p>25 supported living plan?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 concerns as to capacity, his capacity?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I cannot remember that, sir.</b></p> <p>3 Q. In terms of the "no diagnosed MH issues" point and in</p> <p>4 particular how that interacts with issues regarding</p> <p>5 capacity in your role as safeguarding lead, were you</p> <p>6 aware at the time that D1275, on admission to</p> <p>7 Brook House on 1 May 2017, said he had mental health</p> <p>8 issues and was hearing voices?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I cannot remember that, sir.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Were you aware that this led him to be referred to</p> <p>11 a mental health nurse?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I cannot remember that, sir.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Were you aware that he had, by that stage, failed to</p> <p>14 attend 13 medical appointments?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I am not aware of that, sir.</b></p> <p>16 Q. You were not aware or you --</p> <p>17 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Were you aware that an SIR had been written about him on</p> <p>19 22 June 2017 raising that he was being used as a drugs</p> <p>20 guinea pig and seemed to be being abused and used by</p> <p>21 other detainees?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Again, I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Were you aware that this had led to D1275 being put on</p> <p>24 an anti-bullying support plan on 22 June 2017?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I cannot remember that, sir.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>2 Q. In terms of your understanding of how Brook House works,</p> <p>3 in terms of retention of documents like this, would they</p> <p>4 have been available to you, had you looked, when opening</p> <p>5 the supported living plan?</p> <p>6 <b>A. The documents would have been kept, because they have to</b></p> <p>7 <b>be.</b></p> <p>8 Q. In terms of capacity, strictly speaking, were there any</p> <p>9 specific processes in relation to capacity where, if</p> <p>10 a staff member has concerns about capacity, they are</p> <p>11 specifically logged so that other staff members</p> <p>12 potentially dealing with that individual where there are</p> <p>13 capacity concerns, that those staff members, later down</p> <p>14 the line, can consider them?</p> <p>15 <b>A. It depends how they're logged, sir.</b></p> <p>16 Q. That sounds like there's no specific way of logging</p> <p>17 issues in relation to capacity?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Depends on whether they were logged on any of our</b></p> <p>19 <b>systems and by who.</b></p> <p>20 Q. You must have been aware that D1275 refused to sign the</p> <p>21 supported living plan when it was opened, because you</p> <p>22 were there and it wasn't signed?</p> <p>23 <b>A. But I cannot remember the incident, sir.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You also -- it was you who ticked the box that says he</p> <p>25 needs reasonable adjustment to "fully engage with the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

6 (Pages 21 to 24)

<p>1 regime". I can take you to it, if you want, but --</p> <p>2 <b>A. I don't need to see the document, sir, but if it is</b></p> <p>3 <b>a tick in a box, it's whether it was ticked at the time</b></p> <p>4 <b>of opening or at a later date.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Why don't we just put it up, just to make sure, so we</p> <p>6 are on the same page?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I don't need to see it, sir. It's been available to me</b></p> <p>8 <b>and it is not going to change my answer.</b></p> <p>9 Q. If that was you, if that was at time of opening, did</p> <p>10 either of those elements cause you any concern about his</p> <p>11 capacity?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Were you involved in his supported living plan after</p> <p>14 opening it?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I cannot remember, sir.</b></p> <p>16 Q. There's no documented evidence of any queries with the</p> <p>17 medical team to see if they were satisfied that D1275</p> <p>18 had mental capacity before the supported living plan was</p> <p>19 closed. Do you know whether this is because it simply</p> <p>20 wasn't done or because it wasn't documented?</p> <p>21 <b>A. I do not know, sir.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Would you say that this -- from your knowledge of how</p> <p>23 the centre worked or should have worked, would you say</p> <p>24 this should have been done before it was closed?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Can you repeat the question, sir?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 Questions from THE CHAIR</p> <p>2 THE CHAIR: Have you filled in a supported living plan in</p> <p>3 recent weeks, months?</p> <p>4 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>5 THE CHAIR: Is that part of your role anymore, part of your</p> <p>6 function?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Because I am not generally resident facing, then my</b></p> <p>8 <b>interaction with residents currently is minimal and</b></p> <p>9 <b>I have not had to do any supported living plans of</b></p> <p>10 <b>recent.</b></p> <p>11 THE CHAIR: Could you tell me a bit about what your</p> <p>12 understanding is of the process currently if you or</p> <p>13 a member of staff that reports to you had concerns about</p> <p>14 a detained person's mental capacity?</p> <p>15 <b>A. So in regards, we would seek the healthcare's advice,</b></p> <p>16 <b>because we still don't have relevant training, we are</b></p> <p>17 <b>not professionals in that field, so we would support --</b></p> <p>18 <b>we're very much driven by the mental health team whether</b></p> <p>19 <b>a supported living plan would need to be in place,</b></p> <p>20 <b>because a supported living plan is in regards to any</b></p> <p>21 <b>additional changes within a regime that a resident might</b></p> <p>22 <b>need help with.</b></p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Can you recall any recent incidents where you</p> <p>24 have had to raise that with the mental health team?</p> <p>25 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 Q. Of course. So referring to queries with the medical</p> <p>2 team to see if they were satisfied D1275 had mental</p> <p>3 capacity before the supported living plan was closed,</p> <p>4 would you say that this should have been done before it</p> <p>5 was closed, those queries?</p> <p>6 <b>A. There should have been a multi-disciplinary meeting.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Finally, in terms of those documents that I mentioned</p> <p>8 before, throughout the months that D1275 was at</p> <p>9 Brook House, between then and opening the supported</p> <p>10 living plan, I asked you about whether those documents</p> <p>11 would have been logged, and you said that they would</p> <p>12 have been logged, or I asked you whether they were</p> <p>13 available to you and you said they would have been</p> <p>14 logged. Before opening the supported living plan, was</p> <p>15 it your practice to look through any of those documents</p> <p>16 which might be relevant to his capacity?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Potentially.</b></p> <p>18 Q. But certainly, if that wasn't done, you would say that</p> <p>19 it should have been done?</p> <p>20 <b>A. I cannot remember the incident, sir, so I cannot fully</b></p> <p>21 <b>answer that question.</b></p> <p>22 MR ERDUNAST: I don't have any more questions. Thank you</p> <p>23 very much. Chair, do you have any questions?</p> <p>24 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Erdunast. Yes, I do</p> <p>25 have a couple of questions for you, Mr Povey-Meier.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Then a question just related to</p> <p>2 something that Mr Erdunast asked you earlier about in</p> <p>3 your evidence regarding random searches of staff,</p> <p>4 I don't want you to give me a precise date, but can you</p> <p>5 remember how recently a random staff search was</p> <p>6 conducted, that you are aware of, either that you were</p> <p>7 involved in, yourself searched, or that you are aware</p> <p>8 happened?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I was self-searched on Sunday.</b></p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Who carries out those searches currently?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Generally, security.</b></p> <p>12 THE CHAIR: So that's security staff based at Brook House?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Security staff based at Brook House, yes.</b></p> <p>14 THE CHAIR: Is that DCOs or DCMs -- sorry, it's DOMs now,</p> <p>15 isn't it?</p> <p>16 <b>A. It is both.</b></p> <p>17 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I have no other questions for you.</p> <p>18 Thank you for coming this morning. I appreciate it is</p> <p>19 not an easy experience, but it's been important to hear</p> <p>20 from you. I'm grateful for you coming.</p> <p>21 <b>A. Thank you.</b></p> <p>22 <b>(The witness withdrew)</b></p> <p>23 THE CHAIR: Mr Erdunast, I believe we will take a break now?</p> <p>24 MR ERDUNAST: Indeed, chair. We will have a break now until</p> <p>25 11.30 am, and then we will hear the evidence of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

<p>1 Mr Skitt. 2 (10.49 am) 3 (A short break) 4 (11.32 am) 5 MR STEPHEN SKITT (sworn) 6 Examination by MR ALTMAN 7 MR ALTMAN: First of all, give us your name, please. 8 <b>A. Stephen Skitt.</b> 9 Q. Mr Skitt, you made a witness statement dated 4 March of 10 this year. Chair, for our reference, it is &lt;SER000455&gt;, 11 I think it might be. I just need that checked. But, 12 whichever it is, I would like it adduced in full, if you 13 would, please? 14 THE CHAIR: Thank you. 15 MR ALTMAN: Mr Skitt, let me ask you a few things about 16 yourself, if I may. You made a very lengthy witness 17 statement. 18 <b>A. I did.</b> 19 Q. Do you have the statement in front of you? 20 <b>A. I have packs in front of me, yes.</b> 21 Q. We are not going to go to the file, as you know, too 22 often, but I think it would help for you to have the 23 witness statement open in front of you because I will be 24 going to it from time to time. So you should find it in 25 your first tab. If you open it up to tab 1, do you have</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Head of security.</b> 2 Q. Yes. 3 <b>A. Recently, this year, in January, I have now moved</b> 4 <b>over -- sorry, it's assistant director operations.</b> 5 Q. So that's what you are doing now? 6 <b>A. That's my current role at the moment.</b> 7 Q. I will come back to Serco a little later. But nine 8 years at G4S. So you moved over from the 9 Prison Service, in effect, to the contracted-out sector? 10 <b>A. Yes. I was working at HMP Birmingham. HMP Birmingham</b> 11 <b>was put up for privatisation, and G4S won the contract</b> 12 <b>and I TUPE-ed over from HMPS to G4S.</b> 13 Q. Do we understand, then, you worked at Her Majesty's 14 Prison Birmingham for a while? 15 <b>A. Yes.</b> 16 Q. Did you run it when it went into private ownership or it 17 was run privately, is that what you are telling us? 18 <b>A. It was public sector up until 2011 and then I moved over</b> 19 <b>to G4S because they were the company that won the</b> 20 <b>contract, and then I remained there until I moved to</b> 21 <b>Gatwick.</b> 22 Q. I see. So for continuity purposes, presumably, you 23 stayed there. What was your position at Birmingham? 24 <b>A. I was the head of security.</b> 25 Q. Under G4S?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 31</p>
<p>1 it there? 2 <b>A. Yes.</b> 3 Q. You can go to it any time you wish to refresh your 4 memory, and, as I say, from time to time, I will invite 5 your attention to certain parts of it. Something about 6 you, first. I am looking at your paragraph 3. You say 7 you have worked in the custodial industry for 35 years? 8 <b>A. I have, yes.</b> 9 Q. 25 years of which were based in Her Majesty's Prison and 10 Probation Service, HMPPS; nine years of which was with, 11 or has been with, G4S; and the remainder with Serco? 12 <b>A. That's correct.</b> 13 Q. Let's just break that down for a moment. How long have 14 you been with Serco? 15 <b>A. Since May 2020.</b> 16 Q. So when Serco took over the contract at Brook House -- 17 <b>A. Yes.</b> 18 Q. -- you remained in post, in effect? 19 <b>A. Yes.</b> 20 Q. But just under the guise of a different company? 21 <b>A. Yes.</b> 22 Q. Are you doing the same job as you used to do? 23 <b>A. When we moved over in May 2020, I was the head of</b> 24 <b>security.</b> 25 Q. You were ...?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 30</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Under HMPS and G4S, yes.</b> 2 Q. Just let me ask you this: you call it "the custodial 3 industry". 4 <b>A. Yes.</b> 5 Q. Is it an industry? 6 <b>A. Perhaps the wrong term, but custodial environment.</b> 7 <b>I have worked in the custodial environment since 1986,</b> 8 <b>yes.</b> 9 Q. At paragraph 4 of your witness statement, you say: 10 "Throughout my working life, I have held the roles 11 of prison officer, senior officer, principal officer, 12 governor grade ..." 13 <b>A. Yes.</b> 14 Q. Pausing there, what does that mean? 15 <b>A. So effectively, you moved, I guess, from what we would</b> 16 <b>consider from -- a uniform grade into a -- when it</b> 17 <b>happened, it was a governor grade role, which is</b> 18 <b>effectively an operational manager.</b> 19 Q. Yes. 20 <b>A. Then there were a number of grades within that role that</b> 21 <b>you'd progress if you wanted to.</b> 22 Q. Head of security, head of safer custody, head of 23 residence, then deputy governor? 24 <b>A. Yes.</b> 25 Q. All of this at Birmingham?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 32</p>



<p>1 <b>A. No. No, so the first, probably, 16/17 years of my</b>  2 <b>career, I worked at Long Lartin, which was</b>  3 <b>a high-security prison. I then moved to</b>  4 <b>Shrewsbury Prison, then to Stoke Heath, which was</b>  5 <b>a juvenile young offenders' establishment.</b>  6 Q. Yes.  7 <b>A. From there, I moved to Brinsford, which was, again, what</b>  8 <b>we call a split site, which held juveniles and young</b>  9 <b>offenders. And then I moved to HMP Birmingham, which is</b>  10 <b>a large core local.</b>  11 Q. Where was it you were deputy governor?  12 <b>A. At Brinsford.</b>  13 Q. Is it Brins-ford?  14 <b>A. Brinsford, yes.</b>  15 Q. Where is that?  16 <b>A. It's just outside Wolverhampton.</b>  17 Q. Then deputy director, presumably, which we will come to,  18 G4S, at Brook House?  19 <b>A. Yes.</b>  20 Q. And assistant director operations?  21 <b>A. Operations, correct.</b>  22 Q. Which is where you are now?  23 <b>A. Yes.</b>  24 Q. Before that, I mean, you say at the foot of your page 1,  25 paragraph 4, "AD Security Gatwick IRC". Was that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 33</p>	<p>1 Q. What do you mean by that?  2 <b>A. There'd been some issues amongst the SMT at Brook House,</b>  3 <b>and I'd been to another prison to assist in a murder</b>  4 <b>inquiry that happened there, and subsequently, I was</b>  5 <b>asked to stay there for a few months to implement some</b>  6 <b>of the actions that we'd found within that</b>  7 <b>investigation.</b>  8 Q. Yes.  9 <b>A. I was then asked if I would be willing to come down to</b>  10 <b>Gatwick to assist with security there, as the previous</b>  11 <b>incumbent had left. Although I had a quite high CTC</b>  12 <b>clearance --</b>  13 Q. Which is counter-terrorism clearance; yes?  14 <b>A. I had to redo that again because it was moving from the</b>  15 <b>Ministry of Justice to the Home Office. So I had to</b>  16 <b>wait for that to take place, which took a couple of</b>  17 <b>months.</b>  18 <b>By the time I'd got clearance -- this is my</b>  19 <b>understanding of it -- the previous deputy director at</b>  20 <b>Gatwick had left, and by the time I'd kind of got there,</b>  21 <b>I was asked if I would carry out the temporary deputy</b>  22 <b>director's role.</b>  23 Q. That was, what, May 2015?  24 <b>A. I think it may have been a bit earlier than that. My</b>  25 <b>memory is not ...</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 35</p>
<p>1 a previous job somewhere in the middle?  2 <b>A. So when we moved over to Serco, I was the AD of</b>  3 <b>security.</b>  4 Q. "AD" being?  5 <b>A. Assistant director, sorry. My apologies.</b>  6 Q. No, don't worry.  7 <b>A. And then, in January this year, there was some exchanges</b>  8 <b>within the current structure of the SMT. I moved over</b>  9 <b>to assistant director operations.</b>  10 Q. We will come back to aspects of this a little later, but  11 at your paragraph 6 on page 2, you say:  12 "In or around May 2015 ..."  13 Just pausing there, by May 2015, how long had you  14 been at Brook House?  15 <b>A. Probably a couple of months.</b>  16 Q. So we should fix in our heads, as far as you're  17 concerned, Mr Skitt, that you didn't start at G4S until,  18 what, early 2015?  19 <b>A. At Brook House?</b>  20 Q. At Brook House, forgive me, yes.  21 <b>A. Yes, that's correct.</b>  22 Q. So you come into post. Can you identify the month when  23 you started?  24 <b>A. So I was originally going to go down to assist at</b>  25 <b>Brook House prior to that.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 34</p>	<p>1 Q. Let's put some names to the posts you've identified.  2 Who was the previous deputy director?  3 <b>A. I think it was Duncan Partridge.</b>  4 Q. It was Duncan Partridge. And the previous head of  5 security that you mentioned?  6 <b>A. Wayne Debnam.</b>  7 Q. Wayne Debian, you think, or Dembian, Denman?  8 <b>A. Debnam. That's my understanding of it, anyway.</b>  9 Q. Somebody called Wayne?  10 <b>A. Wayne, yes.</b>  11 Q. So you come in, May 2015. Coming back to your  12 paragraph 6, you say:  13 "... I was asked by G4S to go to Gatwick ... ('IRC')  14 because there had been historical difficulties,  15 involving many grievances ..."  16 <b>A. Yes.</b>  17 Q. "... at senior management team level", which we all  18 abbreviate as SMT, or the SMT level. You say:  19 "I was therefore seconded to Gatwick IRC to support  20 the SMT in the capacity of Head of Security and to  21 provide some stability in the security area of  22 the centre as Wayne Debnam ..."  23 You spell it in your witness statement D-E-B-M-A-N,  24 to help the transcribers:  25 "... Head of Security and Safety, left the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 36</p>

<p>1 business."</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. When you joined, who was the director?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Ben Saunders.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Had you come across Ben Saunders in the past?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I'd previously applied for the role of deputy director</b></p> <p>7 <b>at Gatwick in 2012 and wasn't successful. I'd met Ben,</b></p> <p>8 <b>obviously, then, for the interview.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Forgive me, when you say, obviously, you met him for</p> <p>10 interview, was he one of the interviewers?</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes, sorry, he was one of the interviewers. I had been</b></p> <p>12 <b>down to do what we call a "back to the floor", so it was</b></p> <p>13 <b>encouraged with G4S that we looked at other sites, other</b></p> <p>14 <b>parts of the business, and perhaps spent a day there, or</b></p> <p>15 <b>a couple of days, in a different part of the business</b></p> <p>16 <b>prior to that, I think it was. I chose that because it</b></p> <p>17 <b>was an area that I hadn't previously worked in.</b></p> <p>18 <b>I think, going to another prison, I felt probably</b></p> <p>19 <b>I wouldn't get that much benefit from seeing something</b></p> <p>20 <b>different, and then, after that, I applied for the role</b></p> <p>21 <b>in 2012.</b></p> <p>22 Q. So you found yourself now working with Ben Saunders?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Yes. That's correct.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You say at paragraph 7 of your statement:</p> <p>25 "I cannot recall how long the secondment was due to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 37</p>	<p>1 <b>closed and Sarah moved with responsibilities for the PDA</b></p> <p>2 <b>as well --</b></p> <p>3 Q. PDA?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Predeparture accommodation, was moved into Tinsley House</b></p> <p>5 <b>and Sarah became head of Tinsley.</b></p> <p>6 Q. I see. Now, in a couple of sentences, if you can,</p> <p>7 Mr Skitt, describe the role of the deputy director?</p> <p>8 <b>A. First and foremost, you are deputy to the director, so,</b></p> <p>9 <b>in their absence, you would be responsible for both</b></p> <p>10 <b>sites, and, ultimately, all the elements of Brook House.</b></p> <p>11 <b>I'd have a number of functional heads that would report</b></p> <p>12 <b>to me, such as security, safeguarding, residents would</b></p> <p>13 <b>report in to me, so I'd have overall oversight of,</b></p> <p>14 <b>effectively, the running within Brook House.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Was it chiefly an administrative role?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No, it was very much a hands-on role.</b></p> <p>17 Q. You also mention dealing with disciplinary issues.</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. You say it was all-encompassing, including ensuring the</p> <p>20 welfare of staff and residents, and presumably you had</p> <p>21 any number of meetings that you had to attend?</p> <p>22 <b>A. There was quite a lot of meetings we'd have to attend</b></p> <p>23 <b>to, both within our own organisation and also</b></p> <p>24 <b>multi-disciplinary meetings with the Home Office and</b></p> <p>25 <b>other service providers.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 39</p>
<p>1 last, however, in or around August 2015, I applied for</p> <p>2 the role of Deputy Director at Gatwick."</p> <p>3 And you were successful?</p> <p>4 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You said you decided to apply for the role because you</p> <p>6 thought it would be a good challenge "and I like to move</p> <p>7 around and try new things". Presumably, it wasn't</p> <p>8 a disappointment, because it was a challenge?</p> <p>9 <b>A. It was very much a challenge.</b></p> <p>10 Q. You state, as we know, at paragraph 8, that you were</p> <p>11 deputy director at Brook House during the relevant</p> <p>12 period. Now, so that we understand some of</p> <p>13 the structure, Ben Saunders was the centre director?</p> <p>14 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>15 Q. You were deputy director. Were you the only deputy</p> <p>16 director?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I was, and the split was, I was Brook House, also head</b></p> <p>18 <b>of Brook House, and there was a head of Tinsley.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Was that Sarah Newland?</p> <p>20 <b>A. No, that was Stacie Dean at the time.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Stacie Dean, but she moved on and, I think, for reasons</p> <p>22 we may have to come to. Sarah Newland, did she take</p> <p>23 over as head of Tinsley House at some point?</p> <p>24 <b>A. She did, because Sarah was responsible for Cedars, which</b></p> <p>25 <b>was the predeparture accommodation. That building</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 38</p>	<p>1 Q. You say in paragraph 9 that in or around July 2019, an</p> <p>2 opportunity came up for the head of security role at</p> <p>3 Brook House, and because at the time you were nearing</p> <p>4 retirement age, you took the decision to step down from</p> <p>5 the role as deputy director --</p> <p>6 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>7 Q. -- to allow someone else to come in to the job. What</p> <p>8 happened to you between July '19 and May 2020 when Serco</p> <p>9 took over the contract?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I became the head of security. So the head of security</b></p> <p>11 <b>role came up and I took a personal decision that the</b></p> <p>12 <b>opportunity was there, so I asked to be considered for</b></p> <p>13 <b>that.</b></p> <p>14 Q. How did that differ, head of security, from being deputy</p> <p>15 director?</p> <p>16 <b>A. As in the -- I mean, the head of security role is a role</b></p> <p>17 <b>that I'm familiar with. It is a role that I do enjoy.</b></p> <p>18 <b>I think, from a personal point of view, I found it --</b></p> <p>19 <b>I'm just trying to think of my words. "Easier" is not</b></p> <p>20 <b>the word. I found it better for me as an individual.</b></p> <p>21 Q. It may sound obvious, but what does the head of security</p> <p>22 do?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Effectively, you're responsible for the -- I mean,</b></p> <p>24 <b>security kind of starts at the perimeter, at the gate,</b></p> <p>25 <b>and all the elements and policies that you would have</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 40</p>

<p>1 <b>for having a good secure centre that operates within</b></p> <p>2 <b>certain boundaries. You know, it covers a great deal of</b></p> <p>3 <b>issues -- things like CCTV, security policies,</b></p> <p>4 <b>management of intelligence, analysing that, you know,</b></p> <p>5 <b>and being responsible for those areas.</b></p> <p>6 Q. And security in terms of the detained population as</p> <p>7 well, keeping them secure within the detention centre?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes, it was all part of the protocols and procedures,</b></p> <p>9 <b>but you didn't do it as an individual. You were reliant</b></p> <p>10 <b>on the whole centre having a part to play in that,</b></p> <p>11 <b>because there were certain checks that had to be carried</b></p> <p>12 <b>out during the day, particularly around the fabric of</b></p> <p>13 <b>the centre, you know, the management of the daily</b></p> <p>14 <b>intelligence that comes through. You know, so it's</b></p> <p>15 <b>a really kind of ongoing continuous process.</b></p> <p>16 Q. Yes, so all-embracing every aspect of the removal</p> <p>17 centre, from presumably the people within it, staff, the</p> <p>18 detained population, the fabric of the building, the</p> <p>19 security of the building, as you say, starts at the</p> <p>20 gates, or the perimeter fence, if there is one, and</p> <p>21 those sorts of aspects?</p> <p>22 <b>A. And working with partner agencies such as the police and</b></p> <p>23 <b>other law enforcement agencies.</b></p> <p>24 Q. That was a role that you'd had previously --</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 41</p>	<p>1 Q. Yes. Forgive me for stopping you, because what you are</p> <p>2 actually talking about now is the physical layout.</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. I'm not really asking you about physical --</p> <p>5 <b>A. My apologies.</b></p> <p>6 Q. What I'm asking you about is really the concept. You</p> <p>7 set this all out in your paragraph 16, so by all means</p> <p>8 use it. If it would help you, Mr Skitt, rather than you</p> <p>9 remembering, let me read it to you and that will speed</p> <p>10 up things, for a start, and, secondly, then I can ask</p> <p>11 some questions arising. What you say is, you did find</p> <p>12 it different; yes?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. I'm looking at your paragraph 16:</p> <p>15 "The core day of an IRC and a prison would be</p> <p>16 similar, you have open doors, serve the set meals ...</p> <p>17 activities, then lock-up in the evenings."</p> <p>18 Yes?</p> <p>19 <b>A. (Witness nods).</b></p> <p>20 Q. But you said there were many differences, and you bullet</p> <p>21 point these and there are four bullets. First, you</p> <p>22 don't send the residents of an IRC to work?</p> <p>23 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>24 Q. So, unlike the prison estate where prisoners, convicted</p> <p>25 prisoners, have to work, of course those who are among</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 43</p>
<p>1 Q. -- you were telling us. So it was one, presumably, you</p> <p>2 understood?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. When you had that role previously, just remind us, was</p> <p>5 that within the Prison Service?</p> <p>6 <b>A. That was work -- work both for G4S and working within</b></p> <p>7 <b>HMPPS, yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Which brings me to another topic which we would like</p> <p>9 your help with, please, Mr Skitt: the differences</p> <p>10 between a prison environment and a removal centre like</p> <p>11 Brook House, you were asked to describe in your witness</p> <p>12 statement at your paragraph 16 on page 4.</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. You said it was difficult to describe. I am going to</p> <p>15 ask you to do your best. By all means, refresh your</p> <p>16 memory from what you said in your statement, because</p> <p>17 there are several bullet points, because I want you to</p> <p>18 tell us how you perceive the difference between the</p> <p>19 prison estate, if you like, and the detention estate?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Certainly, if you look at Tinsley House and you look at</b></p> <p>21 <b>Brook House, it's like comparing apples and pears. They</b></p> <p>22 <b>are two completely separate design and construction</b></p> <p>23 <b>buildings. Brook House, in design and construction, is</b></p> <p>24 <b>effectively of a similar design to how a prison, in my</b></p> <p>25 <b>opinion, would be constructed.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 42</p>	<p>1 the detained population in a place like Brook House</p> <p>2 cannot be put to work unless they wish to, because we</p> <p>3 hear that some of the people in Brook House cleaned, for</p> <p>4 example. Now, presumably, that was voluntary rather</p> <p>5 than compulsory?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes, it was a paid -- what we call a paid activity. So</b></p> <p>7 <b>residents -- there are a number of different roles that</b></p> <p>8 <b>they could do. They could be servery workers, they</b></p> <p>9 <b>could work in other -- cleaning, other parts of</b></p> <p>10 <b>the centre. It's been slightly different for the last</b></p> <p>11 <b>couple of years with Covid, it's reduced a lot of</b></p> <p>12 <b>the opportunities that are available. You know, we kind</b></p> <p>13 <b>of had, like, gym orderlies and things like that. But</b></p> <p>14 <b>they can volunteer for it and they can get paid.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Let's be clear. In the prison estate, can prisoners be</p> <p>16 compelled to work or, again, is that voluntary?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Remand prisoners can work if they wish.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Convicted?</p> <p>19 <b>A. If they're convicted, then they have to work, yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So that's the fundamental difference?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Forgetting remand prisoners for a moment, the difference</p> <p>23 between convicted prisoners, who are compelled to work,</p> <p>24 as compared with detainees, who can work if they wish</p> <p>25 and will be paid for it, but if they wish to do nothing,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 44</p>

<p>1 then they don't have to?</p> <p>2 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Secondly, you say, within prisons, there are a lot more</p> <p>4 controlled processes in place. You mention incentives</p> <p>5 and privileges. Individuals in prison can earn</p> <p>6 privileges through demonstrating good behaviour or</p> <p>7 engaging with sentence management. There is an</p> <p>8 adjudications process in prison, which can be used to</p> <p>9 address and correct poor behaviour; is that right?</p> <p>10 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>11 Q. When individuals go to prison, they know they can do</p> <p>12 things to improve their time in there because good</p> <p>13 behaviour can lead to incentives?</p> <p>14 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>15 Q. But if there is bad behaviour, that can result in</p> <p>16 privileges being removed?</p> <p>17 <b>A. That is correct.</b></p> <p>18 Q. You talk about the different regimes. I'm not going to</p> <p>19 go through them all, but your statement has been</p> <p>20 adduced. It is going to be published so anybody can</p> <p>21 read your statement through, if they wish.</p> <p>22 Compare with that Brook House. Were there any</p> <p>23 incentives or privileges which were available?</p> <p>24 <b>A. In response to the points you've highlighted around</b></p> <p>25 <b>prisons? No, there wasn't.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 45</p>	<p>1 <b>there needs to be some measures, whether it's an</b></p> <p>2 <b>enhanced privilege scheme or some accountability for</b></p> <p>3 <b>a person who would display some really difficult,</b></p> <p>4 <b>challenging behaviour.</b></p> <p>5 Q. I see what you mean. But somebody having personal</p> <p>6 responsibility for their own behaviour, and there should</p> <p>7 be some accountability in that person who is adjudged to</p> <p>8 behave badly?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. In terms of the third bullet point, the third</p> <p>11 difference, you say, well, there's the obvious, you</p> <p>12 know, people who are convicted are sentenced to periods</p> <p>13 of imprisonment. They may be subject to licence,</p> <p>14 whereas -- and will come out, perhaps subject to</p> <p>15 licence. But at the same time, you have people who are</p> <p>16 in the detained population, it is an administrative</p> <p>17 decision. They are not convicted criminals?</p> <p>18 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>19 Q. I mean, some have been, but they have served their</p> <p>20 sentence?</p> <p>21 <b>A. That's correct.</b></p> <p>22 Q. But many other people haven't been convicted of</p> <p>23 a criminal offence at all, but, by happenstance, happen</p> <p>24 to find themselves in the position they are and become</p> <p>25 part of the detained population?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p>
<p>1 Q. Around compliance. Good behaviour rather than bad</p> <p>2 behaviour?</p> <p>3 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>4 Q. In terms of accountability, you say you believe there is</p> <p>5 more of an accountability system in prison which you</p> <p>6 simply don't get in an IRC, an immigration removal</p> <p>7 centre?</p> <p>8 <b>A. That is my opinion, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Pausing there, Mr Skitt. What is your view: did you</p> <p>10 think an incentive and privileges scheme should be</p> <p>11 something that ought to be looked at?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I think my personal view is I think, in all societies</b></p> <p>13 <b>and communities, and I would see a secure environment as</b></p> <p>14 <b>a small micro-community, I think you have to have some</b></p> <p>15 <b>control measures --</b></p> <p>16 Q. Yes.</p> <p>17 <b>A. -- as we all have to adhere to some control measures in</b></p> <p>18 <b>any shape or form in our life and take responsibility</b></p> <p>19 <b>for that. I think it became very challenging when</b></p> <p>20 <b>people who know that they can display poor behaviour or</b></p> <p>21 <b>be challenging and probably understand that there will</b></p> <p>22 <b>be no consequences for that action, sometimes, over</b></p> <p>23 <b>a period of time, can make places worse.</b></p> <p>24 Q. So your view is?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I haven't got the answer in regards to that. I think</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So that is another important distinction. Finally,</p> <p>3 something I just alluded to, your fourth bullet point:</p> <p>4 prisoners know when they are going to leave prison?</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes, that is correct.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Whereas some of the detained population, it's like an</p> <p>7 indefinite sentence?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes, and I think a lot of the frustrations that I would</b></p> <p>9 <b>come across when walking around or talking to residents</b></p> <p>10 <b>within the centre, you know, their, I guess, life, for</b></p> <p>11 <b>want of a better word, it results around what is</b></p> <p>12 <b>happening with them, and there is a lot of uncertainty</b></p> <p>13 <b>in people as to, "Am I going to be here next week? Am</b></p> <p>14 <b>I going to be here in three months' time?". Sometimes</b></p> <p>15 <b>they haven't got that kind of date or point in time to</b></p> <p>16 <b>aim for. So they sometimes see themselves in kind of</b></p> <p>17 <b>ever-spiralling circles.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Your paragraph 18, you talk about daily morning meetings</p> <p>19 which you attended:</p> <p>20 "I used to try and instil into staff that there were</p> <p>21 tools they could use to maintain discipline and control</p> <p>22 the population of detainees in that environment."</p> <p>23 What tools?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Communication.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Yes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p>

12 (Pages 45 to 48)

<p>1 <b>A. So I -- from personal experience, I have worked in some</b>  2 <b>very difficult environments, and I think you have to</b>  3 <b>be -- certainly within -- working in any custodial</b>  4 <b>setting, you have to be a good communicator. A lot of</b>  5 <b>issues you can deal with, in my opinion, by</b>  6 <b>communicating with people in the right manner and trying</b>  7 <b>to kind of de-escalate from that point.</b>  8 Q. I assume you're not talking about use of force  9 incidents, where use of force is a last resort and  10 de-escalation can be accomplished by good communication.  11 Presumably, Mr Skitt, you're telling us about all other  12 kinds of problems which emerge from time to time?  13 <b>A. Yeah, but anything, interpersonal skills, you know,</b>  14 <b>sometimes it's initially how you deal with it. And,</b>  15 <b>yeah, use of force is available but, as you say, it is</b>  16 <b>a last resort.</b>  17 Q. Did you regard your custodial experience as an advantage  18 or a disadvantage?  19 <b>A. I would consider it as an advantage.</b>  20 Q. Because?  21 <b>A. Because of the different environments I have worked in,</b>  22 <b>some of the different situations that have been</b>  23 <b>presented to me. You know, I've worked in different</b>  24 <b>roles within those environments, such as within drug</b>  25 <b>strategy, within rehabilitation centres, within close</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p>	<p>1 <b>understanding how that works, you know, that was</b>  2 <b>a learning curve for me. But I think ultimately,</b>  3 <b>I think when you're dealing with people, it's about how</b>  4 <b>you deal with people.</b>  5 Q. What about the staff under you? Do you think even staff  6 who hadn't your experience or anything like it within  7 the prison estate actually forgot what the nature of  8 the demographic in that place was? In other words, they  9 regarded detained people as prisoners. Do you think  10 that some of your staff couldn't see the distinction  11 from time to time?  12 <b>A. I think my opinion would be that the staff fully</b>  13 <b>understood the environment that they worked in and they</b>  14 <b>were working in an immigration centre.</b>  15 Q. So without exception?  16 <b>A. That would be my opinion, yes. I don't think -- I mean,</b>  17 <b>there were some people that had moved from the</b>  18 <b>Prison Service into Brook House, and, you know, I guess</b>  19 <b>sometimes they would talk to me because we'd have shared</b>  20 <b>experiences, and, you know, certainly the people that</b>  21 <b>I'd spoken to who'd come from prisons felt it was a more</b>  22 <b>relaxed environment and not as challenging as working in</b>  23 <b>prisons and working with residents within our care.</b>  24 Q. You watched Panorama, presumably, more than once,  25 Mr Skitt?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 51</p>
<p>1 <b>supervision centre as a manager. You know, there's lots</b>  2 <b>of different areas I've worked in, and I would</b>  3 <b>consider -- well, I would consider I've gained</b>  4 <b>considerable different strands of work.</b>  5 Q. Do you ever think, Mr Skitt, that it was easy to confuse  6 the two establishments, given your experience, 35 years,  7 you tell us, a substantial portion of which was within  8 the prison estate, and here you are, for a number of  9 years, dealing with a completely different population,  10 who are there administratively, yet within -- and you  11 mentioned it a little earlier and I moved you on, but  12 within something that looks and feels very much like  13 a prison. Do you think you ever forgot that or confused  14 the two?  15 <b>A. It's working with people, and that will be the kind of</b>  16 <b>forefront of my mind. I don't think it's about</b>  17 <b>different types of environments. It is -- wherever it</b>  18 <b>is, it is still working with people who will have</b>  19 <b>a number of difficulties, vulnerabilities, challenges,</b>  20 <b>issues they need to deal with. You know, it is around</b>  21 <b>people. It's about me understanding what is available</b>  22 <b>to me within the detention estate, and that was</b>  23 <b>a learning curve for me. I think, you know, no doubt</b>  24 <b>about that. Moving to a different environment under</b>  25 <b>a different set of kind of policies, rules and</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 50</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I did.</b>  2 Q. One assumes you have been following the evidence in this  3 inquiry?  4 <b>A. Some of it, yes.</b>  5 Q. Did you listen to any of the evidence of Yan Paschali?  6 <b>A. I have to say, I mean, obviously I have seen Panorama on</b>  7 <b>a number of occasions, and certainly, within my time of</b>  8 <b>working in custodial environments, one of the most</b>  9 <b>shocking things I have seen in regards to what occurred.</b>  10 <b>I haven't personally come across anything like that</b>  11 <b>throughout my career. But -- sorry, could you just</b>  12 <b>repeat?</b>  13 Q. The question is actually not so much about your shock of  14 what you saw -- presumably you're talking about  15 Yan Paschali --  16 <b>A. Mmm.</b>  17 Q. -- and what he in particular did to a particular  18 detainee?  19 <b>A. Mmm.</b>  20 Q. But Callum Tulley, the BBC undercover reporter, told us  21 of times, for example, when Yan Paschali would tell him  22 and others about the things he, Paschali, got up to when  23 he, himself, worked in the Prison Service at Wandsworth.  24 Now, Paschali says that these were all just tall  25 stories, but were you aware of all of that?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 52</p>

<p>1 <b>A. I wasn't, no.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Paschali telling Callum Tulley how he had assaulted</p> <p>3 prisoners when he worked in the Prison Service as</p> <p>4 a prison officer. Did you know any of that?</p> <p>5 <b>A. No, I wasn't aware of any of that.</b></p> <p>6 Q. If he was telling the truth, here was Yan Paschali,</p> <p>7 somebody who had come from the Prison Service, now</p> <p>8 working at Brook House, bringing criminality into</p> <p>9 Brook House and bragging about it?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I wasn't aware of --</b></p> <p>11 Q. No, no, I'm not saying you were. But are you agreeing</p> <p>12 with me, now you're aware of it, Mr Skitt, do you agree</p> <p>13 that there is somebody who was not able to see the</p> <p>14 difference between the custodial environment and the</p> <p>15 detention environment?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I do, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. So there's one example. But you say you were unaware?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I was unaware.</b></p> <p>19 Q. And there may have been others?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. For all you know. You don't?</p> <p>22 <b>A. There are things that have come to light, certainly in</b></p> <p>23 <b>my career, where similar things may have occurred or</b></p> <p>24 <b>something may have come to light which, you know,</b></p> <p>25 <b>sometimes you're not aware of.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 53</p>	<p>1 the Prison Service ..."</p> <p>2 I'm asking you what you mean by it and what you last</p> <p>3 said. It's gone off the page on the transcript, but</p> <p>4 I think you were talking about handling cases,</p> <p>5 residents' cases?</p> <p>6 <b>A. Yes. I think the big difference I came across, moving</b></p> <p>7 <b>from one sector to another, for want of a better word,</b></p> <p>8 <b>would be the ownership of -- not the ownership, but the</b></p> <p>9 <b>kind of management of individuals, where you would be</b></p> <p>10 <b>more involved in managing an offender, as it would be in</b></p> <p>11 <b>prison, effectively start to finish, being involved in</b></p> <p>12 <b>all their casework, being involved in all the reports,</b></p> <p>13 <b>having offender supervisors, and kind of have that input</b></p> <p>14 <b>into that, whereas, there is a difference -- that is</b></p> <p>15 <b>managed by the Home Office. That is what people are</b></p> <p>16 <b>contracted to do. I guess you are just custodians. So</b></p> <p>17 <b>you are custodians of managing the centre and managing</b></p> <p>18 <b>the welfare of residents.</b></p> <p>19 <b>I felt that staff came up against a lot of</b></p> <p>20 <b>frustrations, particularly around individuals, knowing</b></p> <p>21 <b>what they want to do, and, you know, I probably felt</b></p> <p>22 <b>sometimes, if that would have occurred to me in a kind</b></p> <p>23 <b>of prison setting, I would have probably had the answer</b></p> <p>24 <b>for the individual or certainly kind of get the answer</b></p> <p>25 <b>very quickly and kind of support those individuals. But</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 55</p>
<p>1 Q. You say in your paragraph 17:</p> <p>2 "I believe there were things that could have been</p> <p>3 done better at the IRC in light of my time in the</p> <p>4 Prison Service."</p> <p>5 What do you think could have been done better?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I think one of the -- I think, if this is what I'm</b></p> <p>7 <b>referring to, I think one of the -- one of my views was</b></p> <p>8 <b>certainly, if you look at the two environments, we had</b></p> <p>9 <b>no kind of input into a resident's stay, effectively, or</b></p> <p>10 <b>case within an IRC. That was done remotely by</b></p> <p>11 <b>Home Office colleagues.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Could you just speak up a bit, Mr Skitt? It could be</p> <p>13 me, but I'm struggling. You're very softly spoken.</p> <p>14 Shout if you want.</p> <p>15 <b>A. There's not many people said that before.</b></p> <p>16 Q. No, but I'm saying it now. Just speak up a little more</p> <p>17 if you can?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Do you want me to move them closer?</b></p> <p>19 Q. Move your chair forward.</p> <p>20 <b>A. Is that any better?</b></p> <p>21 Q. Yes.</p> <p>22 <b>A. Sorry, could you repeat the question, please.</b></p> <p>23 Q. I've almost forgotten it. At paragraph 17 you said:</p> <p>24 "I believed that there were things that could have</p> <p>25 been done better at the IRC in light of [your] time in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 54</p>	<p>1 <b>that's my personal opinion.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So you're saying, in the detention estate, you felt</p> <p>3 disenfranchised from the people you were holding?</p> <p>4 <b>A. Not disenfranchised, but perhaps staff and myself</b></p> <p>5 <b>couldn't help them perhaps as much as we wanted to.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Of course, there were others who -- external bodies, who</p> <p>7 were there to help, weren't there?</p> <p>8 <b>A. That's right, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. IMB had a statutory responsibility, Her Majesty's</p> <p>10 Inspector would come in and inspect --</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. -- from time to time. You had the GDWG?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Gatwick Welfare Group, yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. We will come back to them. Other --</p> <p>15 <b>A. Healthcare providers --</b></p> <p>16 Q. Forward Trust?</p> <p>17 <b>A. We'd have Forward Trust, we'd have Migrant Help working</b></p> <p>18 <b>in the centre at one point.</b></p> <p>19 Q. So there was assistance, but what you're saying is, your</p> <p>20 own staff couldn't have the -- if you like, the hands-on</p> <p>21 assistance to detained men, as is possible in the</p> <p>22 prisons estate?</p> <p>23 <b>A. That's correct. They could. But it would probably take</b></p> <p>24 <b>some time to kind of ...</b></p> <p>25 Q. We heard evidence, if my memory serves me correctly,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 56</p>

1 from a former DCO by the name of Charlie Francis. Do  
 2 you remember Charlie Francis?  
 3 **A. I do remember Charlie Francis, yes.**  
 4 Q. Who gave an interview to Dominic Aitken, an academic who  
 5 was in Brook House doing some research during our  
 6 relevant period, April through to August, and  
 7 Charlie Francis told Dr Aitken how he would talk to  
 8 particular individuals about their problems and about  
 9 their self-harming and that sort of thing, in fairly  
 10 strident, robust terms.  
 11 Was that something that was encouraged or, if  
 12 Charlie Francis was doing that, would that be something  
 13 that he was doing off his own bat?  
 14 **A. No, I think, you know, my understanding would be, there**  
 15 **are a lot of staff that would -- the majority of staff**  
 16 **would do the same around the centre.**  
 17 Q. But they had no training for it. They had no mental  
 18 health training. With the best will in the world, they  
 19 could have been talking to suicidal men and making  
 20 things worth rather than better?  
 21 **A. Potentially, yes.**  
 22 Q. Back to your statement, in your paragraph 9, still on  
 23 the differences between the custodial and the detention  
 24 estate, you say it would be fair to say that you made  
 25 adjustments to your ways of working once you moved into

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1 Brook House. What adjustments do you think you had to  
 2 make?  
 3 **A. Some of those adjustments were adapting to the**  
 4 **immigration estate and the different policies,**  
 5 **protocols, the Home Office procedures, were the**  
 6 **adjustments that I had to make, yes.**  
 7 Q. You say you were out of your comfort zone a bit with  
 8 certain aspects of the role, and you had a lack of  
 9 understanding compared to other more experienced people?  
 10 **A. That's correct.**  
 11 Q. How long do you think it took you to settle in?  
 12 **A. I think in any new role, you know, you've got, I think,**  
 13 **probably four to six months to start understanding and**  
 14 **feeling a bit more comfortable about a different**  
 15 **environment.**  
 16 Q. Did there come a time when you were comfortable, do you  
 17 think?  
 18 **A. I think -- I think you're always learning every day and**  
 19 **you learn something new every day, but, you know, I'm**  
 20 **just trying to recall -- I probably did, but I still --**  
 21 **there's always something that you're going to learn, you**  
 22 **know, and if you don't know it, you can always reference**  
 23 **it or talk to somebody to gain further knowledge and**  
 24 **experience about it.**  
 25 Q. I mean, you were a pretty experienced man --

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1 **A. Mmm.**  
 2 Q. -- by the time you turned up at Brook House. Who was  
 3 more experienced than you?  
 4 **A. It wouldn't be for me to say. I don't know.**  
 5 Q. Well, I'm asking you to say. Who were the people you  
 6 turned to if you were a bit lost?  
 7 **A. Other members of the SMT, the director --**  
 8 Q. Who? Ben Saunders?  
 9 **A. Ben Saunders, Michelle Brown, who was quite**  
 10 **knowledgeable about Gatwick. There were a number of --**  
 11 **it's changed now, but DCMs, you know, who you get to**  
 12 **know, you confide in. You could talk to the Home Office**  
 13 **if you were unsure about something or you could**  
 14 **reference ...**  
 15 Q. So you found people to speak to if you felt the need to  
 16 gain a bit of knowledge in an area in which you had  
 17 none?  
 18 **A. Operational knowledge, probably the kind of Home Office**  
 19 **side of it, yeah, if I wasn't sure about something, that**  
 20 **I didn't know, then, yeah, I'd ask or ...**  
 21 Q. Go to page 9 of your witness statement, please, and just  
 22 have a look at paragraph 30. You say:  
 23 "When I started working at Brook House as acting  
 24 deputy director, I found the IRC a lot more relaxed in  
 25 comparison to the prisons I've worked in. On an

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1 operational basis, it's not as challenging as a prison  
 2 environment. There is, however, more of a challenge  
 3 with contractual compliance."  
 4 This was a key issue, wasn't it, Mr Skitt, if we are  
 5 looking for a major difference? Of course, when you  
 6 worked in the prison estate, you didn't have to worry  
 7 about complying with contracts. I mean, you were  
 8 a company man now, weren't you?  
 9 **A. Yes.**  
 10 Q. When you're a company man working for an outfit like  
 11 G4S, they're in it to make a profit. They are not  
 12 a charity, are they?  
 13 **A. That's correct.**  
 14 Q. You here mention the challenges of contractual  
 15 compliance. What were those challenges?  
 16 **A. Getting to understand the contract would have been the**  
 17 **main challenge for me when I started. There had been**  
 18 **contractual compliance required certainly within prisons**  
 19 **working within the private sector, but it was different**  
 20 **to coming to Brook House. I think every -- contracts**  
 21 **are different. I hadn't, prior to coming to Gatwick,**  
 22 **worked in such a -- like, a big, more complex contract**  
 23 **and, you know, in a different role. So it was new to**  
 24 **me.**  
 25 Q. Was it alien, given your past experience, now working

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15 (Pages 57 to 60)

<p>1 for a company which had to make money out of this</p> <p>2 establishment?</p> <p>3 <b>A. It wasn't alien in regards to -- I mean, within the</b></p> <p>4 <b>Prison Service, there were still KPIs, KPTs and other --</b></p> <p>5 <b>you know, depending which area you worked in, that you</b></p> <p>6 <b>still had to comply with. You know, so it wasn't a case</b></p> <p>7 <b>that there was nothing, there was. I guess it is</b></p> <p>8 <b>different working for a private organisation because,</b></p> <p>9 <b>ultimately, private organisations are there to make</b></p> <p>10 <b>a profit.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Yes.</p> <p>12 <b>A. You know, so, yes, that was a difference to me.</b></p> <p>13 Q. What you said was, this contract involves KPIs.</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Key performance indicators?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yes, that's correct, yes, and different schedules and --</b></p> <p>17 Q. And you say set contractual standards and procedures</p> <p>18 which must be adhered to at all times, and penalties are</p> <p>19 applied for non-compliance?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. An IRC is, therefore, more demanding in that sense?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Where did the demand come from? I mean, your superiors</p> <p>24 within the company?</p> <p>25 <b>A. The demand came from within the centre.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 61</p>	<p>1 time that you worked for G4S, when anybody from above</p> <p>2 told you about their unhappiness with the way that you</p> <p>3 were complying with the contract?</p> <p>4 <b>A. We would attend regular what we called trading review</b></p> <p>5 <b>meetings. I can't recall any specifics in regards to</b></p> <p>6 <b>the question you've asked just now.</b></p> <p>7 Q. What about general? Was there ever a time, Mr Skitt,</p> <p>8 when it became clear to you that the company was not</p> <p>9 happy with the way the centre was being run by</p> <p>10 Mr Saunders and you, that it was perhaps costing them</p> <p>11 more money than it ought to?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I can't recall.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Not one? So everybody was happy?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Well, nobody -- I can't recall anybody having that</b></p> <p>15 <b>conversation with me.</b></p> <p>16 Q. While I'm thinking about it, and do you remember you</p> <p>17 said a little earlier that Tinsley House and Brook House</p> <p>18 were like comparing apples and pears, a question I'm</p> <p>19 asked to ask you on behalf of Bhatt Murphy is about the</p> <p>20 differences -- one of the differences between</p> <p>21 Tinsley House and Brook House. Can we just go to</p> <p>22 a paragraph which is relevant to this question. It is</p> <p>23 paragraph 261 at page 72.</p> <p>24 <b>A. 261.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Do you see under the heading "Tinsley House staff":</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 63</p>
<p>1 Q. Yes.</p> <p>2 <b>A. You know, you would report to within your organisation,</b></p> <p>3 <b>but, ultimately, it's a centre responsibility from the</b></p> <p>4 <b>director downwards, and we all had a key part and key</b></p> <p>5 <b>role in that.</b></p> <p>6 Q. And penalty points, which we will touch on, I hope,</p> <p>7 later, but that was another key element?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. If the centre didn't perform and there were particular</p> <p>10 failures, failures cost money?</p> <p>11 <b>A. But I think -- yes, you're correct, but I also think, if</b></p> <p>12 <b>you're not performing to what the contract is, is that</b></p> <p>13 <b>having an impact on services as well? So, you know, to</b></p> <p>14 <b>me, it's not about, you know, the -- yeah, the money</b></p> <p>15 <b>element is very important, I understand that, but it's</b></p> <p>16 <b>also ensuring that the services that we are providing</b></p> <p>17 <b>are appropriate for people in our care.</b></p> <p>18 Q. So from your point of view -- being a company man now,</p> <p>19 Mr Skitt, at least from your point of view, what was the</p> <p>20 most important aspect of what you were doing: the</p> <p>21 people; or making sure that the company above you was</p> <p>22 happy with the performance under this contract?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Me personally? The people.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Do you ever remember a time when, during the period that</p> <p>25 we are -- under discussion, in particular, but at any</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 62</p>	<p>1 "All DCOs, whether they worked at Brook House or</p> <p>2 Tinsley House, had undergone the same training.</p> <p>3 However, I understand there is a difference between both</p> <p>4 sites. It was clear that the Tinsley House staff</p> <p>5 preferred not to work at Brook House or be</p> <p>6 cross-deployed to other centres as physically they were</p> <p>7 different to Tinsley House and in some ways operated</p> <p>8 different processes and systems."</p> <p>9 Is that something that you found, that those staff</p> <p>10 who worked at Tinsley House were very happy with their</p> <p>11 lot, but the idea of moving them across to Brook House</p> <p>12 was something that they didn't particularly like?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes, some staff did raise concerns, and I think, you</b></p> <p>14 <b>know, in -- certainly, I think until the time that we --</b></p> <p>15 <b>I can't remember the dates, but we -- there was a lot of</b></p> <p>16 <b>refurbishment that went on on both sites.</b></p> <p>17 Q. There was a major refurbishment at Tinsley House</p> <p>18 between September 2016 and about May 2017, when some of</p> <p>19 the Tinsley House staff were moved across to</p> <p>20 Brook House?</p> <p>21 <b>A. That's right. Tinsley House effectively was shut. We</b></p> <p>22 <b>put a skeleton staff in there just really to manage the</b></p> <p>23 <b>kind of safety and security of the site.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Yes.</p> <p>25 <b>A. And staff were redeployed to Brook House.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 64</p>



<p>1 Q. Go back to page 6 of your witness statement, because</p> <p>2 I want to ask you a little more about your deputy</p> <p>3 director role. At paragraph 21, you say you had no</p> <p>4 previous experience of being a deputy director of an IRC</p> <p>5 prior to being appointed, but you knew what you were</p> <p>6 going into from the job description.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. So, what, when you applied for it and eventually got the</p> <p>9 role, it was something totally new to you?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Sorry?</b></p> <p>11 Q. It was totally new once you got into this role of deputy</p> <p>12 director? It was a new role, and it was something you</p> <p>13 had no previous experience of?</p> <p>14 <b>A. When I went into --</b></p> <p>15 Q. Yes.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Within an IRC, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. The job description, though, was, what, to oversee the</p> <p>18 day-to-day running of Brook House?</p> <p>19 <b>A. That is correct.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So it was an operational role?</p> <p>21 <b>A. It was -- I think the role was deputy director/head of</b></p> <p>22 <b>Brook House, so it was both titles.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Yes. You told us a little earlier that the head of</p> <p>24 Tinsley at the time was Stacie Dean, when you arrived?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 65</p>	<p>1 <b>was, the expectation would be that the duty director</b></p> <p>2 <b>would oversee and manage that.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Yes.</p> <p>4 <b>A. You know, nine times out of ten, you were told about it</b></p> <p>5 <b>and it was a case of a phone call, "This has happened"</b></p> <p>6 <b>or, "We are going to do a planned use of force",</b></p> <p>7 <b>et cetera.</b></p> <p>8 Q. You say at your paragraph 29:</p> <p>9 "Formal debriefs with staff are usually always</p> <p>10 required following a use of force, fire, incidents</p> <p>11 involving height or loss of power incidents and these</p> <p>12 are dealt with through the command or contingency</p> <p>13 process, part of which is a formal debrief straight</p> <p>14 after the incident."</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. What did you understand by "a formal debrief"?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Whether you call it an informal or formal debrief, you</b></p> <p>18 <b>would expect, after any use of force, that the staff are</b></p> <p>19 <b>spoken with, normally by the DCM then or the DOM now,</b></p> <p>20 <b>and there would be a debrief of that particular use of</b></p> <p>21 <b>force that had occurred, checking in with all staff,</b></p> <p>22 <b>looking at any issues that may have arisen within that</b></p> <p>23 <b>potentially -- that particular use of force.</b></p> <p>24 Q. The debrief then would be conducted, what, by the DCM?</p> <p>25 <b>A. By the DCM, yes. He would complete a -- there would be</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 67</p>
<p>1 Q. The only difference, you say, between the two roles was</p> <p>2 that you would deputise for the director for both sites</p> <p>3 if he was not available --</p> <p>4 <b>A. That's correct --</b></p> <p>5 Q. -- is that correct? That's what you say.</p> <p>6 <b>A. -- or represent the director in anything they wanted me</b></p> <p>7 <b>to represent him.</b></p> <p>8 Q. You were appointed deputy director in due course when</p> <p>9 Sarah Newland -- Stacie Dean left, Sarah Newland came</p> <p>10 in. Do you know why she didn't get the job? Have you</p> <p>11 heard anything since?</p> <p>12 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Did you ever discuss it with her?</p> <p>14 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Now, I want to ask you just a couple of things about use</p> <p>16 of force at the moment. Go to your paragraph 24. Do</p> <p>17 you see you say, looking to use of force incidents --</p> <p>18 and this is still under the heading of your role:</p> <p>19 "I would be notified of such incidents by the duty</p> <p>20 director out of courtesy."</p> <p>21 Was it only ever out of courtesy that you got to</p> <p>22 hear of what happened?</p> <p>23 <b>A. No. If you -- if it was a spontaneous use of force or</b></p> <p>24 <b>an incident happened or, at short notice, a planned use</b></p> <p>25 <b>of force was required, depending on how busy that person</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 66</p>	<p>1 <b>a briefing sheet, then there'd be a debrief as well.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Right, I see. We have seen some of these and we have</p> <p>3 seen use of force forms and packs. We have actually</p> <p>4 seen debriefs. They are terribly short. Was that what</p> <p>5 the idea was? They don't really say much about lessons</p> <p>6 learned, it is just going around a room saying, "Is</p> <p>7 everybody all right?", "Yes, yes, yes" and then the</p> <p>8 whole thing is over. Is that what they were supposed to</p> <p>9 be?</p> <p>10 <b>A. And pick up any issues that come up. It would be</b></p> <p>11 <b>about -- yes, you are checking in with staff, making</b></p> <p>12 <b>sure there are no injuries. You are also checking in on</b></p> <p>13 <b>what had occurred and, you know, you'd like to pick up</b></p> <p>14 <b>any learning points. It's effectively what I would --</b></p> <p>15 <b>you know, like a hot debrief to pick up the things when</b></p> <p>16 <b>people remember that and you'd be causing staff to go</b></p> <p>17 <b>away independently and write the reports.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did you ever attend any use of force incidents?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I have witnessed use of force incidents, yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Did you ever attend any?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. In the sense of deliberately attend a planned use of</p> <p>23 force?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you ever conduct a briefing or a debriefing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 68</p>

1 A. I've never -- I mean, I have conducted them previously  
 2 in different roles --  
 3 Q. Yes, yes.  
 4 A. -- a number of years ago.  
 5 Q. At Brook House?  
 6 A. Sorry?  
 7 Q. At Brook House?  
 8 A. No. But it is expected, if the duty director is on  
 9 site, that they attend the use of force. I attend them  
 10 now if I'm on site and available. But it's not to kind  
 11 of be part of any of the briefing, et cetera. It is  
 12 there to observe. Because you have to review it again  
 13 afterwards.  
 14 Q. When you say "you have to", who has to?  
 15 A. I generally carry out now, as part of my role as the AD  
 16 operations. So, if there is a use of force, then,  
 17 within 24 hours, I would review that use of force  
 18 footage with, if there is one on site, a use of force  
 19 instructor and with a member of the Home Office team,  
 20 yeah.  
 21 Q. Did that happen at Brook House under G4S --  
 22 A. No.  
 23 Q. -- that system?  
 24 A. Not to the extent that we're doing it now.  
 25 Q. Nothing like it, did it?

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1 A. No.  
 2 Q. Do you know why not?  
 3 A. I think, as some of the lessons learnt from the past, it  
 4 was something that we considered that, in partnership  
 5 with the Home Office, we'd both review that within  
 6 24 hours.  
 7 Q. Yes. All right. Let me ask you now, on another topic,  
 8 some aspects about the culture at Brook House, and you  
 9 deal with this at page 11 and onwards of your witness  
 10 statement. You say at paragraph 37:  
 11 "Brook House had a mixture of challenges during the  
 12 relevant period, such as a change in the drug subculture  
 13 which covered the challenging use of NPS (also known as  
 14 spice), this was not unique to us but across all  
 15 custodial types of sites and the community. In  
 16 addition, there was a high population of time-served  
 17 foreign national offenders ... All of this will have  
 18 impacted on its culture."  
 19 So that's the culture amongst the detained  
 20 population, presumably, you're talking about there?  
 21 A. I think if I can just expand on that briefly for you.  
 22 I think the ingress of NPS within both prisons --  
 23 because I had been working in prisons when it came into  
 24 prisons -- and the community, was a massive change in  
 25 regards to the reaction that residents would have by

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1 using these types of drugs. I think -- you know, I've  
 2 seen some really difficult problems caused by that and  
 3 they're very unpredictable. You know, they would turn  
 4 some people into psychotic states for long periods of  
 5 time, and that had a massive impact at Brook House, as  
 6 it did in lots of other places, so it wasn't unique,  
 7 over a period of time, on top of an already challenging  
 8 environment.  
 9 Q. Except, I suppose, the difference between other places  
 10 and Brook House, at Brook House you perhaps didn't have  
 11 the ability to search individuals in the way you would  
 12 those coming into a prison?  
 13 A. Residents? Or --  
 14 Q. No, not residents. Visitors and staff members.  
 15 A. I mean, the same -- there were similar procedures in  
 16 place.  
 17 Q. Dogs?  
 18 A. We didn't have dogs, no, that was one of the aids that,  
 19 actually, at times, I may have been used to in other  
 20 places. But, I think, if you relate that into NPS at  
 21 the time, I think very early on -- I think it took some  
 22 time for National Dog Services to train dogs to indicate  
 23 on NPS because it was -- it was very different in  
 24 regards to drug use because my understanding is that not  
 25 one batch was the same. You know, batches were made up

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1 and different people made different batches and they had  
 2 different effects and would have a different reaction.  
 3 Q. You say at paragraph 42, while we have drugs in mind,  
 4 over the page, about four lines down:  
 5 "We worked tirelessly to try and stem the ingress of  
 6 these drugs into the centre."  
 7 A. Yes.  
 8 Q. What did "working tirelessly" look like, Mr Skitt?  
 9 A. I mean, you have to look at your main points of ingress,  
 10 you know, and they change. There were the elements  
 11 around visits.  
 12 Q. Around visits, yes.  
 13 A. Around visits, visitors coming in; around items coming  
 14 in the centre through parcels. You know, sometimes you  
 15 felt you were one step behind because you'd find one way  
 16 of -- it was organised crime, whichever way you look at  
 17 it, outside, the way it was organised. You know, it  
 18 could come in impregnated on paper, you know, I think  
 19 people got to a stage where they understood that, then  
 20 there'd be something -- you know, there'd be another way  
 21 of doing it. So sometimes, from my experience over  
 22 a number of years, sometimes you can play catch-up in  
 23 regards to the ingenious ways that people will try and  
 24 get items in. But, you know, there is the staffing  
 25 issue of staff bringing in items. One of the areas that

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18 (Pages 69 to 72)

1 we couldn't -- also considered a difficulty was  
2 prisoners, ex-prisoners, coming into the IRC estate from  
3 prisons. You know, it was a recognised ingress entry  
4 certainly within prisons, certainly in the local prison,  
5 you know, that you would have people go out, they would  
6 break their licence conditions, knowing they're going to  
7 come back in 28 days, and, you know, without being  
8 graphic, I mean, most items are secreted where nobody  
9 can be searched.

10 Q. So what was the tireless work to stop it happening?

11 A. So we had the security team working on that. We had  
12 staff on visits who required -- focused on looking for  
13 anything that may happen in visits, such as passes, such  
14 as, you know, identifying nominals that we would be  
15 looking at. You would look at where they were kind of  
16 positioned and staff had some information. You would  
17 have the reception staff with parcels and you would also  
18 have some of the security team that were dealing with  
19 the confidential SIR process who were managing the  
20 intelligence around staff. We were also working very  
21 closely with Gatwick police, who provided a lot of  
22 support around that, and it was just about pulling all  
23 that together.

24 Q. Did it make a difference?

25 A. I mean, yes, it did. I mean, it's very hard to measure,

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1 Q. You touched on staff members, because you told us about  
2 police activity, you have told us about visits,  
3 reception, parcels, and you touched on intelligence; and  
4 I think you said in relation to staff?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did you have any rogue staff members bringing drugs into  
7 the centre?

8 A. The intelligence would suggest we did.

9 Q. What was done about it?

10 A. There was quite a lot of work done around that, but of  
11 course, people asked me the same question and it's fine  
12 knowing somebody is up to something, but, as everybody  
13 would say, you've got to prove it. That is -- you know,  
14 having worked in this field for a number of years,  
15 particularly around drugs prevention, I have had some  
16 really good results and I've had results where, you  
17 know, you just can't obtain the evidence.

18 We'd got some considerable intelligence on a number  
19 of staff. We'd shortlisted --

20 Q. Forgive me, are we talking about the period we are  
21 interested in or generally? We are talking about April  
22 to August 2017?

23 A. I can't be certain, to be honest. I can't be certain.

24 But certainly there was some work going on around  
25 a number of staff which we were concerned about.

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1 but I think, you know, I think there are some reports  
2 that were -- when we kind of get towards 2018, there was  
3 some notable kind of reductions in drugs within the  
4 centre.

5 Q. I mean, during the period that we are looking at, we  
6 heard members of healthcare saying it was only a matter  
7 of time before somebody died?

8 A. Yep.

9 Q. Was that a fear that you and Mr Saunders had?

10 A. It was a fear I certainly had, having come across this  
11 type of drug before in other custodial environments,  
12 yes. It was certainly an unknown drug. Nobody  
13 understood the real kind of impact it could have. As  
14 I said, it was a different -- it could be a different  
15 strain every time. I mean, that's -- you know, you hear  
16 stories about people being used as kind of people to  
17 test drugs.

18 Q. Guinea pigs?

19 A. Guinea pigs.

20 Q. We have had evidence of that as well?

21 A. It was quite common in prisons. If a separate batch  
22 came in, you know, prisoners would use other people to  
23 kind of just see what the effect was.

24 Q. So that culture came in to Brook House as well?

25 A. Yes.

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1 There'd been -- we had brought the police in to do some  
2 work for us. We'd provided them, as we would, with that  
3 information, that intelligence. They were doing some  
4 work that we wouldn't be able to do around that, and  
5 we'd -- the kind of staffing security does really good  
6 work around the use of CCTV, use of other methods in  
7 gaining that intelligence together, to try and form --  
8 to try and kind of look at where we go with it.

9 Q. If we have time, we may come back to an example or so of  
10 that later. So that's one aspect of culture within the  
11 centre. Another aspect you deal with at your  
12 paragraph 38 on page 11 where you talk about  
13 a long-established grievance culture. Do you remember  
14 you told us that the reason, or perhaps one of  
15 the reasons, you were brought in or seconded in,  
16 eventually got the job in May 2015, was to provide some  
17 stability to the centre because of what was going on.  
18 Again, if we have time, we may look at some of  
19 the detail, if not with another witness, but what had  
20 been happening historically at Brook House for you to  
21 characterise it as a long-established grievance culture?

22 A. I think I didn't know the details of previous  
23 grievances. I think, from experience, and, you know,  
24 I'd say to any member of staff, if you do have  
25 a particular issue -- I think a lot of issues, perhaps

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19 (Pages 73 to 76)

1 in the first instance, should be dealt with at the  
2 appropriate tier, but one thing I did notice, and  
3 I hadn't really come across it before in my career, was  
4 that I am aware, but not aware of the details, that  
5 there had been a number of members of the SMT that had  
6 submitted grievances.

7 Q. Against each other or against the centre director or  
8 what?

9 A. Against the centre director, Ben Saunders, yes, which  
10 I -- as I said, I hadn't really come across that.

11 Q. This was 2015 --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- and ongoing --

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. -- through to 2017?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Where, as you put it, there were a lot of unhappy people  
18 raising not just issues with other members, but formal  
19 grievances?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Was it out of control, do you think, Mr Skitt, from what  
22 you saw?

23 A. I wouldn't say it was out of control.

24 Q. Was it being controlled?

25 A. I believe so. I believe, if I recall, that appropriate

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1 action was being taken -- you know, if a grievance was  
2 submitted, then appropriate action was being taken  
3 within the organisation.

4 Q. You put it like this in your statement:

5 "In my 30 years working in other areas, I had never  
6 really seen or dealt with so many grievances."

7 You say none were ever raised against you. But you  
8 had never seen anything quite like it, by the sound of  
9 it?

10 A. I hadn't.

11 Q. These were personal disputes or disputes around somebody  
12 being aggrieved that they hadn't got a job or they had  
13 been overlooked for something or had been spoken to in  
14 the wrong way, or was it a smattering of everything?

15 A. I mean, I didn't see, unless I was asked to look into  
16 one, you know, people submitted grievances through  
17 various ways. I'd had grievances submitted against me,  
18 as you are aware.

19 Q. Well, actually, you say "none were ever raised against  
20 myself".

21 A. Prior to going --

22 Q. Prior to going there?

23 A. Sorry, that may be my --

24 Q. Fine. But, as we know, grievances were raised against  
25 you as well once you were there?

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1 A. Yes, that's correct.

2 Q. It doesn't sound like it was in control, does it,  
3 Mr Skitt?

4 A. What do you class as not in control -- out of control in  
5 regards to --

6 Q. Well, you know, here you are, all of you, on the SMT  
7 running a centre where you have a detained population.

8 At one stage, at maximum capacity, you'd have over  
9 500 men in your control?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. All of these squabbles and grievances and disputes  
12 between individuals is a huge time resource and labour  
13 resource and people take their eye off the ball a bit,  
14 don't they?

15 A. Are you talking about within the SMT?

16 Q. Yes. It can't do otherwise, can it?

17 A. It doesn't make a healthy working relationship.

18 Q. No, it is particularly unhealthy because, while people  
19 are trying to resolve their grievances and their  
20 differences, they are taking their eye off the job  
21 they're supposed to be doing, aren't they? It stands to  
22 reason?

23 A. I have no evidence to support that, but I do --

24 Q. It is not healthy, as you say.

25 A. It is not healthy, no.

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1 Q. And I repeat what you said, something you had never seen  
2 in 30 years of work?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. Whether this happens by chance or not, let me see if you  
5 can help. Where did it all come from? Why, in this  
6 place of all places, during the period we are talking  
7 about or the run-up to the period and through the  
8 period, if you had to put your finger on the point, or  
9 nail why it was that all these grievances were arising  
10 at this place, what was it?

11 A. I don't know.

12 Q. Where was the problem?

13 A. I don't know, is the honest answer.

14 Q. I mean, you're a people person, Mr Skitt, you tell us?

15 A. I'd be speculating, to be honest, but I don't know.

16 Q. Well, you observed it, you saw it?

17 A. These had been going on for some period prior to me  
18 going to Gatwick. I think by the time I got there,  
19 I think -- I think most of them had been resolved either  
20 by people leaving, I think -- because I believe they  
21 involved the previous deputy director.

22 Q. That was Duncan Partridge?

23 A. Yes, he had left the business.

24 Q. Stacie Dean, eventually?

25 A. Stacie was still there.

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20 (Pages 77 to 80)

<p>1 Q. She left eventually, did she?</p> <p>2 <b>A. She left eventually.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Yes.</p> <p>4 <b>A. I think Michelle Brown. I think that had been concluded</b></p> <p>5 <b>when I got there, or just -- had just been concluded.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Yes.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Then Wayne Debnam had left -- he'd gone.</b></p> <p>8 Q. These are senior members?</p> <p>9 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Of a management team, trying to manage this place. This</p> <p>11 long-established culture was such that you were brought</p> <p>12 in to stabilise the ship. Do you think you succeeded?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Honest answer?</b></p> <p>14 Q. Yes. We don't want a dishonest one, Mr Skitt.</p> <p>15 <b>A. No, I've sworn on the Bible. No, I think it was a very</b></p> <p>16 <b>challenging and difficult environment to work with.</b></p> <p>17 <b>I found it personally difficult as well.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Was this a function that you had, as a deputy director,</p> <p>19 that you were comfortable with? Was it something you'd</p> <p>20 been used to in your other spheres of employment,</p> <p>21 dealing with people who were at each other all the time?</p> <p>22 <b>A. No. I think it did -- you know, I'd be used to working</b></p> <p>23 <b>within the team and, you know, I'd worked in teams</b></p> <p>24 <b>previously at this level where, yeah, you had</b></p> <p>25 <b>disagreements with people, you know, but, as a team, you</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 81</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Loraine Higgins was the director's PA.</b></p> <p>2 Q. And apologies from Michael Gibson. Who was he?</p> <p>3 <b>A. He was the -- I'm trying to think of his title now.</b></p> <p>4 <b>Basically, he worked within the central team looking at</b></p> <p>5 <b>governance and audits and working in that area. And</b></p> <p>6 <b>Kalpesh was the accountant.</b></p> <p>7 Q. We can see under "Matters arising", point 3:</p> <p>8 "Discussions took place around the cross-deployment</p> <p>9 by Tinsley staff to Brook ..."</p> <p>10 This is well before the refurbishment because this</p> <p>11 is March 2016 and this is something you have touched on</p> <p>12 already about the displeasure of Tinsley House staff</p> <p>13 having to work at Brook House, but I'm really interested</p> <p>14 in the rest of this sentence:</p> <p>15 "... and that the amnesty from grievance is to end."</p> <p>16 What's that all about?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I haven't got a clue. I have been asked this question.</b></p> <p>18 <b>I can't think of what that sentence would mean.</b></p> <p>19 Q. You were there?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. This is a meeting which you attended?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I can't recall. I mean, I can't recall the meeting.</b></p> <p>23 <b>I probably attend quite a lot of meetings. But I have</b></p> <p>24 <b>tried to reflect on this question because it has been in</b></p> <p>25 <b>my kind of questions.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 83</p>
<p>1 <b>worked together. So I think it did hinder the</b></p> <p>2 <b>encompassing a team kind of working, in my opinion.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Can we look, please, at a document I'd like to put up on</p> <p>4 screen now for the first time, &lt;CJS000463&gt;. Chair, I'm</p> <p>5 not going to take you to all of the tabs, because they</p> <p>6 have been copied in such a way that only some of</p> <p>7 the pages, and not all of the relevant pages, have been</p> <p>8 copied. So it may just be easier to focus on the</p> <p>9 screen.</p> <p>10 THE CHAIR: Okay, thank you.</p> <p>11 MR ALTMAN: &lt;CJS000463&gt; at page 1. This is a minute of an</p> <p>12 SMT meeting. We can see it is well before our period,</p> <p>13 it is 3 March 2016. We can see who is present:</p> <p>14 Lee Hanford. We have heard from him. There is you,</p> <p>15 Steve Skitt. Michelle Brown, Stacie Dean clearly still</p> <p>16 there in March 2016, Sara Edwards, Sarah Newland,</p> <p>17 Michelle Fernandes. She was HR; is that right?</p> <p>18 <b>A. That's correct, yes.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Neil Davies. Who was he?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Head of security.</b></p> <p>21 Q. Jules Williams, we have heard from him. Michael Bird</p> <p>22 and Loraine Higgins, who were they?</p> <p>23 <b>A. Michael Bird was the facilities manager at the time, so</b></p> <p>24 <b>he was responsible for all the maintenance of the site.</b></p> <p>25 Q. And Loraine Higgins?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 82</p>	<p>1 Q. Yes.</p> <p>2 <b>A. I cannot think what that would mean; whether that's been</b></p> <p>3 <b>misrepresented wrong in the minutes by the minute taker,</b></p> <p>4 <b>I don't know, but I can't really recall.</b></p> <p>5 Q. If meetings of the SMT run like most meetings of any</p> <p>6 board or any committee, then the minutes tend to be sent</p> <p>7 around to the participants to approve them?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Yes, don't disagree.</b></p> <p>9 Q. It looks as if this is not a draft but a final minute of</p> <p>10 the meeting. "Amnesty" is a curious word, don't you</p> <p>11 think --</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. -- in the circumstances of what appears to be grievances</p> <p>14 coming to an end? But anyway, you can't help us?</p> <p>15 <b>A. I can't -- sorry, I can't help you, no.</b></p> <p>16 Q. We have been talking about pressures. This is one</p> <p>17 pressure, the long-established grievance culture. We</p> <p>18 have been talking about drugs and the other problems</p> <p>19 within a detention centre. This is a question that I'm</p> <p>20 asked, again, to ask you on behalf of Bhatt Murphy.</p> <p>21 I've slightly reworded it. But do you accept that the</p> <p>22 nature of Brook House, together with the nature of</p> <p>23 the detainee population, many of whom were vulnerable</p> <p>24 with mental health issues, and were subject to, in</p> <p>25 effect, indefinite detention, as well as abuse, made all</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 84</p>

<p>1 of the pressures -- and there are presumably more that</p> <p>2 we will come to -- particularly acute? Do you think all</p> <p>3 of that was a bit of a tinderbox?</p> <p>4 <b>A. I mean, one is -- well, it would do in any environment.</b></p> <p>5 <b>But in regards to the actual kind of what was the</b></p> <p>6 <b>problem around mental health, drugs was certainly</b></p> <p>7 <b>a problem, mental health, you know, as we know in a lot</b></p> <p>8 <b>of environments, similar -- you know, there are a lot of</b></p> <p>9 <b>people who suffer mental health. I mean, I'm not sure</b></p> <p>10 <b>what the abuse bit is in relation to.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Well, you've seen it on Panorama.</p> <p>12 <b>A. That particular ...?</b></p> <p>13 Q. Yes, that's the abuse I'm talking about.</p> <p>14 <b>A. That's fine.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Verbal and physical.</p> <p>16 <b>A. Yeah, well, it would do. It would have an impact.</b></p> <p>17 Q. What about staff morale generally? What was your view</p> <p>18 of that?</p> <p>19 <b>A. There were concerns with staff morale, you know,</b></p> <p>20 <b>listening to staff going around. There were a number of</b></p> <p>21 <b>issues raised about staff, around staffing levels,</b></p> <p>22 <b>around other elements of it, yes. Staff morale was</b></p> <p>23 <b>a kind of concern.</b></p> <p>24 Q. Well, you say at your paragraph 43 on page 13, with</p> <p>25 reference to staff morale:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 85</p>	<p>1 who didn't know any different?</p> <p>2 <b>A. So you get into -- I mean, I can't recall exactly how</b></p> <p>3 <b>long the Tinsley staff worked at Brook House. I mean,</b></p> <p>4 <b>it was probably a considerable amount of time while the</b></p> <p>5 <b>refurbishment was going on.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Yes.</p> <p>7 <b>A. Staff would get used to the greater numbers. You know,</b></p> <p>8 <b>it would feel, perhaps, a bit more comfortable with the</b></p> <p>9 <b>extra staffing that we could put in areas. And I think</b></p> <p>10 <b>you get used to it, and I think, when you remove</b></p> <p>11 <b>something -- you know, we tried to put some comms around</b></p> <p>12 <b>this to say, "Look, you know, Tinsley staff are going</b></p> <p>13 <b>back. There will be a noticeable change in what you see</b></p> <p>14 <b>within your working environment", because there would</b></p> <p>15 <b>be, there would be less staff, you know, a considerable</b></p> <p>16 <b>amount of less staff, yes.</b></p> <p>17 Q. So when staff complained of understaffing, are you</p> <p>18 saying that's not something you recognise or there was</p> <p>19 understaffing?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yeah, I recognise that there was issues with staffing</b></p> <p>21 <b>that, you know, just kind of listening to staff walking</b></p> <p>22 <b>around. It was a challenge. You know, staffing levels</b></p> <p>23 <b>were a challenge. You know, we worked in a very</b></p> <p>24 <b>challenging environment, you know, and I have to say,</b></p> <p>25 <b>you know, the staff, you know, did an outstanding,</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 87</p>
<p>1 "... we had staff [at one point] from Tinsley</p> <p>2 working here because Tinsley was shut for</p> <p>3 refurbishment."</p> <p>4 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You have told us that:</p> <p>6 "During this time [you say], the staffing levels at</p> <p>7 Brook House [were] very high ..."</p> <p>8 <b>A. They were, yes.</b></p> <p>9 Q. "... as you essentially had two centres' worth of staff</p> <p>10 working at one centre. As soon as the refurbishment</p> <p>11 works were completed, the additional staff transferred</p> <p>12 back to Tinsley and the staffing levels at Brook House</p> <p>13 went back to 'normal'. This reduction [you say] in</p> <p>14 staffing levels would have been very noticeable to staff</p> <p>15 members who joined Brook House during the period within</p> <p>16 which Tinsley staff were also working here, as to them,</p> <p>17 the increased staffing level would have been the norm.</p> <p>18 They would not have known any different. The workload</p> <p>19 for each member of staff would have increased once the</p> <p>20 Tinsley staff left as there would have been less staff</p> <p>21 members to share responsibilities between. This may</p> <p>22 have led staff to believe that we were understaffed ..."</p> <p>23 So your take on it is that the disappearance of</p> <p>24 the Tinsley House staff in around May time, May 27 or</p> <p>25 thereabouts, provided a false picture to those recruits</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 86</p>	<p>1 <b>excellent job every day that they come in. We do know</b></p> <p>2 <b>that there are a few exceptions to that, but -- you</b></p> <p>3 <b>know, but on the whole, the staff group, I thought, were</b></p> <p>4 <b>great, were fantastic.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Let's look at another document, if we can put up on</p> <p>6 screen, please, &lt;IMB000048&gt;. This is a note of an IMB</p> <p>7 statutory visit in the week commencing 10 July. If we</p> <p>8 look towards the bottom of the document, under the</p> <p>9 heading "Clyde wing", we can see that the author of this</p> <p>10 note says:</p> <p>11 "One of the officers I spoke to said morale was</p> <p>12 'rock bottom' and said they are considered experienced</p> <p>13 having started the job 11 months ago, but the majority</p> <p>14 of staff are much newer. He said it was unusual that</p> <p>15 they had four on the wing when I visited and said it is</p> <p>16 usually only two or three and often no cover for rest</p> <p>17 breaks. He reported it was worse since the Tinsley</p> <p>18 staff had gone back."</p> <p>19 Presumably, you won't dispute that sentiment from</p> <p>20 whoever the individual was?</p> <p>21 <b>A. That could be a fair reflection, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. Your paragraph 44, you were clearly asked about G4S's</p> <p>23 values, and you say:</p> <p>24 "The values of G4S were integrity and respect,</p> <p>25 safety and security, excellence, innovation and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 88</p>

<p>1 teamwork."</p> <p>2 Does any of that mean anything, in reality? I mean,</p> <p>3 it sounds like a mission statement, but does it mean</p> <p>4 anything to anyone, any of that stuff, Mr Skitt? Or are</p> <p>5 these just sound bites?</p> <p>6 <b>A. It means quite a bit to me personally.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Does it really mean much to the staff under you, do you</p> <p>8 think?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I'd like to think so. I would like to think that they</b></p> <p>10 <b>act with integrity and respect others and look after the</b></p> <p>11 <b>safety of people in our care, yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Over the page, in the final sentence of paragraph 44,</p> <p>13 you say:</p> <p>14 "I think, as a manager, it is important to</p> <p>15 understand how these values cascade down."</p> <p>16 How were those values cascaded down?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I mean, I would -- I know there's some, perhaps,</b></p> <p>18 <b>criticism of me doing that. I would generally come in</b></p> <p>19 <b>early on a morning. I always have done. I still do.</b></p> <p>20 <b>And I would like to attend the staff morning briefing</b></p> <p>21 <b>and listen -- it wasn't my briefing, it was the kind of</b></p> <p>22 <b>Oscars' briefing or the duty managers' briefing of</b></p> <p>23 <b>the day, where they would run through what we would call</b></p> <p>24 <b>the handover, which kind of highlighted any previous</b></p> <p>25 <b>concerns from the previous 24 hours, would talk about</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 89</p>	<p>1 effectively being shut out and ostracised for having</p> <p>2 done my duty and bringing to the attention of the senior</p> <p>3 managers here racism", and when it's given to the centre</p> <p>4 director, who delegates it to you, the deputy, end of</p> <p>5 the line?</p> <p>6 <b>A. I can't recall that specific complaint.</b></p> <p>7 Q. No. You can't recall it?</p> <p>8 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>9 Q. You're not saying Mr Syred has invented it, though, are</p> <p>10 you?</p> <p>11 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>12 Q. But if he is right, and you can't recall it, it is quite</p> <p>13 a serious thing, isn't it --</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. -- that you didn't deal with it?</p> <p>16 <b>A. I don't disagree.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Can you explain it? No explanation?</p> <p>18 <b>A. I can't recall it, you know.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Because what it suggests is a culture -- Mr Syred was</p> <p>20 a respected member of staff. He was a welfare officer.</p> <p>21 We have seen him --</p> <p>22 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>23 Q. -- in this inquiry, and if somebody like him isn't being</p> <p>24 taken seriously, and if somebody like him has complaints</p> <p>25 of a serious nature of that kind which are not dealt</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 91</p>
<p>1 any issues that were perhaps going to be relevant for</p> <p>2 the day in question, and any pointers that staff would</p> <p>3 need to be aware of. You know, and I would be available</p> <p>4 for any questions or, if there were anything that</p> <p>5 I needed to -- message I needed to give to staff because</p> <p>6 most of the staff were there. I found it useful for</p> <p>7 that.</p> <p>8 You know, and some of the conversations were about</p> <p>9 how we -- you know, I wouldn't exactly say it in regards</p> <p>10 to, "This is our values", and go through each one, but,</p> <p>11 in a kind of nutshell, talk about, you know, things that</p> <p>12 I want to put across about how we deal with people</p> <p>13 encompassing those values.</p> <p>14 Q. One of the criticisms about you, Mr Skitt, is, for</p> <p>15 example, by Owen Syred. We don't, perhaps, have to look</p> <p>16 at it now because I'm sure you will have read it. But</p> <p>17 where he had a complaint where he had been called</p> <p>18 a "snitch" or a "grass" for informing on racism within</p> <p>19 the centre, and he told this inquiry about complaints he</p> <p>20 raised, in particular with Ben Saunders, in relation to</p> <p>21 it and that Mr Saunders, according to him, passed that</p> <p>22 complaint on to you to deal with and, says Mr Syred, it</p> <p>23 wasn't dealt with and he received no response.</p> <p>24 Now, what do you say about that Mr Skitt? Because</p> <p>25 it is a serious charge, Mr Syred saying, you know, "I'm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 90</p>	<p>1 with, it rather suggests that a culture is allowed to</p> <p>2 mushroom, don't you think?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I don't disagree with that comment.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Because one of the things we have heard about very often</p> <p>5 is that this place had a toxic culture. Do you</p> <p>6 recognise that?</p> <p>7 <b>A. The word "toxic culture" -- I have mentioned "toxic" in</b></p> <p>8 <b>my statement in relation to, I think, my views of what</b></p> <p>9 <b>the SMT had become. I'm not sure a toxic culture for</b></p> <p>10 <b>the centre.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Well, we have heard of "laddish", "macho", you've seen</p> <p>12 Panorama for yourself?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. You've seen some of the language used towards detained</p> <p>15 men, the language used amongst staff of others, about</p> <p>16 others. Whether you care to call it "toxic" or not,</p> <p>17 it's not very good, is it?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Are you saying you were blissfully unaware of the whole</p> <p>20 thing?</p> <p>21 <b>A. Of the Panorama?</b></p> <p>22 Q. No, of that kind of culture, Mr Skitt?</p> <p>23 <b>A. There had been issues raised that had been dealt with,</b></p> <p>24 <b>but, as a whole, the way -- staff would react</b></p> <p>25 <b>differently and be different around me than they would</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 92</p>

<p>1       <b>within their own peer group or kind of other managers --</b></p> <p>2       Q. Yes.</p> <p>3       <b>A. -- you know, and talk in a different way. Had I been</b></p> <p>4       <b>aware, or had any members of the SMT been aware, of such</b></p> <p>5       <b>a culture, as what you are describing, you know, I am</b></p> <p>6       <b>certain that something would have been done about it.</b></p> <p>7       Q. So, thinking about it -- I mean, you've seen the</p> <p>8       Panorama programme, I'm sure more than once, and all of</p> <p>9       this information comes out about an organisation which</p> <p>10      you were running day to day; it must have been pretty</p> <p>11      shocking?</p> <p>12      <b>A. I mean, I can't comment -- I mean, the information that</b></p> <p>13      <b>came out afterwards we weren't aware of before.</b></p> <p>14      Q. No. It must have been pretty shocking?</p> <p>15      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16      Q. "How did I, Steve Skitt, miss all of this?"</p> <p>17      <b>A. I ask myself the same question.</b></p> <p>18      Q. "How did I, Ben Saunders, miss all of this?"</p> <p>19      <b>A. And I'm sure a lot of people, if they are honest with</b></p> <p>20      <b>themselves, would say, "How did we miss all that?", and</b></p> <p>21      <b>we did, and we didn't find out a lot of it, as you know,</b></p> <p>22      <b>until after the programme had been aired because nobody</b></p> <p>23      <b>had told us.</b></p> <p>24      Q. Was it you weren't sufficiently visible?</p> <p>25      <b>A. I would say I was relatively visible.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 93</p>	<p>1       deputy director, you would have been privy to some of</p> <p>2       the concerns raised by staff, whether this was through</p> <p>3       the formal whistleblowing policy or the general</p> <p>4       complaints process. You say, if you were made aware of</p> <p>5       any occasion where someone raised concerns in relation</p> <p>6       to the treatment of a detained person, formally or</p> <p>7       informally, you would evaluate the information and make</p> <p>8       any appropriate decisions.</p> <p>9       If you go on to paragraph 50, there you deal with</p> <p>10      the responsive staff members when action is taken</p> <p>11      against colleagues. You say that's not something you</p> <p>12      could really comment on because you wouldn't really be</p> <p>13      party to what they say. But you add procedures are in</p> <p>14      place for people to say something if they thought or</p> <p>15      think something was or is inappropriate:</p> <p>16      "I think that people felt comfortable reporting or</p> <p>17      using these reporting systems, as we did get a few</p> <p>18      reports from staff about staff, as far as I can</p> <p>19      remember."</p> <p>20      Now, the few reports you talk about, in the scheme</p> <p>21      of things, are you saying that -- we are forgetting</p> <p>22      grievances amongst SMT members, but we are talking about</p> <p>23      serious reports from one staff member about another</p> <p>24      complaining about mistreatment or abuse or derogatory</p> <p>25      language. Are those the few reports you're talking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p>
<p>1       Q. Relatively?</p> <p>2       <b>A. I think I got around the centre quite a lot. I wouldn't</b></p> <p>3       <b>say every day, but I would say, you know, in the week,</b></p> <p>4       <b>I got around the centre as much as I could. It may not</b></p> <p>5       <b>have been the whole of the centre at all the time, it</b></p> <p>6       <b>may have been different areas, but ...</b></p> <p>7       Q. So it may have been relative invisibility or people were</p> <p>8       hiding it from you or not doing it in front of you?</p> <p>9       <b>A. I don't think -- respectfully, I don't think they're</b></p> <p>10      <b>going to do it in front of me.</b></p> <p>11      Q. No.</p> <p>12      <b>A. You know, that would be my view.</b></p> <p>13      MR ALTMAN: Chair, it is just gone 1.00 pm. Time for lunch,</p> <p>14      Mr Skitt.</p> <p>15      THE CHAIR: Thank you.</p> <p>16      MR ALTMAN: 2 o'clock? Thank you.</p> <p>17      THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.</p> <p>18      (1.05 pm)</p> <p>19      (The short adjournment)</p> <p>20      (2.00 pm)</p> <p>21      MR ALTMAN: Mr Skitt, have you got your statement still in</p> <p>22      front of you? Look at paragraph 48, please, which is</p> <p>23      page 14. There you say you couldn't recall any specific</p> <p>24      occasion, from memory, due to the time which has passed</p> <p>25      since the relevant period. However, in your role as</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 94</p>	<p>1       about there?</p> <p>2       <b>A. I think it could be any report that any member of staff</b></p> <p>3       <b>felt uncomfortable that they wanted to raise in</b></p> <p>4       <b>a perhaps more open forum. Some staff, in my opinion,</b></p> <p>5       <b>would have perhaps felt more comfortable to either</b></p> <p>6       <b>contact the "Speak Out" line --</b></p> <p>7       Q. Speak up just a bit. Yes.</p> <p>8       <b>A. The "Speak Out" line, or some staff may feel comfortable</b></p> <p>9       <b>to put a -- they could put a confidential SIR in, and</b></p> <p>10      <b>I have seen some from staff that have been anonymous</b></p> <p>11      <b>or -- you know, or through those channels.</b></p> <p>12      Q. Given the nature and scale of the abuse that the inquiry</p> <p>13      has heard about, are you prepared to accept, Mr Skitt,</p> <p>14      that the procedures for complaining couldn't have</p> <p>15      functioned very well?</p> <p>16      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>17      Q. You're prepared to accept that?</p> <p>18      <b>A. For the incident, yes, because, obviously --</b></p> <p>19      Q. Well -- carry on.</p> <p>20      <b>A. We didn't know about those concerns until after the</b></p> <p>21      <b>incident, at a later point in time.</b></p> <p>22      Q. I gave you one example of Owen Syred a little earlier.</p> <p>23      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>24      Q. But, by and large, people didn't report, did they, what</p> <p>25      was going on? Otherwise, you should have known about</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 96</p>



<p>1 it?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I think in the examples of the programme itself, that is</b></p> <p>3 <b>correct, yes, because we didn't know and nobody did</b></p> <p>4 <b>report it.</b></p> <p>5 Q. I mean, if we look at a document, if we can put it up on</p> <p>6 screen, Zaynab, &lt;IMB000026&gt;, and this is a Brook House</p> <p>7 Independent Monitoring Board, IMB, meeting of</p> <p>8 20 September. This is a month after you have first been</p> <p>9 notified of the BBC allegations.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. It was two and a half weeks or so after the programme</p> <p>12 had been aired on BBC. If we look, please, on page 2,</p> <p>13 under "Item 4 Monthly reports from Home Office and G4S":</p> <p>14 "SS for G4S [that's you] ... discussed the recent</p> <p>15 BBC Panorama programme and advised on a number of points</p> <p>16 listed below:</p> <p>17 "1. Prior to the programme airing, pre-emptive work</p> <p>18 had taken place within the centre to ensure there were</p> <p>19 no issues within Brook. Staff and detainees had been</p> <p>20 spoken to and letters distributed."</p> <p>21 Pausing there, what was the pre-emptive work which</p> <p>22 had taken place?</p> <p>23 <b>A. To highlight the fact that there was going to be</b></p> <p>24 <b>a programme; to communicate to residents/staff that the</b></p> <p>25 <b>programme was going to be aired, and I think it kind of</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p>	<p>1 system and realising it wasn't fit for purpose?</p> <p>2 <b>A. The whistleblowing process was in place. It was there</b></p> <p>3 <b>for staff to use. We know staff did use it because we'd</b></p> <p>4 <b>had some reports gone through. However, I think, after</b></p> <p>5 <b>this, it was noted that the -- it would be important for</b></p> <p>6 <b>staff, if they did want to raise anything, that the</b></p> <p>7 <b>whistleblowing process was in place and we sent letters</b></p> <p>8 <b>to all the staff with whistleblowing cards on, just as</b></p> <p>9 <b>a kind of belt and braces, really, to impact on the</b></p> <p>10 <b>importance of it.</b></p> <p>11 Q. It clearly hadn't been functioning as G4S had hoped up</p> <p>12 to that point, had it?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I can't comment if it was -- well, yes, you would have</b></p> <p>14 <b>hoped there'd have been some reports from the incidents.</b></p> <p>15 Q. But there hadn't been?</p> <p>16 <b>A. There hadn't been, that's correct.</b></p> <p>17 Q. We also know from Callum Tulley that a poster, or</p> <p>18 posters, informing staff members about the "Speak Out"</p> <p>19 policy within Brook House itself had been scrawled over</p> <p>20 with "snitch", "grass", those sorts of words. Did you</p> <p>21 know that?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Some posters -- not just those, others -- if they were</b></p> <p>23 <b>found to have been defaced, they would have been taken</b></p> <p>24 <b>down and replaced.</b></p> <p>25 Q. We don't know whether that one was taken down or not but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 99</p>
<p>1 <b>stated the time and the date within that, just so people</b></p> <p>2 <b>were aware of it.</b></p> <p>3 Q. We can see a number of other actions. It is really</p> <p>4 towards the bottom on this topic I want to ask you</p> <p>5 about. Do you see the main paragraph at the foot of</p> <p>6 the page?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. Do you see we have got "JL" suggesting that, apart from</p> <p>9 the suspended staff, there could be other staff that</p> <p>10 agreed with the behaviour of suspended officers:</p> <p>11 "How would G4S change this culture/ethos?"</p> <p>12 It is this:</p> <p>13 "SS advised that within the action plan there were</p> <p>14 points to address this issue. These include building</p> <p>15 more trust in the whistleblower system and also the use</p> <p>16 of body-worn cameras by all officers that recorded</p> <p>17 continually, the info being downloaded at the end of</p> <p>18 each shift."</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. "LH asked how staff would be encouraged to whistleblow.</p> <p>21 SS advised that all staff would be receiving letters</p> <p>22 about speaking out and explaining the system is</p> <p>23 anonymous and run by a third party."</p> <p>24 It rather suggests that, after this particular horse</p> <p>25 had bolted, you were looking at the whistleblowing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 98</p>	<p>1 it was sufficient for Callum Tulley to tell us about it.</p> <p>2 But it shows, doesn't it, that if that was going on and</p> <p>3 the "Speak Out" policy was being defaced in that way,</p> <p>4 presumably by other staff members, then, insofar as</p> <p>5 whistleblowing is concerned, it was perfectly clear</p> <p>6 that, if you blow the whistle, you're going to be</p> <p>7 ostracised as a "snitch" or a "grass", and that's</p> <p>8 exactly what happened to Owen Syred?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I mean, in the face of Callum Tulley's comments, I can't</b></p> <p>10 <b>confirm or deny that there was one of what he said.</b></p> <p>11 <b>However, if we had have noticed any posters defaced</b></p> <p>12 <b>or -- you know, then they would have been taken down and</b></p> <p>13 <b>replaced.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Presumably for another one to go up and be defaced in</p> <p>15 the same way?</p> <p>16 <b>A. Well, sometimes you can't account for people who want to</b></p> <p>17 <b>write silly things on bits of paper, can you?</b></p> <p>18 Q. Are you saying you weren't aware of that, though?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I wasn't aware of that particular incident, no.</b></p> <p>20 Q. So on the times you'd gone around the wings, or wherever</p> <p>21 this poster may have been, and my recollection, from</p> <p>22 what Callum Tulley said, although it was a long time</p> <p>23 ago, is it was outside some lavatories where the poster</p> <p>24 was on a wall. But as far as you're concerned, in all</p> <p>25 the time you were there, you've never been a poster</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 100</p>

25 (Pages 97 to 100)

1 defaced in that way, a "Speak Out" poster?

2 **A. I have seen posters defaced. I can't particularly**

3 **relate to that particular one, no.**

4 Q. Have you seen "Speak Out" posters defaced in a way which

5 made perfectly clear that anybody using the hotline

6 would be regarded as a grass?

7 **A. No, I haven't.**

8 Q. How have you seen "Speak Out" posters defaced, then?

9 **A. I didn't particularly mention "Speak Out" posters; some**

10 **posters.**

11 Q. Forget the other posters, Mr Skitt. I'm only talking

12 about "Speak Out" ones.

13 **A. No, I can't recall any now.**

14 Q. Let's move on, please. In your -- back to your

15 statement. Paragraph 52 and onwards. You will recall

16 that you were asked to go through the recommendations

17 which had been made by HMIP as a result of their visit

18 between 31 October and 11 November 2016; yes?

19 **A. Yes.**

20 Q. There -- I'm not going to go through them, because it

21 would just, I'm afraid, take up too much time -- you set

22 out reasonably clearly, the recommendations which were

23 accepted and those -- or part accepted and those which

24 were rejected in paragraphs 53 and 54, and they all

25 relate to the action plan which G4S and, indeed, the

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1 **A. Yes.**

2 Q. Who signs off on those recommendations from G4S's point

3 of view?

4 **A. Ultimately, the director.**

5 Q. You mean Mr Saunders?

6 **A. Yes, Ben Saunders, yes.**

7 Q. Does it go any higher than the centre director? Does

8 the company itself have to sign off on the

9 recommendations? Because there may be cost effects?

10 **A. The company would be involved. I'm not sure if any of**

11 **those would have to sign off on it. My understanding,**

12 **and I may stand to be corrected at some point, is it was**

13 **the director's responsibility.**

14 Q. When you say "director" --

15 **A. Ben Saunders.**

16 Q. -- because one thinks of company directors --

17 **A. Sorry, yes, Ben Saunders.**

18 Q. -- you're thinking of the centre director?

19 **A. The centre director, yes.**

20 Q. Which is a huge responsibility?

21 **A. Yes.**

22 Q. So you have a series of meetings amongst, what, the

23 whole of the SMT or just certain members of the SMT?

24 **A. No, it would be the whole of the SMT, and it could**

25 **involve other members from the Gatwick team because, you**

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1 Home Office considered in relation to the

2 recommendations made and, chair, for the record, the

3 inspection report is <VER000117>.

4 What I'd like to know, looking at all of those

5 recommendations, those partially accepted and those

6 rejected, who made the decisions about them?

7 **A. So the -- you'd receive the HMIP reports. We would then**

8 **start drafting responses to that. We would also do this**

9 **in consultation with the Home Office as well, because,**

10 **ultimately, the agreed action plan was between the**

11 **Home Office and ourselves. So we would work through the**

12 **draft of that, and then, if I recall correctly, we would**

13 **have held a number of meetings.**

14 Q. Who is the "we"?

15 **A. The G4S SMT --**

16 Q. At what level?

17 **A. -- and the Home Office.**

18 Q. Sorry, what level within G4S?

19 **A. The SMT, from the director downwards.**

20 Q. So it's Ben Saunders, it's you, it's Michelle Brown --

21 **A. Yes.**

22 Q. -- and others within the SMT at that level are looking

23 at the HMIP report and you are making the decisions

24 about whether recommendations should or shouldn't be

25 accepted?

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1 **know, it may be relevant that it may refer to**

2 **a particular area, you know, where the person who**

3 **manages that area may not be within the SMT, but would**

4 **perhaps be the expert to give advice.**

5 Q. Do you receive any external advice or is the whole thing

6 done in-house?

7 **A. External replies from ...?**

8 Q. "Advice", "advice". Do you receive any external advice

9 upon the impact of a particular recommendation?

10 **A. It's normally done between G4S and the Home Office.**

11 Q. So it is all done internally?

12 **A. All done, yep.**

13 Q. The meetings the SMT have, are any Home Office members

14 invited or is it strictly the SMT of G4S?

15 **A. I think, by memory, I think, initially, we would draft**

16 **the responses and then we would have -- involve the**

17 **Home Office at a fairly senior level within the**

18 **Home Office to decide with those actions. But there may**

19 **be consultation along the way, depending on what the**

20 **action is.**

21 Q. A lengthy process? Several meetings?

22 **A. Oh, yes, certainly, yes.**

23 Q. So the ultimate decision, as far as G4S is concerned, to

24 accept recommendations or reject them is, who?

25 **A. Well, ultimately, it would be the centre director,**

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26 (Pages 101 to 104)

<p>1 <b>Ben Saunders, or whoever the centre director is at the</b>  2 <b>time.</b>  3 Q. In the report of HMP for that 2016 period I was talking  4 about, there was a detained persons survey. Did you  5 appreciate that, a survey?  6 <b>A. Yes, I'm aware there's always a survey when HMIP are</b>  7 <b>coming, yes.</b>  8 Q. Let's put the document up on screen, &lt;VER000117&gt;, and,  9 to begin with, at page 20. Here is the report, and here  10 is the first page, which Zaynab has just taken off the  11 screen, but that was, as we saw, 31 October to  12 11 November 2016. This is page 20, and we see, at 1.13,  13 under the heading "Bullying and violence reduction" --  14 we will come to the survey in a moment. This was about  15 everyone feeling safe from bullying and victimisation,  16 and that, "Detainees at risk or subject to victimisation  17 are protected through active and fair systems known to  18 staff and detainees". The report says:  19 "In our survey, 37 per cent of detainees reported  20 feeling unsafe, 21 per cent reported victimisation by  21 other detainees and 18 per cent by staff."  22 So that is a very bare summary of one part of  23 the survey. We can see the survey itself if we go to  24 page 69. It is, "Appendix IV: Summary of detainee  25 survey responses", and there are headers for sampling,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 105</p>	<p>1 13 per cent, yes; 87 per cent, no. And then  2 question 46:  3 "Have you spent a night in the separation/isolation  4 unit in the last six months?"  5 17 per cent said yes; 83 per cent said no. Then  6 under the heading "Safety", question 50:  7 "Has a member of staff or group of staff victimised  8 (insulted or assaulted) you here?"  9 22 of the returns said yes, and that was  10 18 per cent. 82 per cent, which were 99, said no. You  11 must have been aware of all of this, Mr Skitt?  12 <b>A. We would have had this in the report at the time, yes.</b>  13 Q. What was done about that? You will agree, won't you,  14 you can't take -- as a deputy director of a centre like  15 this, you can't take any comfort from 18 per cent of  16 the people returning those questionnaires saying that  17 they had been victimised by staff or a group of staff,  18 which meant insulted or assaulted?  19 <b>A. No, you can't. No, I agree.</b>  20 Q. So what was done about it?  21 <b>A. I can't -- I know we would have gone through this,</b>  22 <b>I know we would have looked at it within the safe</b>  23 <b>custody team. It's nearly six years ago. I can't</b>  24 <b>specifically remember exactly what we did with this</b>  25 <b>piece of information.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 107</p>
<p>1 how the questionnaire was distributed and collected, and  2 towards the bottom, the survey response. Right at the  3 bottom:  4 "At the time of the survey on 31 October 2016, the  5 detainee population at Brook House IRC was 392. Using  6 the method described above, questionnaires were  7 distributed to a sample of 209 detainees.  8 "We received a total of 159 completed  9 questionnaires, a response rate of 76 per cent. This  10 included one questionnaire completed via interview.  11 Nine respondents refused to complete a questionnaire and  12 41 questionnaires were not returned."  13 Page 76, please. Right at the bottom, section 7 is  14 "Staff", question 43:  15 "Do you have a member of staff at the centre that  16 you can turn to for help if you have a problem?"  17 97, or 66 per cent, said yes; 34 per cent, 49, said  18 no:  19 "Do most staff [question 44] at the centre treat you  20 with respect?"  21 107 of the returns, which equated to 77 per cent,  22 said yes; 23 per cent, equating to 32 returns, said no.  23 Then over the page, question 45 at the top:  24 "Have any members of staff physically restrained you  25 (C&amp;R) in the last six months."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 106</p>	<p>1 Q. If we look at question 51:  2 "If you have felt victimised by a member of  3 staff/group of staff, what did the incidents involve?"  4 "Physical abuse (being hit, kicked or assaulted).  5 3 per cent.  6 "Because of your nationality. 6 per cent.  7 "Drugs. 2 per cent.  8 "Because you have a disability. 0 per cent.  9 "Because of your religion/religious beliefs.  10 1 per cent."  11 Even those figures are too high, aren't they?  12 <b>A. I think any figures are too high in that respect. But</b>  13 <b>what incidents they relate to, I wouldn't know, because,</b>  14 <b>obviously, this is anecdotal information that we were</b>  15 <b>given a survey or report.</b>  16 Q. It's not that anecdotal because if you look at  17 question 52:  18 "If you have been victimised by detainees or staff,  19 did you report it?"  20 12 per cent said yes, 14 per cent said no. So if  21 this survey was accurate or near accurate, there ought  22 to be 13 reports in answer to this survey of individuals  23 who said that they had been victimised by detainees or  24 staff and they reported it?  25 <b>A. So if it had been gone through the complaints procedure</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 108</p>

27 (Pages 105 to 108)

<p>1 <b>and they reported it for the complaints which go to the</b></p> <p>2 <b>Home Office, without knowing details from this report,</b></p> <p>3 <b>I wouldn't know what had been reported and what had</b></p> <p>4 <b>been -- I mean, if a complaint had gone in, it would</b></p> <p>5 <b>have been investigated.</b></p> <p>6 Q. But taking it at face value, Mr Skitt, these should have</p> <p>7 been worrying figures for you and Mr Saunders?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Again, I'm trying to recall on something a number of</b></p> <p>9 <b>years ago. I think it would have been concerning for</b></p> <p>10 <b>the SMT as a whole.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You can't tell us what you did about it?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I can't recall what we did, no.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Let's move on to a different topic now, please. In</p> <p>14 paragraph 60 and onwards, you were asked in this section</p> <p>15 to deal with external bodies. At paragraph 60 on your</p> <p>16 page 22 and onwards, you deal with the Gatwick Detainees</p> <p>17 Welfare Group. I'd like to ask you a few things about</p> <p>18 them.</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. You say at 60 in the final line:</p> <p>21 "The service of the GDWG is invaluable in my</p> <p>22 opinion."</p> <p>23 Yes?</p> <p>24 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Did you always hold that view?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 109</p>	<p>1 "... works to improve the welfare and well-being of</p> <p>2 people held in detention by offering friendship and</p> <p>3 practical and emotional support and advocating for fair</p> <p>4 treatment."</p> <p>5 That's what I mean and that's what he means by</p> <p>6 advocacy; advocating on their behalf, advancing their</p> <p>7 cases, if you like. Did you understand that?</p> <p>8 <b>A. I think there's a -- in regards to their casework,</b></p> <p>9 <b>I'm -- I just want to understand it correctly, that</b></p> <p>10 <b>we're talking about signposting where people can go?</b></p> <p>11 Q. I'm simply reading to you what he says, Mr Skitt. Then,</p> <p>12 at paragraph 9, he talks about the network that they</p> <p>13 have:</p> <p>14 "The visitors form the core of our work and their</p> <p>15 role is to meet detainees, offer empathy, constructive</p> <p>16 advice, practical help and friendship to ameliorate the</p> <p>17 experience of detention."</p> <p>18 And 10:</p> <p>19 "In addition, GDWG employs a small team of advocacy</p> <p>20 coordinators or 'staff' who offer practical help to</p> <p>21 detainees including ..."</p> <p>22 And he sets out a whole list of the sort of help</p> <p>23 that they offer. Now, did you understand that this is</p> <p>24 what GDWG was all about at the time you were deputy</p> <p>25 director for G4S?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 111</p>
<p>1 <b>A. I have always held that view and I've always said that</b></p> <p>2 <b>the service that the Gatwick Welfare Group set out to</b></p> <p>3 <b>provide with social support for residents, particularly</b></p> <p>4 <b>around visiting, they will also look at destitute</b></p> <p>5 <b>clothing, provide support -- monetary support and other</b></p> <p>6 <b>support for residents.</b></p> <p>7 Q. You say it was a body originally set up as an</p> <p>8 organisation to provide social and pastoral support for</p> <p>9 residents?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. You will have seen, I think, a statement from</p> <p>12 James Wilson?</p> <p>13 <b>A. I have.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Who, in effect, described them as having an advocacy</p> <p>15 role and offering help to detained persons; yes? Do you</p> <p>16 accept that?</p> <p>17 <b>A. I accept that they are there -- what do you mean within</b></p> <p>18 <b>"advocacy"?</b></p> <p>19 Q. Well, advocating on their behalf?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Sorry, I'm a bit unsure of --</b></p> <p>21 Q. Let's look at what he has to say. It's &lt;GDW000001&gt; at</p> <p>22 page 3. This is a statement Mr Wilson made in the</p> <p>23 High Court in 2018, and at paragraph 10, he talks about</p> <p>24 Gatwick -- the Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group. It is</p> <p>25 a registered charity, at paragraph 8:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 110</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Certainly with paragraph 10, yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. So what didn't you understand?</p> <p>3 <b>A. That my understanding was, and from there the kind of</b></p> <p>4 <b>guidance that they published to residents that they</b></p> <p>5 <b>would cover the elements that they have highlighted in</b></p> <p>6 <b>paragraph 10 of this report.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Did you understand that they advocated on behalf of</p> <p>8 residents, as you call them, for fair treatment? Did</p> <p>9 you understand that?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I understood that there are other parts to their role as</b></p> <p>11 <b>an organisation, yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. At paragraph 64 of your statement, Mr Skitt, about four</p> <p>13 lines down, on page 23, you say:</p> <p>14 "There were certain members of the GDWG who became</p> <p>15 too involved in residents' cases. A lot of people</p> <p>16 thought this was inappropriate and thought that these</p> <p>17 types of actions would get in the way of what the GDWG</p> <p>18 was there to do."</p> <p>19 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>20 Q. "For example, they were getting involved with casework</p> <p>21 and questioning medical treatment given to residents.</p> <p>22 The IMB also raised concerns that members of the GDWG</p> <p>23 were contacting them to get information for residents."</p> <p>24 A line or two down:</p> <p>25 "In addition, the group were raising safeguarding</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 112</p>

<p>1 issues and healthcare complaints on behalf of 2 a resident. However, they were not following the 3 specific processes we have in place for raising 4 concerns ..." and so on and so forth.</p> <p>5 Was that your view, that the GDWG were overreaching 6 their remit?</p> <p>7 <b>A. There were a number of concerns that were raised 8 through -- certainly from the IMB. The IMB contacted me 9 and said they were concerned about contact. There was 10 also a number -- well, there was a concern, and I think 11 James Wilson says in his, kind of, statement about 12 wanting another visit with the residents because he 13 believed he'd got mental health issues and he wanted to 14 enquire -- well, the way I read it was enquire into that 15 more.</b></p> <p>16 Now, my concern was -- and I think some of this has 17 got lost in translation with James -- it's quite right 18 that anybody raises a concern. My concern was what 19 channels those concerns are raised.</p> <p>20 You can contact another body, but I was worried 21 whether something could be missed that could be 22 detrimental to a resident in our care, particularly 23 around safeguarding, particularly about mental health, 24 because we would want to know that information and 25 signpost it as quickly as we can to the appropriate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 113</p>	<p>1 <b>doctor, strangely enough, is not qualified to do this 2 because they have to come in and measure a person up for 3 these aids. So I said, right, where are we? Where is 4 our next port of call? And I had a discussion with the 5 healthcare manager, Sandra Calver, and either she'd 6 already agreed or we agreed between us that we would pay 7 for a physiotherapist to come in and assess the 8 gentleman, and I believe that literally happened a day 9 or two after.</b></p> <p>10 So it's just an example. To me, it wasn't around we 11 want to be difficult. It wasn't around that we are 12 trying to be obstructive. The point I was trying to put 13 across to James on numerous occasions was, if we 14 signposted directly to the right person in the first 15 place, and I was kind of -- you know, concerned, they 16 had a very good working relationship with the welfare 17 team on site, they had a very good relationship, 18 I think, with Safer Custody, and they did use those 19 departments as a conduit. However, they don't work 20 24/7, so I think what I was just trying to say was, if 21 there were any concerns similar to the one I've just 22 mentioned, then please direct it to myself or, over 23 24 hours, the centre can be contacted and we can direct 24 it to the duty director, who is always on 24-hour call.</p> <p>25 Q. Can we just look at a couple of emails, please, because</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 115</p>
<p>1 people to deal with it, such as healthcare or if it's 2 a safeguarding issue, we can very quickly go to the wing 3 managers to kind of raise our concerns about 4 a particular individual and they can look at their 5 processes around safeguarding quite quickly.</p> <p>6 I think one example I can give is -- and I know it 7 is mentioned in here -- about the gentleman that had 8 a burnt foot. That come to light and that come to me 9 and I received a long email kind of raising the concerns 10 about this gentleman, and quite right, and it was 11 basically saying, "Well, we believe he should have some 12 kind of aid, crutches or wheelchair, et cetera", which, 13 from what I saw, I didn't disagree with and was quite 14 concerned that we'd actually got somebody in the centre 15 in this position.</p> <p>16 I initially contacted the healthcare because -- 17 whether this had been kind of seen on screening, and 18 what had we done. When I did contact the healthcare, 19 they were aware of it and I said, "Well, from a layman's 20 point of view, why can't we supply crutches or 21 a wheelchair or whatever was deemed appropriate to 22 support this resident?" I mean, I didn't know this, but 23 they -- for anybody that requires crutches or any kind 24 of aid, you have to see a physiotherapist, and I said, 25 "Well, can't the doctor do it?", and they said, no, the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 114</p>	<p>1 I think some of this all started in April 2017?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>3 Q. If we go to &lt;GDW000003&gt; at page 18, to begin with. At 4 the top, there is an email from you to James Wilson.</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You having to reschedule a meeting. But then you say: 7 "In regards to attendance, this meeting is to 8 discuss an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with 9 yourselves and a number of local issues that involve 10 your staff support, and I do not feel it appropriate to 11 involve other organisations at this point, you can, of 12 course, outside of this, speak to AVID ..."</p> <p>13 Who were AVID?</p> <p>14 <b>A. I believe they were a similar organisation to Gatwick 15 Welfare Group.</b></p> <p>16 Q. "... and they can offer you some advice."</p> <p>17 <b>A. I think there was a person -- there was a lot of 18 correspondence around this. I think it was somebody 19 called Ali.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Wasn't it -- it may be my memory is wrong. Didn't 21 Mr Wilson want to bring Ali into this repeat interview 22 with the resident?</p> <p>23 <b>A. He did, yes, that's correct.</b></p> <p>24 Q. That was something that you didn't allow?</p> <p>25 <b>A. I didn't refuse it. I contacted the onsite Home Office</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 116</p>

<p>1 team and said that James had contacted me, he wishes</p> <p>2 this person to come in from this organisation, because,</p> <p>3 ultimately, any visitor that comes into the centre has</p> <p>4 to be approved by the Home Office. They wouldn't give</p> <p>5 me a decision. They advised me to write to what they</p> <p>6 call DES, which is detention escort and security. So</p> <p>7 I wrote to them and the response I got back was no.</p> <p>8 Q. So it was a Home Office decision that didn't allow it?</p> <p>9 A. It was a Home Office decision. It was not my decision.</p> <p>10 Q. If we go on to page 29, time moves on, it is 12 June and</p> <p>11 Mr Wilson is writing to you and others about a meeting</p> <p>12 that you had had. In the final paragraph:</p> <p>13 "Finally, for now, I was grateful to Steve for</p> <p>14 raising the concern about our implying the provision of</p> <p>15 counselling, and was sorry we weren't able to finish</p> <p>16 this conversation. If you feel that we had somehow</p> <p>17 stepped over a line of what is acceptable, please do let</p> <p>18 me know. We are not counsellors and are clear that we</p> <p>19 are not providing a therapeutic or psychiatric service</p> <p>20 to detainees. However, being a listening ear,</p> <p>21 a befriender and a form of emotional support for</p> <p>22 detainees who need someone to talk to is at the core of</p> <p>23 what we do."</p> <p>24 He finishes the email in very much the same vein.</p> <p>25 But in the meantime, in August, if we go to page 32,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 117</p>	<p>1 bottom of page 48, on the right-hand side, you see, at</p> <p>2 line 13, she was asked.</p> <p>3 "Question: You say in your statement ..."</p> <p>4 So counsel is asking Anna Pincus about her</p> <p>5 statement:</p> <p>6 "... that this email from you was discussed during</p> <p>7 a meeting on 18 August and that Steve Skitt complained</p> <p>8 that your email was an example of a concern raised to</p> <p>9 the right person but in the wrong way because it was not</p> <p>10 for you diagnose a risk of PTSD or to request the move.</p> <p>11 Is that right?</p> <p>12 "Answer: That's right. So, I mean, first of all,</p> <p>13 I had actually attended a training on PTSD, which you</p> <p>14 mentioned at the beginning, but, second of all, if I was</p> <p>15 expressing something inappropriately, that was not the</p> <p>16 point. The point was, his concern should have been</p> <p>17 directed at how well the person -- the detained person</p> <p>18 was, and to focus on the tone of my email rather than</p> <p>19 the issue of the well-being of the detained person</p> <p>20 seemed to me illustrates that it was a broken culture."</p> <p>21 Were you aware of her criticisms, Mr Skitt?</p> <p>22 A. When I read this, yes.</p> <p>23 Q. And she wasn't the only one. Mr Wilson -- I'm not going</p> <p>24 to go through it all, because I'm afraid it would take</p> <p>25 far too long -- for his part in the course of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 119</p>
<p>1 please, at the bottom, right at the bottom, this is</p> <p>2 something we have heard evidence about. Anna Pincus, on</p> <p>3 7 August, at 10.00 in the morning sends an email over</p> <p>4 the page, page 33, to Dan Haughton:</p> <p>5 "I met a detainee that I was concerned about last</p> <p>6 week and, in view of the symptoms of stress he is</p> <p>7 manifesting, I wonder whether you would consider moving</p> <p>8 him to Tinsley House where the environment might give</p> <p>9 him fewer triggers for post-traumatic stress from his</p> <p>10 time of imprisonment in Turkey. Obviously, you know the</p> <p>11 case much better than I, but I would appreciate any</p> <p>12 consideration you can give the request, particularly at</p> <p>13 a time when his stress is likely to escalate with his</p> <p>14 partner being about to have a baby without him there."</p> <p>15 Did this all lead to a little unpleasantness,</p> <p>16 Mr Skitt? Because we have heard from Anna Pincus about</p> <p>17 this particular email leading to some discussion about</p> <p>18 it at a meeting that took place between you and I think</p> <p>19 Mr Wilson and others on 18 August of that same year,</p> <p>20 because if we go to what she had to tell us, and we can</p> <p>21 put up on screen &lt;INQ000105&gt;, page 12. This is</p> <p>22 a transcript of her evidence on 9 December, right at the</p> <p>23 bottom on page 46, and counsel asked her about the very</p> <p>24 email that I have been asking you about, and I'm not</p> <p>25 going to take you through all of the text, but at the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 118</p>	<p>1 his evidence, and you will have read large tracts of</p> <p>2 what he says, including some of the aspects of</p> <p>3 the relationship between you that you have been telling</p> <p>4 us about, that he regarded you as hostile. We can look</p> <p>5 at it, if you wish. It is &lt;INQ000104&gt;, page 22. Here,</p> <p>6 at the bottom, on page 86 of this particular transcript</p> <p>7 page, at line 6, he was being asked about what he had</p> <p>8 said to Verita in interviews with them on</p> <p>9 24 October 2017, and he was asked to look at notes of</p> <p>10 what he had had to say, and towards the bottom, at</p> <p>11 line 17:</p> <p>12 "Question: ... It says:</p> <p>13 ""[Difficult] relationship with G4S."</p> <p>14 "...</p> <p>15 "... meets them quarterly.</p> <p>16 ""G4S are defensive and suspicious -- want to</p> <p>17 restrict their role.</p> <p>18 ""Happy with them doing non-controversial practical</p> <p>19 tasks.</p> <p>20 ""Suspicious of casework.</p> <p>21 ""G4S don't like them referring cases to others.</p> <p>22 ""Meets Steve Skitt, Dan Haughton, Paul Gasson ...</p> <p>23 ""G4S feel openly threatened.</p> <p>24 ""Don't want them [or you] contacting IMB, HO</p> <p>25 caseworker.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 120</p>

30 (Pages 117 to 120)

<p>1        "Struck by level of hostility'."</p> <p>2        Counsel asked:</p> <p>3        "I presume that's from you:</p> <p>4        "'Included Ben Saunders.'</p> <p>5        "Is that saying that the hostility included</p> <p>6        hostility from Ben Saunders?</p> <p>7        "Answer: Yes, although certainly it felt that was</p> <p>8        also -- I think I only met with Ben Saunders on that one</p> <p>9        occasion relatively early in post, but he echoed very</p> <p>10       much the concerns I'd heard before and since."</p> <p>11       If we go a little further to the bottom of that</p> <p>12       right-hand side of the page, at line 3 on page 88:</p> <p>13       "Question: We see at the bottom ..."</p> <p>14       Counsel was still asking about this note:</p> <p>15       "... 'Incidents' ...</p> <p>16       "'Where does BBC programme fit in JW's</p> <p>17       experience?'"</p> <p>18       So that is the question Verita were asking</p> <p>19       James Wilson, which counsel was asking Mr Wilson about:</p> <p>20       "'Can't place it. Shocked him. But had heard</p> <p>21       rumours. Can't compare it over time.'"</p> <p>22       And he was asked about that. Line 17, the note</p> <p>23       continued:</p> <p>24       "'GDWG have good relations with some officers. Know</p> <p>25       that they are caring.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 121</p>	<p>1       <b>I am raising it with them. And about how we refer</b></p> <p>2       <b>people through. On the whole, I think most of</b></p> <p>3       <b>the correspondence James returned to me or certainly</b></p> <p>4       <b>some of the correspondence was -- it felt to me from his</b></p> <p>5       <b>comments that it was a positive relationship, thanking</b></p> <p>6       <b>me for my support and that. I think, even to the extent</b></p> <p>7       <b>of, you know, why was I asked to represent Gatwick</b></p> <p>8       <b>Welfare Group in their rebidding process through the --</b></p> <p>9       <b>I believe it was through the lottery funding. They</b></p> <p>10       <b>asked me if I would be willing to be interviewed by the</b></p> <p>11       <b>person who was putting together that bid to support</b></p> <p>12       <b>their services. I stated from the outset that I felt</b></p> <p>13       <b>that their services were invaluable in regards to</b></p> <p>14       <b>residents for social care, for signposting, for any</b></p> <p>15       <b>destitute clothing that would be available. We'd put in</b></p> <p>16       <b>a number of processes that were new. One was around, if</b></p> <p>17       <b>Gatwick Welfare Group wanted to give somebody some</b></p> <p>18       <b>money, I agreed, if that needed to happen quickly, then</b></p> <p>19       <b>we, G4S, would pay for that there and then, and then</b></p> <p>20       <b>subsequently allow Gatwick Welfare Group to refund that</b></p> <p>21       <b>money to us so a person who had no money and they wished</b></p> <p>22       <b>to provide some funding, we could do that quite quickly.</b></p> <p>23       <b>We also did some work around the visits room,</b></p> <p>24       <b>particularly one of their advocates wanted to introduce</b></p> <p>25       <b>some support for children who were visiting with their</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 123</p>
<p>1        "'No notice removal adds to anxiety.'</p> <p>2        "..."</p> <p>3        "'Paul Gasson -- hostile.</p> <p>4        "'Steve Skitt -- was helpful and now less so.</p> <p>5        Become more hostile. Don't refer to other agencies</p> <p>6        etc.'"</p> <p>7        Not a glowing report of the relationship between G4S</p> <p>8        and Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, is it?</p> <p>9        <b>A. I accept Mr Wilson's comments and opinions. Sat here,</b></p> <p>10       <b>I can only say, if I came across as hostile, then that's</b></p> <p>11       <b>probably wrong, in his opinion, and, if he'd have raised</b></p> <p>12       <b>it with me, we would have discussed it.</b></p> <p>13        There were a kind of number of concerns. I think,</p> <p>14        in some respects, a lot of the conversation that was fed</p> <p>15        back to Gatwick Welfare Group, I was the messenger.</p> <p>16        I didn't always make decisions on what they could or</p> <p>17        couldn't do. There were concerns I've highlighted about</p> <p>18        how we refer concerns to us, so we can deal with them</p> <p>19        appropriately. There were also concerns raised to me by</p> <p>20        the IMB, that they felt uncomfortable, as an independent</p> <p>21        board, that requests are going to them for details.</p> <p>22        That was something they raised to me. I raised it with</p> <p>23        James.</p> <p>24        Now, whichever way he took that, I can't kind of say</p> <p>25        that, but that is just a concern that's raised to me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 122</p>	<p>1        parents, and I think it was kind of colouring books,</p> <p>2        books, and then just kind of play activities to support</p> <p>3        children who -- you know, we know what children are</p> <p>4        like. They want to get out and do things, rather than</p> <p>5        sit still.</p> <p>6        You know, that's Mr Wilson's opinion. I accept</p> <p>7        that. And if he felt I was being hostile, then</p> <p>8        I apologise for that. But, on the whole, it --</p> <p>9        I thought we had a fairly good -- well, reasonable</p> <p>10       relationship that was positive for the outcomes of</p> <p>11       residents.</p> <p>12       Q. Unhappily, as you appreciate, it's not quite the way</p> <p>13       that he saw it.</p> <p>14       A. Yes.</p> <p>15       Q. Have we got up &lt;INQ000104&gt;? Yes. If we can please go</p> <p>16       to page 15. Towards the top, on the right-hand side,</p> <p>17       just let me show you some other things he said. I think</p> <p>18       here he is still talking about what happened at this</p> <p>19       meeting. At the top:</p> <p>20       "Answer: Yes. I think I was being polite and</p> <p>21       diplomatic ... I did appreciate them raising</p> <p>22       concerns ... and ... discussing them."</p> <p>23       Then he was asked about what he said to the inquiry</p> <p>24       in a witness statement. At lines 11 and 12:</p> <p>25       "... you describe Mr Gasson and Mr Skitt as having</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 124</p>

<p>1 taken 'a highly combative and distrustful approach at</p> <p>2 [the] meeting'."</p> <p>3 Then, if we roll it down a bit more to the bottom</p> <p>4 quadrant, page 60:</p> <p>5 "Question: You describe in your inquiry statement,</p> <p>6 and also you have repeated just now, that the approach</p> <p>7 to GDWG was increasingly becoming one that was</p> <p>8 tantamount to bullying. Why do you say that?</p> <p>9 "Answer: That was a dynamic that I felt was</p> <p>10 increasing there. I was particularly -- I was vividly</p> <p>11 aware of that in that meeting, the dynamic.</p> <p>12 I remember -- I can remember the meeting very vividly.</p> <p>13 I remember it was just -- it was Steve Skitt and</p> <p>14 Paul Gasson who were in the meeting. They were nearest</p> <p>15 the door. I was on my own. They were very, very</p> <p>16 agitated ... I felt that they were toying with me, they</p> <p>17 were threatening with something, with something --</p> <p>18 a very immediate threat to our access ... dark and rainy</p> <p>19 day, I remember walking out of the centre feeling shaken</p> <p>20 by the meeting, and I'd had meetings before where they</p> <p>21 had been difficult, but I was really shaken by the</p> <p>22 meeting."</p> <p>23 Do you recognise that?</p> <p>24 <b>A. We had a -- there were a couple of meetings that we had</b></p> <p>25 <b>where -- that were challenging in regards to what was</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 125</p>	<p>1 know and we can discuss. I've offered to make any</p> <p>2 necessary contacts for the next few weeks. In other</p> <p>3 words, please make sure any concerns raised are going</p> <p>4 through me. I realise this sounds quite draconian but</p> <p>5 it's a serious situation'."</p> <p>6 <b>A. I think, out of all of this, the only aim that I had was</b></p> <p>7 <b>around -- and I think, when I had the meeting -- well,</b></p> <p>8 <b>one meeting with James, we talked about some of the --</b></p> <p>9 <b>of his staff that were -- that I'd heard were kind of</b></p> <p>10 <b>reported as perhaps being outside their remit in regards</b></p> <p>11 <b>to what they were doing, and I raised that with James,</b></p> <p>12 <b>and he appeared to take that on board. He wasn't aware</b></p> <p>13 <b>of those issues, and he said he would go back and have</b></p> <p>14 <b>a look at that. But I think the main crux of this --</b></p> <p>15 <b>you know, the conversations were -- all the aim of</b></p> <p>16 <b>the meetings were, were around how we refer and how we</b></p> <p>17 <b>kind of put information to the right people, because, if</b></p> <p>18 <b>you miss something, there are inherent dangers,</b></p> <p>19 <b>particularly about mental health or safety. If you kind</b></p> <p>20 <b>of send an email, you visit somebody on a Friday</b></p> <p>21 <b>afternoon, and you don't send it to the right person,</b></p> <p>22 <b>somebody may not pick it up until Monday because they</b></p> <p>23 <b>may not be on that weekend. This is just all about</b></p> <p>24 <b>reporting to the right person or some of it is, and we,</b></p> <p>25 <b>as the -- either the duty director or myself if I'm on</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 127</p>
<p>1 <b>being asked, and I think the meeting, we talked about --</b></p> <p>2 <b>if I recall rightly, we talked about some of</b></p> <p>3 <b>the concerns. Reference the (inaudible), I wouldn't say</b></p> <p>4 <b>I'd have been threatening. I may talk direct, I may</b></p> <p>5 <b>talk straight, but I wouldn't consider myself as</b></p> <p>6 <b>a threatening person, particularly in a meeting with the</b></p> <p>7 <b>Home Office, who was my customer.</b></p> <p>8 Q. He is accusing not just you, but Paul Gasson, who was</p> <p>9 the Home Office manager?</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. Finally in this regard, and we can put this up on screen</p> <p>12 very quickly, please, his reaction to what had happened</p> <p>13 is also captured, and I'm asked to put this to you by</p> <p>14 DPG, Deighton Pierce Glynn, at &lt;DPG000002&gt; at page 57.</p> <p>15 It is a witness statement that Anna Pincus made at</p> <p>16 page 57, paragraph 162. This is Anna Pincus talking</p> <p>17 about the meeting of 18 August with G4S and the</p> <p>18 Home Office:</p> <p>19 "... James sent an email that day to the GDWG staff</p> <p>20 team saying: 'I just had a pretty gruelling meeting with</p> <p>21 Brook management. The continuation of the drop-ins is</p> <p>22 on something of a knife edge. For the time being, if</p> <p>23 you are considering raising any concerns with G4S</p> <p>24 (including healthcare) or with any of the agencies that</p> <p>25 work within Brook or Tinsley House ... please let me</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 126</p>	<p>1 <b>duty, we can kind of signpost very quickly to deal with</b></p> <p>2 <b>the issue. And I think there were some very good</b></p> <p>3 <b>examples of some of the -- you know, if you were to look</b></p> <p>4 <b>into a lot of the emails that had subsequently gone</b></p> <p>5 <b>through, and even at the time, there was a lot of good</b></p> <p>6 <b>work achieved by that information getting to the right</b></p> <p>7 <b>person or the right people in a timely fashion.</b></p> <p>8 Q. All well and good, Mr Skitt. Let's put that to one</p> <p>9 side. But when you're dealing with other people, like</p> <p>10 GDWG and somebody like James Wilson, who you clearly</p> <p>11 respected; yes?</p> <p>12 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>13 Q. And when he's saying things like bullying, tantamount to</p> <p>14 bullying, felt threatened, gruelling meeting, then</p> <p>15 perhaps the relationship you're describing isn't the one</p> <p>16 he thought he was having?</p> <p>17 <b>A. It is worrying. Yes, I accept it's worrying if people</b></p> <p>18 <b>are -- you know, feel -- you know, whether this was</b></p> <p>19 <b>aimed at me in particular or is it aimed at Paul?</b></p> <p>20 <b>I don't know. You know, I'm not a maverick in kind of</b></p> <p>21 <b>saying, "Yes, you can do this or, no, you can't". You</b></p> <p>22 <b>know, a lot of the decision making around what people</b></p> <p>23 <b>could or couldn't do within the centre went through</b></p> <p>24 <b>another authority. It wouldn't necessarily be me that</b></p> <p>25 <b>was making the decision. You know, as you have clearly</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 128</p>



<p>1      <b>kind of identified here in some of the previous cases,</b></p> <p>2      <b>you know, sometimes I'm the messenger.</b></p> <p>3      Q. Let's move on. A little earlier, do you remember I was</p> <p>4      asking you about the differences between custodial</p> <p>5      environment and detention.</p> <p>6      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7      Q. You started telling us about the physical layout.</p> <p>8      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>9      Q. I know you're still there now, so you may be biased, of</p> <p>10     course, Mr Skitt, but being as objective as you can, do</p> <p>11     you think that Brook House is a fit and proper place to</p> <p>12     hold detained men for purely administrative reasons?</p> <p>13     <b>A. It's very difficult, is the reply.</b></p> <p>14     Q. It was intended to be a difficult question, but it's</p> <p>15     one, you know, with your experience, we value your</p> <p>16     opinion. I know you work for Serco, I know it's your</p> <p>17     bread and butter and you have been there many years.</p> <p>18     <b>A. It is an area where I work, I work for an organisation</b></p> <p>19     <b>that has a customer to the Home Office. It is</b></p> <p>20     <b>a building that we are contracted to supply services for</b></p> <p>21     <b>our customer. And we operate on behalf of the customer.</b></p> <p>22     <b>Yes, it is a prison-like building, but the condition of</b></p> <p>23     <b>the building is, I believe, in good condition. It is</b></p> <p>24     <b>clean. The rooms are of a nature which is a suitable</b></p> <p>25     <b>place for somebody to live. We are trying to make</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 129</p>	<p>1      28 per cent of men. More than three months, less than</p> <p>2      six months, 18 per cent. More than six, less than nine,</p> <p>3      10 per cent. More than nine, less than 12, six. More</p> <p>4      than 12 months, five. And we have had examples of</p> <p>5      others there apparently far longer.</p> <p>6      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>7      Q. Now, it is all fine and dandy putting men like this in</p> <p>8      a building designed for short-term holding, but some of</p> <p>9      these men were spending the equivalent of substantial</p> <p>10     sentences of imprisonment, weren't they?</p> <p>11     <b>A. I mean, the timescales of some of the residents that had</b></p> <p>12     <b>previously been at Brook was considerable. I remember</b></p> <p>13     <b>talking to one gentleman who I think had been there</b></p> <p>14     <b>nearly two years.</b></p> <p>15     Q. If you are there two years, it is the equivalent of</p> <p>16     a four-year sentence?</p> <p>17     <b>A. And I think he had been in previous detention centres.</b></p> <p>18     <b>However, the casework and the reasons why an individual</b></p> <p>19     <b>is there, I have no kind of say on --</b></p> <p>20     Q. No, but the point, Mr Skitt, is, that's not what it was</p> <p>21     designed to do?</p> <p>22     <b>A. My understanding is it was originally opened as</b></p> <p>23     <b>a short-term -- that's my opinion. I'll stand to be</b></p> <p>24     <b>corrected. But that's what I understand.</b></p> <p>25     Q. So you started out with a man count of something like</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 131</p>
<p>1      <b>enhancements, as we speak, to try and soften the look</b></p> <p>2      <b>within the centre. So I would say yes.</b></p> <p>3      Q. You think it is fit and proper?</p> <p>4      <b>A. Yes. In regards to the kind of condition.</b></p> <p>5      Q. Yes.</p> <p>6      <b>A. I mean, you could debate, you know, it is a prison</b></p> <p>7      <b>building, and I know it's something that HMIP, on all</b></p> <p>8      <b>their inspections, will criticise; most prison buildings</b></p> <p>9      <b>that I've worked in.</b></p> <p>10     Q. Let me perhaps put the question in a slightly different</p> <p>11     way: do you think it was a mistake to have built</p> <p>12     a building to the specification of a category B prison</p> <p>13     for this population of men?</p> <p>14     <b>A. I think you have to look at -- I'm no expert on this, so</b></p> <p>15     <b>please bear with me. I think the building was</b></p> <p>16     <b>originally designed as a very short-term removal centre.</b></p> <p>17     Q. That's what I'm coming to.</p> <p>18     <b>A. Mmm.</b></p> <p>19     Q. Therein lies the rub of it, because built as</p> <p>20     a short-term holding centre, it might just about have</p> <p>21     been manageable, for most people, for 72 hours. I could</p> <p>22     take you to one of the survey questions in the HMIP</p> <p>23     report that we looked at not very long ago, which gives</p> <p>24     a breakdown of the amount of time that men had been</p> <p>25     there. More than one month, less than three months,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 130</p>	<p>1      426, and I think, 22 beds were added in 2013.</p> <p>2      <b>A. 448, it went to.</b></p> <p>3      Q. Before you were there.</p> <p>4      <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>5      Q. Come 2017, with effect from 1 April, there had been an</p> <p>6      agreement to add 60 more beds which you know about?</p> <p>7      <b>A. (Witness nods).</b></p> <p>8      Q. Was that a great idea?</p> <p>9      <b>A. It was a directive from the Home Office that they wanted</b></p> <p>10     <b>to put the extra beds in.</b></p> <p>11     Q. Was it a great idea, Mr Skitt?</p> <p>12     <b>A. Sorry?</b></p> <p>13     Q. Was it a great idea?</p> <p>14     <b>A. I think, at the time, it was a reasonable idea.</b></p> <p>15     Q. You said it was controversial in your witness statement?</p> <p>16     <b>A. The controversy -- this is about one person, isn't it,</b></p> <p>17     <b>in a room?</b></p> <p>18     Q. You tell us.</p> <p>19     <b>A. This is my personal view. It has always been my</b></p> <p>20     <b>personal view since I've probably been in the</b></p> <p>21     <b>Prison Service and it is my personal view. I accept</b></p> <p>22     <b>where I work and I have to accept that the requirement</b></p> <p>23     <b>is part of the contract, whether it is in a prison or an</b></p> <p>24     <b>IRC, there's more than one person in a room. But, you</b></p> <p>25     <b>know, my personal view is that we should have -- all</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 132</p>

1 **custodial sites should be single rooms. That is just my**  
 2 **personal view.**  
 3 Q. Mr Skitt, it is not just me. I think my hearing is  
 4 going. It may be it is. But that's not going to be the  
 5 same with everybody else and I am told: can you keep  
 6 your voice up?  
 7 **A. I'm sorry.**  
 8 Q. You speak very softly. You are what you are. But can  
 9 you please keep your voice up?  
 10 **A. Yes, sorry, my apologies everybody. Just put your hand**  
 11 **up if you can't hear me.**  
 12 Q. I will tell you. Paragraph 85 of your statement. You  
 13 don't have to look at it. You say the beds were  
 14 a controversial addition. But with the beds came extra  
 15 funding and staffing to manage additional capacity.  
 16 That's what I really was asking you about.  
 17 **A. Sorry, my apologies.**  
 18 Q. No, no, no, I know that you have said elsewhere in this  
 19 statement that you had the view that you have just  
 20 expressed. What I'm asking you is why you said the beds  
 21 were a controversial addition. What was controversial?  
 22 **A. Well, I say controversial. They were a topic of**  
 23 **discussion, whether people should, whether people**  
 24 **shouldn't. I know Stephen Shaw had a view, I know**  
 25 **members within the SMT had raised a kind of three**

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1 **beds -- it was something, as an organisation, we had to**  
 2 **look at. There were a -- it is not our accommodation,**  
 3 **it is a Home Office building. We were asked to put**  
 4 **together a kind of plan in regard to profiling, extra**  
 5 **staffing, look at what extra regimes we could put in**  
 6 **place. We put the plan together and submitted that to**  
 7 **the Home Office and the extra beds project was then**  
 8 **driven forward. I think appropriate risk assessments**  
 9 **had taken place into the rooms in regards to**  
 10 **air-conditioning, I think -- I forget what it's called**  
 11 **now. There is a test you do of, certainly, the**  
 12 **lighting, there is a specific word for it, there is**  
 13 **a DSO, but I can't recall what it was, that everybody**  
 14 **has the appropriate lighting. I think discussions were**  
 15 **raised around about furniture and I think extra**  
 16 **furniture was also put in the rooms as well to suit**  
 17 **three people, yes.**  
 18 Q. Was it anything that G4S could have put its foot down  
 19 about and said, "No, this is not happening"?  
 20 **A. No, I wouldn't have thought so, no. We were providing**  
 21 **what the customer had asked for. We put together our**  
 22 **assessment of that and staffing levels, but ultimately,**  
 23 **in my opinion, it would be the Home Office that would**  
 24 **have signed that off.**  
 25 Q. Why were they needed?

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1 **A. Sorry?**  
 2 Q. Why were the extra beds needed?  
 3 **A. I think around the time -- don't quote me on dates.**  
 4 **I think Dover had just closed or was closing.**  
 5 Q. Dover what?  
 6 **A. Dover -- there's a prison in Dover Castle that was an**  
 7 **IRC. I think that was closing and I think it was handed**  
 8 **back to HMPPS, I believe. I think there were plans**  
 9 **afoot in the longer term. Whether the plans were there**  
 10 **then but certainly it happened afterwards, the Verne,**  
 11 **which was a prison on the Portland, shut down. That was**  
 12 **600 spaces, I think.**  
 13 Q. It was certainly open in May, and I can tell you with  
 14 a degree of confidence it was there, the Verne, on  
 15 13 May, because we have evidence of a detainee D687 who  
 16 was moved to the Verne on 13 May 2017 and tried to  
 17 self-harm in a disabled lavatory rather than be taken.  
 18 So that's May time. So it was almost certainly open at  
 19 that point?  
 20 **A. Whether that was in the plans going forward. But it**  
 21 **certainly did shut, and so did, later on, Morton Hall,**  
 22 **which was another HMPPS --**  
 23 Q. We have heard of Morton Hall. That's Lincolnshire?  
 24 **A. Lincolnshire, yes.**  
 25 Q. So 60 beds added, put in at cost. G4S gets extra

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1 funding; yes?  
 2 **A. Yes.**  
 3 Q. And G4S -- I mean, it is not just the beds. It is other  
 4 fixtures and fittings have to come in to accommodate  
 5 60 more men at full capacity.  
 6 **A. Yes.**  
 7 Q. We will look, not with you, but with Mr Petherick,  
 8 I hope, at some of the costings of this. You say in  
 9 your statement:  
 10 "I remember Andrew Mitchell was all for the  
 11 additional beds."  
 12 Andrew Mitchell who?  
 13 **A. MP.**  
 14 Q. Minister, at the time?  
 15 **A. I'm not sure if he was a minister at the time, but he**  
 16 **came down to -- I'm not sure why he came down, to be**  
 17 **honest, whether it was on behalf of --**  
 18 Q. Came to have a look, did he?  
 19 **A. Yes, came to have a look.**  
 20 Q. And was all for it. As you say, Stephen Shaw reported  
 21 in January 2016 that it shouldn't go ahead, and  
 22 in July 2018, when he did his follow-up report, his  
 23 recommendation was that, where extra beds had already  
 24 been put in and Brook House was one of the IRCs, they  
 25 should be removed?

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34 (Pages 133 to 136)

<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. And they were removed?</p> <p>3 <b>A. They were removed, yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. As a result of Stephen Shaw?</p> <p>5 <b>A. That's my understanding, yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. So all of the costs of putting them in, they had to be</p> <p>7 taken out again because of Stephen Shaw's views. In the</p> <p>8 meantime, because they were supposed to take effect on</p> <p>9 or about 1 April -- we can look at the service provider</p> <p>10 form or the notice of change.</p> <p>11 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>12 Q. But it was due to have effect from 1 April, 60 beds, of</p> <p>13 2017. Were they used, in fact?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes, they were.</b></p> <p>15 Q. We have heard differing evidence about this. We have</p> <p>16 heard hardly used, not used. What's your recollection?</p> <p>17 <b>A. My recollection is that they were used.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Full capacity or not?</p> <p>19 <b>A. I can't recall if they were full capacity, but I think</b></p> <p>20 <b>the approach we took was a kind of softly, softly</b></p> <p>21 <b>approach is perhaps the wrong phrase. But we knew there</b></p> <p>22 <b>were nationalities that actually preferred to be more in</b></p> <p>23 <b>a communal room.</b></p> <p>24 Q. You said this to Verita. You said Chinese?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Vietnamese, Chinese. They were -- to be in a room.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 137</p>	<p>1 <b>probably -- fairly early in, but a reasonable reflection</b></p> <p>2 <b>on that.</b></p> <p>3 Q. If we look at -- I don't invite you to, but I'll read it</p> <p>4 for the record -- paragraph 235, page 67 of your witness</p> <p>5 statement, you say:</p> <p>6 "I was involved in some staffing plans.</p> <p>7 Particularly the one I can recall was surrounding the</p> <p>8 extra 60 beds that were put in place. I was also</p> <p>9 involved in working with the then director and others</p> <p>10 and I can recall that everyone who was involved in this</p> <p>11 process at the time considered the plan and agreed the</p> <p>12 staffing levels would be deemed appropriate."</p> <p>13 Now, I want to be clear about what you are saying</p> <p>14 there.</p> <p>15 <b>A. So --</b></p> <p>16 Q. Just a moment. Let me ask the question.</p> <p>17 <b>A. Sorry.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did you take on more staff for the 60 additional beds or</p> <p>19 did you maintain the status quo?</p> <p>20 <b>A. No, no, I think more staff were recruited.</b></p> <p>21 Q. How many?</p> <p>22 <b>A. I think, without looking at the document, I think it was</b></p> <p>23 <b>an odd number. I think just under 20. I think about</b></p> <p>24 <b>20, or just under.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Was that in anticipation of the beds coming in or around</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 139</p>
<p>1 <b>I can't recall if we had to kind of say to somebody,</b></p> <p>2 <b>"You are going in a room", but we did try and adopt an</b></p> <p>3 <b>approach that was sensible, I think, and logical, and</b></p> <p>4 <b>say, you know, "Do you mind -- do you want to? Have you</b></p> <p>5 <b>got a few friends?", which I guess, you know, in -- you</b></p> <p>6 <b>know, on the other hand, we had Tinsley up the road</b></p> <p>7 <b>which was -- as you may be aware, is full of dormitory</b></p> <p>8 <b>accommodation.</b></p> <p>9 Q. &lt;CJS000582&gt;. Here we have some SMT meeting notes. This</p> <p>10 is 13 April. So it is around two weeks after the beds</p> <p>11 have apparently gone in. If we go to the second page,</p> <p>12 please, just under "Departmental updates.</p> <p>13 BH residential (JW)", being Jules Williams?</p> <p>14 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>15 Q. "Unsettled across the wings. A few assaults and</p> <p>16 boisterous behaviour. There has been no impact with</p> <p>17 additions beds."</p> <p>18 Was that the case, that there had been no impact?</p> <p>19 I mean, this is only two weeks in, so it's not --</p> <p>20 <b>A. No, as I -- I think, if I recall, we did -- well,</b></p> <p>21 <b>I think we took a sensible approach into starting this</b></p> <p>22 <b>off. So I think the one -- you know, the people that</b></p> <p>23 <b>were in these three-bedded rooms were people that were</b></p> <p>24 <b>happy to be in there, so it hadn't been a particular</b></p> <p>25 <b>problem. Some wanted to share, some didn't. That could</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 138</p>	<p>1 1 April or after?</p> <p>2 <b>A. It was part of the process and mobilisation towards the</b></p> <p>3 <b>extra beds coming in.</b></p> <p>4 Q. The imam, you will remember him.</p> <p>5 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>6 Q. Mr Qayyum. He spoke to Verita on 1 December. Can we</p> <p>7 just put up on screen, please, &lt;VER000230&gt; at page 11.</p> <p>8 We can see, at question 133, Ms Lampard is asking him.</p> <p>9 "Question: What happened when there was the</p> <p>10 additional, when they added the 60?</p> <p>11 "Answer: It has become worse ...</p> <p>12 "Question: Were there some more staff that were put</p> <p>13 in?</p> <p>14 "Answer: Yes. G4S are involved quite heavily in</p> <p>15 recruiting at the moment."</p> <p>16 Bearing in mind this interview is taking place</p> <p>17 in December 2017:</p> <p>18 "Again, I am also involved in recruitment days, so</p> <p>19 I attend assessment days. In the last two months,</p> <p>20 I have attended, let's say, six or seven assessment days</p> <p>21 which is very, very rare for G4S to have.</p> <p>22 Since January, 2016, until just two or three months ago,</p> <p>23 I had attended about three assessment days. Over the</p> <p>24 last two months I have attended six or seven."</p> <p>25 Bearing in mind, as I say, the date of this</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 140</p>

<p>1 interview is 1 December, he is talking about the autumn 2 of 2017, of course after the Panorama programme. 3 Mr Marsden asks: 4 "Question: There has been a sudden spike in 5 recruitment? 6 "Answer: Yes, so they are recruiting quite heavily 7 and I've seen that change since Lee Hanford has come 8 into position." 9 Ms Lampard wants to pin him down: 10 "Question: ... but staffing levels before the 60 11 were pretty awful and it got worse after the 60 or do 12 you think it got better? 13 "Answer: It got worse, but now they have picked up 14 again because we are recruiting quite heavily and new 15 members of staff are coming in. 16 "Question: Putting in those 60 made a bad situation 17 pretty -- 18 "Answer: Pretty much worse at first." 19 His recollection, and he was involved in 20 recruitment, by the sound of it, is that there weren't 21 new staff? 22 <b>A. Without going back, tracking back into the recruitment</b> 23 <b>of staff going back some time, we did go through periods</b> 24 <b>where we found recruitment of staff very difficult</b> 25 <b>generally.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 141</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I don't know. I work there. I enjoy working there.</b> 2 <b>That's my opinion.</b> 3 MR ALTMAN: Chair, it is 3.15 pm. Can I suggest a quarter 4 of an hour break? 5 THE CHAIR: Indeed, thank you. See you at 3.30. Thank you. 6 (3.15 pm) 7 (A short break) 8 (3.35 pm) 9 MR ALTMAN: Chair, Ms Blackwell asked me very nicely at the 10 break if I would just put up one of the emails, which 11 I referred to earlier, just to ask Mr Skitt a couple 12 more questions, so I shall do that. 13 THE CHAIR: Of course, thank you. 14 MR ALTMAN: If we go to page 41, which is up on screen, this 15 is the email or letter I put to you earlier dated 16 25 September, and I am asked to read out the first 17 paragraph, which says -- I think it is this one: 18 "Thank you for taking the time to meet with me last 19 month. This letter sets out some of information you and 20 Paul requested during our discussions and contains some 21 suggestions for the efficient management of our future 22 meetings." 23 It is quite a lengthy document. If we go to the 24 bitter end, on page 44, please, at the top. Mr Wilson 25 says:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 143</p>
<p>1 Q. That's a bit different to what you were telling us 2 earlier, Mr Skitt, because, in your mind, new staff were 3 taken on -- you said about 20 -- to cater for the 4 additional beds. That's what I understood you to be 5 saying? 6 <b>A. What I'm saying is, I can't go back and track whether</b> 7 <b>that was for -- that may be enough for the extra 20</b> 8 <b>beds. That may be just a general --</b> 9 Q. 60 beds. 10 <b>A. Sorry, 60 beds. That may be just general recruitment,</b> 11 <b>not just specifically -- I mean, I'm just reading into</b> 12 <b>that, does Zeeshan think that was particularly around</b> 13 <b>the beds or was that recruitment in general? I think --</b> 14 <b>I know there were some challenging times with</b> 15 <b>recruitment. I think there always is in an area that --</b> 16 <b>where the centre is, because there is a lot of</b> 17 <b>opportunity and a lot of employment in the area, given</b> 18 <b>the fact that we're next door to Gatwick Airport and all</b> 19 <b>the kind of support services that support the airport in</b> 20 <b>general. So recruitment is a challenging process.</b> 21 Q. What you mean is, in a competition of, where would 22 I like to work, Brook House isn't going to be at the top 23 of the list in Gatwick? 24 <b>A. I don't know. You'd have to ask people.</b> 25 Q. I'm asking you. You work there.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 142</p>	<p>1 "Finally, to end on a positive note, I was really 2 encouraged to hear you say at the meeting that you felt 3 that in 99.9 per cent of cases that GDWG was doing good 4 work. I hope that with a continuance of the dialogue 5 between us that we can work usefully together." 6 So that's just to set a balance of some of the other 7 things he said in the letter, and I hope that suffices. 8 Yes. Right. Moving on. 9 Can I ask you a couple of things about something we 10 have already touched on, Mr Skitt, which is drugs. Can 11 we put up on screen &lt;CJS000555&gt;, please. Here is 12 another SMT meeting minute, this one of 9 February. If 13 we go to the foot of the page -- sorry, page 2. Under 14 "deputy director" with your initials: 15 "Security -- picking up on trends and that there has 16 been a massive turnaround in the dynamics of the centre. 17 Different types of intelligence especially around 18 corruption. A number of staff feel that it is 19 colleagues bringing in some of the prohibited items. 20 A number of staff in Visits need to be challenged." 21 Do you remember I asked you a little earlier about 22 how you were working tirelessly to prevent the ingress 23 of drugs? Here we are in February 2017. Clearly, 24 security was informing you and the rest of the SMT that 25 there had been a massive turnaround in the dynamics.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 144</p>

<p>1 Which way around had the turnaround gone in February?</p> <p>2 Did it mean more drugs were coming in or less?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I can't -- yeah, I can't recall if it would be up or</b></p> <p>4 <b>down. The dynamics, normally, in these cases, would be</b></p> <p>5 <b>that you'd have a number of what we would call prominent</b></p> <p>6 <b>nominals involved in the drug subculture that may have</b></p> <p>7 <b>gone or we may have had more turn up. I don't know, is</b></p> <p>8 <b>the honest answer.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Paul Gasson was asked about this issue in his Verita</p> <p>10 interview &lt;VER000256&gt; at page 19. Page 21, sorry. He</p> <p>11 was asked, you can see, if we expand halfway down at</p> <p>12 question 309, about new psychoactive substances, and</p> <p>13 what it could do. In that long answer, he says:</p> <p>14 "I asked for staff searches. It took me a while</p> <p>15 and, to be frank, it was fobbed off. The only staff</p> <p>16 searches I had was new ITC staff ..."</p> <p>17 Who were ITC staff? The training staff?</p> <p>18 <b>A. That would be the new staff that would join.</b></p> <p>19 Q. Those on the training course?</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. "So everyone on day one of the ITC apparently gets</p> <p>22 searched, so that's good. However, they are not going</p> <p>23 into the centre so it's not contractual. Everyone needs</p> <p>24 to be searched over time as part of the staff searching</p> <p>25 plan if they are going into the centre.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 145</p>	<p>1 <b>a number of staff to do staff searching. Those are some</b></p> <p>2 <b>of the difficulties. The other issue is, yes, we failed</b></p> <p>3 <b>in that.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Yes.</p> <p>5 <b>A. But on a -- from a personal experience in regards to</b></p> <p>6 <b>staff searching for drugs, I am not a -- personally,</b></p> <p>7 <b>a keen fan on routine searching because staff understand</b></p> <p>8 <b>what routine searching is and it is usually set at</b></p> <p>9 <b>different times of the day. I personally would like to</b></p> <p>10 <b>work with intelligence and, if I need to do a search on</b></p> <p>11 <b>somebody, I can try and target that search. That would</b></p> <p>12 <b>be my approach, personally, but I wasn't head of</b></p> <p>13 <b>security at the time.</b></p> <p>14 Q. Fine. So you agree that when Gasson said it failed, it</p> <p>15 did fail?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>17 Q. Can we look at another document, please, &lt;IMB000015&gt; at</p> <p>18 page 1. It is another IMB meeting report. If we go to</p> <p>19 item 4, this being 15 March 2017, "SS for G4S":</p> <p>20 "HMIP report was published last week with positive</p> <p>21 remarks for Brook. There has been some good work in</p> <p>22 reducing the flow of NPS into the centre, especially</p> <p>23 through visits."</p> <p>24 The report is the one that I have been asking you</p> <p>25 about?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 147</p>
<p>1 "Off the back of that, they wrote a new staff</p> <p>2 searching policy and they declared that they had failed</p> <p>3 to search their staff."</p> <p>4 He was asked to confirm that:</p> <p>5 "Question: That was early '16?</p> <p>6 "Answer: That was early '16. I am sure I have all</p> <p>7 mitigation tables and comments on the shared drive,</p> <p>8 shared folders.</p> <p>9 "The staff searching then did increase. It happened</p> <p>10 once or twice going in, and since Panorama there has</p> <p>11 been a high number of staff searches.</p> <p>12 "Question: During 2017, you think they might have</p> <p>13 done it twice or during early '16 and '17 they did it</p> <p>14 twice?</p> <p>15 "Answer: Yes.</p> <p>16 "Question: Twice in the whole of the 16/17 period?</p> <p>17 "Answer: I am not sure about 2015, but 2016, yes.</p> <p>18 "Question: It was probably only once each year?</p> <p>19 "Answer: I couldn't speculate, but I can find out.</p> <p>20 G4S would have those records."</p> <p>21 Do you agree with what he told Verita?</p> <p>22 <b>A. There were some particular issues at one point. I know</b></p> <p>23 <b>the inquiry has heard concerns around staff resources,</b></p> <p>24 <b>and it is a difficult staff resource to do. It also is</b></p> <p>25 <b>extremely difficult to, within those confines, have</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 146</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. What was the good work?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I can't recall exactly, but within visits was an area</b></p> <p>4 <b>that we were concerned was potentially a main ingress</b></p> <p>5 <b>point. There was, at some point, quite a number of good</b></p> <p>6 <b>finds, what you would call, within the visits team,</b></p> <p>7 <b>a potential stopping of passes, and I think, if</b></p> <p>8 <b>I recall -- I may not be correct -- there were also</b></p> <p>9 <b>a number of prosecutions around that as well.</b></p> <p>10 Q. Then &lt;CJS000915&gt;, please. We will find that to be</p> <p>11 another minute, but this time of a security meeting</p> <p>12 which you attended on 11 April. If we look -- scroll</p> <p>13 up, if you would, Zaynab. You can just about make out</p> <p>14 under safeguarding MB, that's Michelle Brown, the second</p> <p>15 entry up from the particular of that particular entry:</p> <p>16 "UK BA drugs dogs will be using BH &amp; TH as</p> <p>17 a training centre from 4 May."</p> <p>18 What did that mean?</p> <p>19 <b>A. We had attempted to procure dogs from some of our</b></p> <p>20 <b>prisons because some of the prisons do have a resource</b></p> <p>21 <b>of dogs. We found it very difficult because, at this</b></p> <p>22 <b>particular time, a lot of prisons were going through</b></p> <p>23 <b>a similar kind of issue around NPS. We looked at -- we</b></p> <p>24 <b>paid for another part of the business within G4S to</b></p> <p>25 <b>bring dogs in. I think there would have been perhaps</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 148</p>

<p>1 passive/active dogs that were maybe used at, I think,</p> <p>2 like sports events and other places. They weren't used</p> <p>3 to working in environmental – custodial environment.</p> <p>4 Then Michelle mentioned that she'd got a contact</p> <p>5 with a new KBA at the airport, who was responsible for</p> <p>6 the drug dogs which they would, I guess, use in the</p> <p>7 airport and at the ports, and I know from personal</p> <p>8 experience that dog handlers, when they are training</p> <p>9 dogs, do like to use other environments for their dogs</p> <p>10 so they don't get stale, they get different</p> <p>11 environments, so we agreed that they would come to</p> <p>12 Brook. For them, it would be training, you know,</p> <p>13 a different centre. It didn't change the fact that the</p> <p>14 dogs would indicate or not. And they came in and did</p> <p>15 some searches for us as well. We did full staff</p> <p>16 searches and they assisted us with the dogs.</p> <p>17 Q. Let me ask you something else that you were asked about</p> <p>18 for the purposes of your witness statement. You will</p> <p>19 remember two officers that were involved in disciplinary</p> <p>20 matters -- Babs Fagbo, Babatunde?</p> <p>21 A. Yes.</p> <p>22 Q. And Shayne Munroe?</p> <p>23 A. Yes.</p> <p>24 Q. Were you involved in their disciplinary issues?</p> <p>25 A. I was involved in the final part of it, which had been</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 149</p>	<p>1 your recollection, was it simply that inappropriate</p> <p>2 behaviour by the pair of them?</p> <p>3 A. It was a bit more than inappropriate behaviour. So in</p> <p>4 regards to the first one, I think my letter and the</p> <p>5 notes from the meeting kind of outline in detail my</p> <p>6 findings of the hearing and my thought processes in</p> <p>7 coming to my decision.</p> <p>8 Q. Both have given evidence, and I need to ask you about</p> <p>9 this, Mr Skitt, and said that their dismissal by you was</p> <p>10 related to their race. What do you say about that?</p> <p>11 A. Do not agree whatsoever.</p> <p>12 Q. That they were treated unfairly because they are both</p> <p>13 black?</p> <p>14 A. No. They were treated in line with what was presented</p> <p>15 to me at the disciplinary hearing.</p> <p>16 Q. Can I ask you, please, about Ben Saunders. You will</p> <p>17 remember that you had an interview with Verita yourself.</p> <p>18 A. Yes.</p> <p>19 Q. Can we just look at the interview. It is &lt;VER000248&gt;.</p> <p>20 Chair, you have this one in full at tab 99, if you wish</p> <p>21 to make a note. Page 10, please. It is</p> <p>22 27 November 2017, your interview. If we look at</p> <p>23 question 113, you were asked about him and his style at</p> <p>24 111.</p> <p>25 "Answer: Ben had been here a couple of years by the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 151</p>
<p>1 disciplinary hearing.</p> <p>2 Q. Did that relate to their inappropriate behaviour in</p> <p>3 regards to a particular detainee or were there any drugs</p> <p>4 issues around either --</p> <p>5 A. Two separate incidents.</p> <p>6 Q. In April?</p> <p>7 A. Yep.</p> <p>8 Q. Where one, Shayne Munroe, on a day after Babatunde Fagbo</p> <p>9 had allegedly sworn at a detainee, and I think the day</p> <p>10 following the detainee had heard a discussion taking</p> <p>11 place about that incident.</p> <p>12 A. Yes, that's my recollection.</p> <p>13 Q. When Shayne Munroe allegedly became involved and had</p> <p>14 also sworn at the detainee D119, if my memory serves me?</p> <p>15 A. Yes.</p> <p>16 Q. In due course, you had to deal with the pair of them</p> <p>17 and, because of that, they were both dismissed in very</p> <p>18 short --</p> <p>19 A. The incidents happened in quick succession, like you</p> <p>20 say, one day after the other. So by the time the</p> <p>21 investigation had been commissioned and by the time the</p> <p>22 investigations would have been returned, I would --</p> <p>23 I can't remember the exact date, but I would -- yes,</p> <p>24 probably would have been within --</p> <p>25 Q. So that we are clear, as far as they are concerned, with</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 150</p>	<p>1 time I came in ... decent, good bloke ... completely</p> <p>2 different backgrounds."</p> <p>3 You were asked, in effect, what his background was.</p> <p>4 At 114 you say?</p> <p>5 "Answer: He's a social worker and it would probably</p> <p>6 be fair to say operationally we wouldn't have the same</p> <p>7 views of doing things. I did call him Ben the</p> <p>8 politician once."</p> <p>9 You were asked if he was facilitative, and you said:</p> <p>10 "Yes. He was more of a thinker than a doer and</p> <p>11 there were some things that we probably didn't agree on,</p> <p>12 there were some things that I felt would have perhaps</p> <p>13 needed to be taken forward in a different way. I was</p> <p>14 quite talkative with him about the SMT and my views, and</p> <p>15 effectively that he should take more control and</p> <p>16 direction as to what the SMT does."</p> <p>17 You expand in that particular answer.</p> <p>18 "Question: Ben wasn't a builder of a team?</p> <p>19 "Answer: Not in my opinion."</p> <p>20 Over the next page.</p> <p>21 "Question: Was he the kind of person who would walk</p> <p>22 around the place? Would he go out and walk down the</p> <p>23 visits and find out what's going on here?</p> <p>24 "Answer: Not on a regular basis.</p> <p>25 "Question: Did you do that?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 152</p>

1 "Answer: I'll go round every day if I can, if time  
2 prevails."  
3 He had a social work background?  
4 **A. Yes.**  
5 Q. He had been at Medway Secure Training Centre from  
6 between 2002 and 2012 before he was appointed centre  
7 director of Brook House under G4S. Then he was  
8 parachuted back into Medway after the Panorama expose  
9 and the report on Medway, which, if my memory serves me,  
10 was 30 March 2016, and he stayed at Medway until about  
11 the summer of 2016 when he came back to Brook House.  
12 Does that all accord with your recollection?  
13 **A. I can't remember the exact dates, but, yeah, that's --**  
14 **yes.**  
15 Q. Do you think he was suited to being a centre director?  
16 He had had a background in social work, he had been at  
17 Medway for a decade before coming over to Brook House,  
18 a centre director, and then he went back to try and,  
19 I think, inject a little stability after Medway, which  
20 is very similar to what you were asked to do when you  
21 came over to Brook House. Do you think he was suited to  
22 being centre director?  
23 **A. I'm not sure whether it's my place to say whether he was**  
24 **or he wasn't, but --**  
25 Q. Stop there, it is, because I'm asking you. So we want

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1 your opinion.  
2 **A. Okay. So I think -- my opinion is that I am not sure of**  
3 **the details of all the issues that had taken place**  
4 **before I arrived. It had clearly affected a number of**  
5 **people within the SMT. I think what lacked within the**  
6 **SMT at that particular time -- and I sit here and take**  
7 **responsibility for some things, I accept that -- is**  
8 **direction of an SMT and pulling that together.**  
9 Q. So nice bloke, but lousy centre director?  
10 **A. I would say he lacked some skills in what I would be**  
11 **used to in a governor or a director.**  
12 Q. Which were?  
13 **A. Being directive and taking -- not control, that's not**  
14 **the right word, but management of the SMT, would have**  
15 **been the areas --**  
16 Q. In saying that, are you saying that part of what you  
17 call this long-established grievance culture was also  
18 what he had not got a grip of?  
19 **A. I think -- my personal opinion, I think, if that hadn't**  
20 **taken place, and, you know, there are people that can be**  
21 **quite directive, governors and directors, there are**  
22 **people that can work in different ways, and I believe**  
23 **that if those -- some of those elements hadn't have been**  
24 **in place and hadn't happened before, and you've got an**  
25 **SMT that hadn't gone through those issues previously,**

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1 **I think, you know, Ben's style could work with an SMT**  
2 **without those kind of caveats.**  
3 Q. Coming back to what I asked you much earlier, the  
4 grievance culture that still persisted and pervaded at  
5 Brook House did affect the job that he was able to do?  
6 **A. In summary, yes, in my opinion.**  
7 Q. Still in this interview that you gave to Verita, please,  
8 going back to page 6, there is a very long answer at 68.  
9 If you can just pick up probably about ten lines down:  
10 "When I came here, I found a lot of the first-line  
11 managers, from what I was used to, certainly in prisons,  
12 were managers."  
13 Do you see that line? It is about ten lines down.  
14 If you are leading in from the left manager you're  
15 looking for the word "managers". That's it:  
16 "When I came here, I found a lot of the first-line  
17 managers, from what I was used to, certainly in prisons,  
18 were managers."  
19 What do you mean by "first-line managers"?  
20 **A. The DCM grade.**  
21 Q. "There would be an expectation that I would expect  
22 a first-line manager to be able to manage the sickness,  
23 as an example, when somebody went sick, to make other  
24 contacts, do the paperwork. I just felt I had to  
25 micro-manage things like that: have you done this, have

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1 you done that? A lot of my time seemed to be spent --  
2 and still does, in some respects -- having to talk to  
3 managers week in, week out, have you made contact with  
4 your sick, have you done this, have you done that,  
5 things that in a previous life I'd have expected the  
6 other way round. I would probably view it as managed  
7 from top down rather than bottom up."  
8 So here you are complaining about, what, DCMs?  
9 **A. Yes.**  
10 Q. Not SMT members?  
11 **A. No.**  
12 Q. But DCMs?  
13 **A. I think, when you look at the kind of concern I'm kind**  
14 **of highlighting, I think -- I'm not sure that if,**  
15 **weekly, we used to chair a sick meeting.**  
16 Q. Speak up.  
17 **A. Sorry, I do apologise. I'll move these in. I used to**  
18 **chair a -- I think it was weekly -- like a sick meeting,**  
19 **just to run through --**  
20 Q. What's a sick meeting?  
21 **A. For all those staff that are absent.**  
22 Q. Well, you don't have a meeting with the absent staff?  
23 **A. No, a meeting with the managers to discuss the absent**  
24 **staff.**  
25 Q. Who is absent, okay.

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39 (Pages 153 to 156)

1 **A. Yes. I think some of the concerns were, there are some**  
 2 **areas that have to be covered initially when the member**  
 3 **of staff goes sick, and you're quite right, you know,**  
 4 **and that's an initial contact from a manager, just to**  
 5 **say, "Notice you've gone sick. How are you doing?**  
 6 **What's wrong?" And do we need to put in support in**  
 7 **place for those members of staff? I think there was**  
 8 **also some criticism along the line from staff as well,**  
 9 **who were saying, "Well, I've been off sick. I was**  
 10 **perhaps injured at work or I've not been feeling too**  
 11 **well", who hadn't had that contact, who would kind of**  
 12 **complain about that as well. So it was just trying to**  
 13 **instil -- and I do appreciate that there were times when**  
 14 **that particular grade was pulled and pushed to do**  
 15 **various bits. But just the bit I was trying to instil,**  
 16 **if everybody just kind of sat there for five, ten**  
 17 **minutes in the morning, who has gone sick in your area,**  
 18 **just give them a ring, check in with them, see if they**  
 19 **are okay, you know, just kind of really basic questions**  
 20 **that then we know where we are with people, rather than**  
 21 **leave it and then feel -- staff feel annoyed that nobody**  
 22 **has taken the time just to give them a ring.**  
 23 Q. Did you feel micro-management was your lot only in --  
 24 **A. No, I --**  
 25 Q. Wait, wait. I haven't asked you a question, Mr Skitt.

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1 **A. Sorry, I do apologise.**  
 2 Q. Only in relation to sicknesses or did you find yourself  
 3 micro-managing DCMs in all other sorts of ways?  
 4 **A. No, I think sickness was -- I mean, in relation --**  
 5 **I think sickness was one of the concerns, as I say,**  
 6 **because I think -- I'm not sure at the time if there had**  
 7 **been concerns raised by staff who had been off due to**  
 8 **lack of contact. That might have just one example I was**  
 9 **talking -- I wouldn't say I'd be having to micro-manage**  
 10 **everything. I just felt that was one of the areas that**  
 11 **I felt we were letting ourselves down.**  
 12 Q. Let me ask you something else now. We can take that  
 13 down, Zaynab, thank you. In your statement at page 47,  
 14 paragraph 158, you were asked about your views of  
 15 the Home Office:  
 16 "I don't see within the Home Office what I saw in  
 17 a previous life working at prisons: guidance and  
 18 direction. When I worked in the Prison Service, there  
 19 was always guidance and yearly plans about how it  
 20 operates. We're working on this at the IRC now by  
 21 looking at positive detention culture. But still you  
 22 don't have that corporate vision from the Home Office,  
 23 in my opinion. The Home Office's aim in relation to  
 24 Gatwick IRCs is to move people out of the country and  
 25 that is basically it. There is no vision about

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1 progression over the next five or so years because of  
 2 this. It is also likely that no-one in the SMT would  
 3 have vision and more likely that they would just follow  
 4 the status quo without challenging it."  
 5 Now, first of all, when you say "We are working on  
 6 this at the IRC now by looking at positive detention  
 7 culture", your witness statement, of course, was made  
 8 and signed off, if my memory serves me, on 4 March.  
 9 What's the positive detention culture that you are  
 10 invoking under Serco?  
 11 **A. Yes, it's Dr Victoria Lavis, and she --**  
 12 Q. Dr ...?  
 13 **A. Victoria Lavis. I'm not sure if she's coming to give --**  
 14 Q. Not that I know about.  
 15 **A. Okay.**  
 16 Q. Just tell us shortly, Mr Skitt, about her?  
 17 **A. This was introduced when -- as part of the new contract,**  
 18 **you know, it is to work with, basically, all staffing**  
 19 **groups. It is -- basically, we look at areas of**  
 20 **concern, we have recently looked at staff surveys and**  
 21 **had numerous meetings to try and make a kind of plan,**  
 22 **a roadmap for Gatwick IRC going forward and how we can**  
 23 **address that and the staff involved. Also, each**  
 24 **function -- so I have my own kind of roadmap that has**  
 25 **a number of elements within it. As an example, part of**

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1 **my area is the care team. So how the care team operates**  
 2 **in supporting staff and other areas very -- you know,**  
 3 **very similar, and whether that involves training or**  
 4 **specific areas within the centre.**  
 5 **We have set this out, and I'm no expert on this,**  
 6 **but -- and it's been rolled out with engagement from all**  
 7 **staff within the centre, so we are all understanding of**  
 8 **what it is and how we are going to work it going**  
 9 **forward. It is a report. Reports are published based**  
 10 **on our functions that are involving the Home Office,**  
 11 **just so we can understand what the culture is, that we**  
 12 **get it right and that all staff are engaged within that**  
 13 **process.**  
 14 Q. What's her expertise?  
 15 **A. Sorry?**  
 16 Q. What's her expertise, Dr Lavis?  
 17 **A. I mean, I know she was from a psychology background.**  
 18 **I'm not sure exactly what her doctorship is in.**  
 19 Q. Does it follow that Serco is now invoking a positive  
 20 detention culture that, during the time we are talking  
 21 about, it was pretty negative?  
 22 **A. We didn't have such a process in place under then, yes.**  
 23 Q. You're saying Serco is trying to --  
 24 **A. Improve.**  
 25 Q. -- improve: new initiatives in place to make it a better

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40 (Pages 157 to 160)



<p>1 place than it was?</p> <p>2 <b>A. And I think it is something the customer wanted. So</b></p> <p>3 <b>part of the kind of specification was the customer would</b></p> <p>4 <b>want this.</b></p> <p>5 Q. You will remember having an interview with Dr Aitken</p> <p>6 back in July 2017?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I know I was interviewed by Dr Aitken, yes.</b></p> <p>8 Q. We can look at it, if needs be, but you were asked about</p> <p>9 the Home Office, and you say:</p> <p>10 "I think if we go back to purpose vision strategy,</p> <p>11 I'm not sure the general public understand what we do</p> <p>12 anyway. I think those that would form an education --</p> <p>13 uneducated view would perhaps view it as a good thing."</p> <p>14 You say:</p> <p>15 "I think each IRC is independent. All they want to</p> <p>16 do, if they have got a problem, is dump it onto someone</p> <p>17 else, would be my view. We fall foul of that with a lot</p> <p>18 of removals that come into here and I think the purpose,</p> <p>19 the vision, needs to be working all as one because we</p> <p>20 are all doing the same job and I think we make it harder</p> <p>21 for each other by the processes at the moment."</p> <p>22 I am asked to ask you this on behalf of Deighton</p> <p>23 Pierce Glynn: did you consider that the lack of</p> <p>24 institutional purpose or the perceived lack of purpose</p> <p>25 or direction at Brook House contributed to the culture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 161</p>	<p>1 <b>agreed or not agreed at a fairly high level. I think it</b></p> <p>2 <b>was Alan Gibson who initially started to chair these</b></p> <p>3 <b>meetings. I think there were just concerns around not</b></p> <p>4 <b>just people who were being disruptive, but there may</b></p> <p>5 <b>have been people with other vulnerabilities, et cetera,</b></p> <p>6 <b>that I felt were being moved around, who would turn up</b></p> <p>7 <b>at Brook House and be a specific problem that we were</b></p> <p>8 <b>not aware of. I think -- you know, I will -- I think</b></p> <p>9 <b>most people will -- accept anybody into Brook House,</b></p> <p>10 <b>whoever -- but I think sometimes, you know, forewarned</b></p> <p>11 <b>is forearmed. It's to kind of understand what the</b></p> <p>12 <b>difficulties are.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Let's put up your interview again, please, &lt;VER000248&gt;.</p> <p>14 I'm asked on behalf of Bhatt Murphy to ask you some</p> <p>15 questions about this. At page 13, at the top of</p> <p>16 the page, at line 140, you were asked about a more</p> <p>17 demanding Home Office:</p> <p>18 "Answer: I don't think the policy has changed."</p> <p>19 I think you were talking about drugs here:</p> <p>20 "There's certainly more issues raised by residents</p> <p>21 around casework. I struggle to get my head around the</p> <p>22 Home Office, the way they operate. Sorry to keep going</p> <p>23 on about prisons, but if you go to a prison it's</p> <p>24 different. It's very difficult operating centres where</p> <p>25 all you're doing is, for want of a better word, locking</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 163</p>
<p>1 that developed there?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Sorry, I don't quite understand.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Did you consider that the lack of purpose -- this is</p> <p>4 what you were saying, the Home Office had no vision for</p> <p>5 this place --</p> <p>6 <b>A. I think, no, this was about moves, wasn't it?</b></p> <p>7 Q. It was about?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Moves from other centres.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Well, I'm simply quoting what you had to say. It's</p> <p>10 difficult to tell --</p> <p>11 <b>A. I'm just trying to summarise what you have said about my</b></p> <p>12 <b>words of dumping from other centres. I think this was</b></p> <p>13 <b>around the movement of residents around the centres,</b></p> <p>14 <b>where, if there was a particular problematic individual</b></p> <p>15 <b>in another centre, I think they may have been moved</b></p> <p>16 <b>around into other centres as a general transfer rather</b></p> <p>17 <b>than a problematic move, and I think, if we take this</b></p> <p>18 <b>forward, there was some work done because we put in</b></p> <p>19 <b>place at Gatwick a detainees of interest meeting, which</b></p> <p>20 <b>is a weekly meeting about residents that were of</b></p> <p>21 <b>concern, through various reasons, and I think also the</b></p> <p>22 <b>Home Office put into place an excessive disruptive</b></p> <p>23 <b>behaviours policy where all IRCs that would want to</b></p> <p>24 <b>consider to move somebody, for a variety of reasons,</b></p> <p>25 <b>would submit their requests, and they would be either</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 162</p>	<p>1 people up and looking after their needs."</p> <p>2 This is something you said earlier:</p> <p>3 "You have no input whatsoever into their cases, you</p> <p>4 have no access to any information about their cases. In</p> <p>5 a prison you would. The offender management supervises</p> <p>6 all the work around a prisoner, it's all there, all</p> <p>7 accessed, and we deal with it."</p> <p>8 We have already seen how, in your witness statement,</p> <p>9 you talked about how the Home Office failed to instil</p> <p>10 G4S with any corporate vision, given their one-track</p> <p>11 focus on effecting removal. One of the questions I am</p> <p>12 asked to ask you is, is it your view that the</p> <p>13 Home Office placed far too little, if any, value on the</p> <p>14 culture at Brook House and the care or welfare of</p> <p>15 detained persons?</p> <p>16 <b>A. No, it's not my view at all, and I think this was</b></p> <p>17 <b>something that was said a number of years ago. I have</b></p> <p>18 <b>to say, since this document and this report was</b></p> <p>19 <b>published, you know, and those were my views, and I have</b></p> <p>20 <b>echoed those views earlier, I think there has been</b></p> <p>21 <b>a significant investment by the Home Office,</b></p> <p>22 <b>particularly around casework, with the detention</b></p> <p>23 <b>engagement teams that are literally on site now. It has</b></p> <p>24 <b>been difficult the last couple of years with Covid to</b></p> <p>25 <b>kind of engage directly with people and at a level that</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 164</p>

<p>1 we were engaging before, but that is now slightly</p> <p>2 changing, now the guidance is changing, but I think,</p> <p>3 whereas before there would be a small team within the</p> <p>4 centre, it's now quite a large team, and I think, on</p> <p>5 reflection, from what that says there, to what it is</p> <p>6 now, we are in a completely different state.</p> <p>7 Q. Did you feel, then, during this period, with G4S, that</p> <p>8 staff were left dealing with questions that they</p> <p>9 couldn't answer?</p> <p>10 A. Either questions they couldn't answer or would take some</p> <p>11 time to try and get an answer, because some cases --</p> <p>12 caseworkers also work in isolation in other parts of</p> <p>13 the country as well. As I said, you know, my last</p> <p>14 statement, that has now changed and staff can ring up</p> <p>15 the DET teams and get a response fairly quickly which is</p> <p>16 helpful. They are now, as I say, as we are moving out</p> <p>17 of Covid, I have been engaging with senior Home Office</p> <p>18 managers around how we are going to be utilising the</p> <p>19 legal visits for their work, and also -- and others'</p> <p>20 work going on with a colleague of mine, that they will</p> <p>21 be going around the wings on a daily basis, holding</p> <p>22 forums and -- "forums" is the wrong word. I think it's</p> <p>23 engagement sessions with residents to answer any</p> <p>24 questions they may have.</p> <p>25 Q. How did you get on with Paul Gasson?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 165</p>	<p>1 experience in the prison system and that you took no</p> <p>2 ownership of problems. What do you say?</p> <p>3 A. Well, I would say, obviously, that's Paul's opinion.</p> <p>4 I have never had any concerns raised to me. I would</p> <p>5 have thought, if Paul had any concerns around me, he</p> <p>6 could have raised it through his line to raise it so it</p> <p>7 could be formally raised with me. I can't recall</p> <p>8 anything being raised with me.</p> <p>9 Q. Moving on to a few questions about staffing. Going, if</p> <p>10 you would, to paragraph 232 of your witness statement at</p> <p>11 page 66 -- you say how G4S was contracted to provide</p> <p>12 668 hours of DCO time per day and that the contract</p> <p>13 required at least two DCOs on duty in each residential</p> <p>14 wing throughout the day:</p> <p>15 "In terms of whether this level of staffing was</p> <p>16 adequate, you can argue it in both ways. It all depends</p> <p>17 on what is going on in the centre. At times, I accept</p> <p>18 that it could be very tight, however, on some days there</p> <p>19 was more staff than the minimum contracted levels."</p> <p>20 Let me ask you this: when it was tight, was it so</p> <p>21 tight, do you think, that it was insecure?</p> <p>22 A. I wouldn't say "insecure" would be the right word.</p> <p>23 Q. What is the right word?</p> <p>24 A. So I think just to kind of summarise that, yes, two</p> <p>25 staff was the profile. Those were profiles that had</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 167</p>
<p>1 A. I got on all right with Paul Gasson.</p> <p>2 Q. Good working relationship?</p> <p>3 A. I thought so, yeah.</p> <p>4 Q. Did he ever raise any issues with you about your style</p> <p>5 of working or management?</p> <p>6 A. Not to me, personally.</p> <p>7 Q. No? I just want to put up on screen -- I suspect you</p> <p>8 have seen this, Mr Skitt --</p> <p>9 A. I have.</p> <p>10 Q. -- &lt;VER000292&gt; at page 54, please. It is a notebook</p> <p>11 from Verita of notes of interview, and towards the</p> <p>12 bottom, you can make out some of the handwriting I can't</p> <p>13 exactly read, but it looks like, "Concern with</p> <p>14 Steve Skitt" this was notes from Paul Gasson interview</p> <p>15 with Verita. "30 years" it reads as "from prison.</p> <p>16 Doesn't get it is an IRC -- no ownership of problems."</p> <p>17 And then reads on:</p> <p>18 "Accepts that Steve did do things [it may read] in</p> <p>19 a hierarchy."</p> <p>20 Not quite sure about the next word:</p> <p>21 "+ not support + ownership + development."</p> <p>22 So I have read all of that in context insofar as it</p> <p>23 goes. But he is telling Verita he had concerns with</p> <p>24 you, that you didn't really understand the distinction</p> <p>25 between the fact it was an IRC as distinct from your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 166</p>	<p>1 been agreed as part of the contract. I think two staff</p> <p>2 on a wing, yes, is challenging. There is a lot of work</p> <p>3 to do and it was a concern on most days around checking</p> <p>4 what the levels were. There were concerns raised by</p> <p>5 staff. We tried to address those. We looked at</p> <p>6 a number of initiatives of utilising other staff within</p> <p>7 the centre, certainly at peak times, such as unlock</p> <p>8 times, serving of meal times, lock-up times, where we</p> <p>9 could utilise the activity staff, we could utilise other</p> <p>10 satellite areas to assist in that because, effectively,</p> <p>11 once the activities started, a lot of the residents</p> <p>12 would leave the wing, which would reduce the numbers,</p> <p>13 but, you know, potentially, depending on what was going</p> <p>14 on, yes, it could have an impact on maybe what was being</p> <p>15 delivered on the wing, whereas things could be slower,</p> <p>16 staff may not be able to do some of the things in a time</p> <p>17 or if they could on that particular day, and that was</p> <p>18 around prioritising what the work was.</p> <p>19 Q. Paragraph 233:</p> <p>20 "Technically, having two DCOs on a wing where 120</p> <p>21 residents reside could be challenging. However, I was</p> <p>22 aware of the contract levels and so I often thought that</p> <p>23 we just had to make do with what we had."</p> <p>24 "Make do"?</p> <p>25 A. Probably "make do" is the wrong word.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 168</p>

<p>1 Q. First of all, it is two words and they are your words,</p> <p>2 Mr Skitt?</p> <p>3 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. This is a witness statement of 115 pages.</p> <p>5 <b>A. Mmm.</b></p> <p>6 Q. It's lengthy. You looked at a lot of documents. You</p> <p>7 are still at Serco, working for Brook House, so you</p> <p>8 know -- you're not out of the business, as it were, or</p> <p>9 the industry, as you call it, and presumably, before</p> <p>10 this went into print, you must have been satisfied that</p> <p>11 those were the correct words to use, and, if they were,</p> <p>12 "making do" sounds like it's the bare minimum?</p> <p>13 <b>A. It's -- I agree -- a flippant comment and not very</b></p> <p>14 <b>professional.</b></p> <p>15 Q. Well, I'm not asking you whether it was a flippant</p> <p>16 comment, but whether, when you used the words, "we just</p> <p>17 had to make do with what we had", it sounds rather</p> <p>18 alarming that the staffing that you had was a make do,</p> <p>19 that you worked with what you had and you didn't have</p> <p>20 any more?</p> <p>21 <b>A. What I mean by that is, the contractual level of</b></p> <p>22 <b>staffing, which is the number we had, and that's what we</b></p> <p>23 <b>had to provide on a daily basis in line with the</b></p> <p>24 <b>contractual elements of that, and it was around</b></p> <p>25 <b>utilising the resources that we did have --</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 169</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Minimum, three, plus one courtyard and a manager on each</b></p> <p>2 <b>wing.</b></p> <p>3 Q. Is that contractual?</p> <p>4 <b>A. That is contractual, as a minimum, but depending on</b></p> <p>5 <b>where you are with non-effectives or leave allocation,</b></p> <p>6 <b>you could have more on there.</b></p> <p>7 Q. "I'm always concerned about staff." Were you always</p> <p>8 concerned about the safety of the detained population as</p> <p>9 well, because you don't mention that here?</p> <p>10 <b>A. I was concerned about everybody. I think the topic we</b></p> <p>11 <b>were talking around was around staff.</b></p> <p>12 Q. If you go to paragraph 238:</p> <p>13 "The problem we had in the centre is that we were</p> <p>14 constantly having to move resource around."</p> <p>15 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>16 Q. "It was also difficult when staff put their own</p> <p>17 colleagues at risk by disappearing off a wing to go and</p> <p>18 do something without trying to find cover. Therefore</p> <p>19 leaving their colleague on their own."</p> <p>20 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>21 Q. What did you mean by "constantly having to move resource</p> <p>22 around"?</p> <p>23 <b>A. So there were a number of concerns. You know, there's</b></p> <p>24 <b>no hiding behind the fact it was challenging.</b></p> <p>25 Q. Dangerous?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 171</p>
<p>1 Q. You mean the human resources?</p> <p>2 <b>A. Human resources, sorry, yes, in the best way possible.</b></p> <p>3 <b>You know. We would be quite innovative and supportive</b></p> <p>4 <b>of everybody within the centre.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Over the page at 239, paragraph 239, you say:</p> <p>6 "I believe that staff and residents were safe at all</p> <p>7 times despite what some will describe as challenging</p> <p>8 staffing levels. I say this because there is a first</p> <p>9 response procedure in place. Staff have the opportunity</p> <p>10 to raise a first response if at any time they feel</p> <p>11 unsafe. I was always concerned about staff and had no</p> <p>12 concern above and beyond the normal concerns one would</p> <p>13 have and this was alleviated by knowing that staff had</p> <p>14 first response available."</p> <p>15 So are you saying you had no concerns at all for</p> <p>16 staff, everything was fine and that they were safe</p> <p>17 because you had a first response procedure in place?</p> <p>18 <b>A. No, I had a lot of concerns about staff. It's about</b></p> <p>19 <b>what measures you have in place, in particular about --</b></p> <p>20 <b>you know, you can argue the point how many staff is</b></p> <p>21 <b>enough staff, and some people will give you different</b></p> <p>22 <b>figures.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Is Serco operating on two DCOs a wing?</p> <p>24 <b>A. No.</b></p> <p>25 Q. How many do you operate on?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 170</p>	<p>1 <b>A. I wouldn't say dangerous. I mean, any situation working</b></p> <p>2 <b>in a custodial environment could be dangerous,</b></p> <p>3 <b>potentially.</b></p> <p>4 Q. But the fewer staff you have, DCOs disappearing off</p> <p>5 wings, leaving one to manage 120 men, that's not</p> <p>6 potentially dangerous?</p> <p>7 <b>A. I think, for the person -- yes, it is potentially</b></p> <p>8 <b>dangerous and that's why we tried to instil in staff,</b></p> <p>9 <b>"Look, we understand people need to go for a comfort</b></p> <p>10 <b>break, we understand people want to go to the toilet",</b></p> <p>11 <b>but the reports that were coming through that staff were</b></p> <p>12 <b>mentioning was, you know, "One minute I'd be working</b></p> <p>13 <b>there, and my colleague, and I'd turn around and they'd</b></p> <p>14 <b>gone to the toilet, you know, and not told me". So it</b></p> <p>15 <b>was about adopting a realistic approach and just trying</b></p> <p>16 <b>to say to staff, "Look, we know you have to go somewhere</b></p> <p>17 <b>sometimes. However, if you let the Oscar 1 know or the</b></p> <p>18 <b>duty manager of the day or your manager -- if you need</b></p> <p>19 <b>to go off, just let somebody know and we can kind of</b></p> <p>20 <b>backfill that space for the period of time you've got to</b></p> <p>21 <b>go to the toilet and that".</b></p> <p>22 Q. The risk here, Mr Skitt, is that G4S was adhering to</p> <p>23 minimum contractual standards as regards staffing, but</p> <p>24 they stuck to them, rather than make the place -- rather</p> <p>25 than a make do, making it safer for everyone. Do you</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 172</p>

<p>1 think that's a fair criticism that G4S were actually</p> <p>2 sticking to the minimum because it suited their</p> <p>3 commercial model perhaps to do so?</p> <p>4 <b>A. We weren't sticking to the minimum. Some days are</b></p> <p>5 <b>better than others.</b></p> <p>6 Q. You have said that some days were better than others.</p> <p>7 Why weren't all days better than others?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Because you have to take into account sickness, you have</b></p> <p>9 <b>to take into account some weeks you have your</b></p> <p>10 <b>non-effectives built into this. Some days there may not</b></p> <p>11 <b>be as many people on leave as you would perhaps in</b></p> <p>12 <b>a summer period. So there would be better days. And we</b></p> <p>13 <b>weren't purposely keeping the staff down to a minimum.</b></p> <p>14 <b>I'm not sure why you would want to. The way the shift</b></p> <p>15 <b>patterns were worked out, staff worked a long shift for</b></p> <p>16 <b>the day because that is what the staff wanted to work.</b></p> <p>17 <b>I'm not necessarily saying that's my favoured approach.</b></p> <p>18 <b>However, that's what was in place. So you basically</b></p> <p>19 <b>split your staff 50/50 because the days that staff are</b></p> <p>20 <b>working others are not. So you lose the opportunity to</b></p> <p>21 <b>utilise staff in a better way sometimes. So if you lose</b></p> <p>22 <b>somebody, you lose them for the day. Whereas, if you</b></p> <p>23 <b>have a different shift pattern, if you lost somebody in</b></p> <p>24 <b>the morning, it might only be the morning shift, but</b></p> <p>25 <b>you'll have somebody coming on lunch time to cover and</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 173</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>2 Q. Is that how you perceived it?</p> <p>3 <b>A. That's how I perceived it, yes.</b></p> <p>4 Q. I have a question for you on behalf of Bhatt Murphy:</p> <p>5 does that mean that G4S was maximising profits and</p> <p>6 contract compliance over the care and safeguarding of</p> <p>7 vulnerable detained persons?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Not in my opinion.</b></p> <p>9 Q. Do you remember a little earlier we were talking about</p> <p>10 additional beds and you said certain of the detained</p> <p>11 population quite liked sharing rooms, whereas others</p> <p>12 didn't?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>14 Q. You mentioned Vietnamese and Chinese. Can we just go</p> <p>15 back to your Verita interview, &lt;VER000248&gt;, please,</p> <p>16 page 16. You see there is that big answer just above</p> <p>17 174. There is a question which begins, and then there</p> <p>18 is an answer at 173:</p> <p>19 "We can probably track our different populations so</p> <p>20 we know exactly what the Albanians are like. They come</p> <p>21 from Albania. If you get 50 or 60 Albanians in the</p> <p>22 centre, the dynamics will change. We got ready for</p> <p>23 a Jamaican charter.</p> <p>24 "Question: In what way with the Albanians?</p> <p>25 "Answer: They have no respect, the way culturally</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 175</p>
<p>1 you may be able to cover the morning through other ways.</p> <p>2 So that's how the kind of detail operated.</p> <p>3 Q. But, in the end, this is all about planning, isn't it,</p> <p>4 planning for eventualities, planning for the</p> <p>5 foreseeable, as well as, potentially, the unforeseeable,</p> <p>6 isn't it?</p> <p>7 <b>A. Yes. And there are lots of unforeseeable issues. You</b></p> <p>8 <b>know, during the operation of the day, you could be --</b></p> <p>9 <b>you could have a number of escorts going out, which you</b></p> <p>10 <b>plan for, and you have planned the staff for that.</b></p> <p>11 <b>That's what you can do. And then, all of a sudden,</b></p> <p>12 <b>you'll get an emergency escort thrown on top of it, so</b></p> <p>13 <b>you've got to find another three staff to take that</b></p> <p>14 <b>escort out or you may find that, you know, you may get</b></p> <p>15 <b>a resident that goes on constant watch, so then you've</b></p> <p>16 <b>got to find another member of staff. You know, these</b></p> <p>17 <b>operational challenges were in all environments like</b></p> <p>18 <b>this. Sometimes you can't predict what's going to</b></p> <p>19 <b>happen during the day.</b></p> <p>20 Q. Paragraph 247. You deal with the profit, and you talk</p> <p>21 about Sarah Newlands' assessment of the profit that was</p> <p>22 built into the contract. But your last sentence is:</p> <p>23 "I know this can be a subjective point, but it was</p> <p>24 my view that the Gatwick contract was very profitable</p> <p>25 for G4S."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 174</p>	<p>1 they are. In their own country they work in clans,</p> <p>2 depending on which family you're from. If you take one</p> <p>3 Albanian on, you take them all on, very similar to my</p> <p>4 experiences from Vietnamese in prisons, a population</p> <p>5 like that. Then you get the Nigerian Ghanaians who, in</p> <p>6 my opinion, are historically quite litigate."</p> <p>7 Did you mean "litigious"?</p> <p>8 <b>A. Litigious.</b></p> <p>9 Q. "They've probably been here in the country quite</p> <p>10 a number of years, will fight every avenue not to go,</p> <p>11 will be difficult on charters. The Jamaican population</p> <p>12 is another difficult population. If you look at the</p> <p>13 Jamaican population, if they've come in here for charter</p> <p>14 removes, you find a lot of Jamaicans haven't lived in</p> <p>15 Jamaica perhaps since they were a child or in some cases</p> <p>16 have never lived in Jamaica. It's just that the parents</p> <p>17 didn't get a British passport when they were younger,</p> <p>18 et cetera. There are those dynamics. Eastern Europeans</p> <p>19 will throw in a different mix to that."</p> <p>20 On page 19 at the top, at 204:</p> <p>21 "Up until Panorama, and there are a number of</p> <p>22 ongoing cases in the High Court now around three-bedded</p> <p>23 rooms, about ventilation and around other things, that's</p> <p>24 ongoing."</p> <p>25 You say -- you were asked.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 176</p>

<p>1 "Question: And you think that's been inspired by 2 the Panorama programme? 3 "Answer: Yes, because, up to then, we hadn't had 4 any problems with the three-person rooms. They didn't 5 like them, but what we tended to find was that people 6 from their own nationalities or people that were 7 friends, the Chinese, as an example, are quite happy to 8 have three people in a room because that's the way they 9 are, they keep within themselves as a group", and so on. 10 I am asked to ask you this on behalf of 11 Bhatt Murphy: do you not think you were stereotyping 12 these people? 13 <b>A. I was trying to give an overview of what -- I'm not sure 14 what the original question was about -- the different 15 populations and how they present as groups, not 16 stereotyping.</b> 17 Q. Were these views that you think you expressed at the 18 time? Would you have expressed these kinds of views to 19 others, other members of staff, SMT, at Brook House? 20 <b>A. Effectively, we knew if -- you know, if -- I mean, going 21 back then, we knew if we were getting a large intake of 22 people from Albania in, we'd know what type of problems 23 they'd cause. A lot of our incidents were related -- 24 you know, netting incidents were related to certain 25 groups of individuals. We -- you know, it's well known</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 177</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Yes.</b> 2 MR ALTMAN: I spoke to Ms Blackwell in anticipation of this 3 happening. As I say, I'm very happy to go on to finish. 4 I'm not going to promise 5.30, it could very well be 5 a little later, and I know it is a little inconvenient 6 to others. But that's the choice. The decision is 7 yours, chair. 8 THE CHAIR: I'm very happy to continue. Mr Skitt, are you 9 sure you're happy -- 10 <b>A. It is my preference to carry on --</b> 11 MR ALTMAN: Mr Skitt, if your answers are a teeny-weeny bit 12 shorter, we will finish this evening. 13 THE CHAIR: Can I just check it is okay in terms of 14 the transcribers? Why don't we take a five-minute break 15 now and then return. 16 (4.33 pm) 17 (A short break) 18 (4.41 pm) 19 MR ALTMAN: The first thing I want to ask you about, this is 20 on behalf of Duncan Lewis, is the rule 40 process. Up 21 on screen we have two paragraphs of a witness statement 22 by Paul Gasson of 8 March in which he says he's been 23 referred to certain documents which show that "I was 24 notified when a detained person was placed on rule 40. 25 I have been asked why I was notified when a detained</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 179</p>
<p>1 <b>within the IRC estate, you know, around escapes and 2 around other issues what different populations are 3 difficult within that. I know the Home Office did a lot 4 of work particularly around that. It's not me 5 stereotyping. I'm just trying to give a kind of flavour 6 of some of the different concerns that can be raised 7 within that.</b> 8 MR ALTMAN: Chair, it is 4.30 pm. This is the choice I am 9 going to present you with. 10 THE CHAIR: Go ahead. 11 MR ALTMAN: I'm not finished. I am looking at the questions 12 I have left of Mr Skitt. There are three or four topics 13 involving some documentation which I'm going to have to 14 show him. 15 It would be foolish of me to say that I could finish 16 in an hour, but there is a fair chance that I might, and 17 if people are prepared -- you, chair, are prepared -- to 18 sit until 5.30/5.45, it would prevent us all coming back 19 tomorrow for the sake of another hour of evidence. So 20 I am entirely in your hands. If you wish to rise now, 21 of course, the transcribers would need a five-minute 22 break at the least. 23 But I'm very happy, if you are, Mr Skitt -- 24 I suspect you would prefer to finish tonight if you 25 could? You are nodding.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 178</p>	<p>1 person was placed on rule 40 and how I used this 2 information. The Home Office was notified of all 3 occasions as per detention centre rule 40. The 4 paperwork would be reviewed to ensure it was completed 5 correctly." 6 Then at 122: 7 "I have been referred to [some other documents] 8 relating to removal from association ... I have been 9 asked to comment on the information I considered to 10 determine whether an individual was suitable to be 11 placed under rule 40." 12 Skipping to the next but one sentence: 13 "For the cases where I did authorise removal from 14 association, the information I considered would have 15 been what was presented by G4S and consideration of any 16 alternatives to the relocation." 17 So that is his take on the use of, and the 18 authorisation for, rule 40. 19 If we go, please, to a Detention Services order, and 20 we will find this at &lt;CJS000676&gt; at page 11. This DSO, 21 as we can see, is removal from association rule 40 and 22 temporary confinement. Rule 42. Can we go, please, to 23 page 11. At the top, rule 40 says: 24 "... the Secretary of State (in the case of 25 a contracted-out detention centre) or the manager (in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 180</p>

<p>1 the case of a directly managed centre) may arrange for 2 the detained person's removal from association ..."</p> <p>3 Subparagraph (2): 4 "In cases of urgency, the manager of 5 a contracted-out detention centre may assume the 6 responsibility of the Secretary of State under paragraph 7 (1) but shall notify the Secretary of State as soon as 8 possible after making the necessary arrangements."</p> <p>9 If we drop down, please, to paragraph 31, you will 10 see in bold: 11 "In no circumstances must an initial authorisation 12 be given for a period beyond 24 hours. In normal 13 circumstances, any use of rule 40 or 42, for an initial 14 24-hour period must be authorised by a manager 15 (executive officer or above) from the HOIE IRC team in 16 a contracted-out centre."</p> <p>17 Stop there, because the rest is to do with prisons. 18 Then, over the page, at paragraph 32: 19 "In cases of urgency ..."</p> <p>20 And footnote 4 says: 21 "For example, to protect life and/or the security of 22 the centre, for example, a fight or an assault on 23 another detainee or member of staff."</p> <p>24 Back to the top, please: 25 "In cases of urgency and if the circumstances are</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 181</p>	<p>1 <b>A. The duty director.</b> 2 Q. What level would the duty director be? 3 <b>A. It's normally my level.</b> 4 Q. Your level. So presumably you've given authorisation 5 before? 6 <b>A. When I've been contacted out of hours, yes.</b> 7 Q. Mr Saunders? 8 <b>A. I mean, out of hours, it's normally the duty director,</b> 9 <b>yes.</b> 10 Q. But is that urgency? Is that a case of urgency? 11 <b>A. It depends on the situation.</b> 12 Q. I mean, you see that the paragraph 32 at the top says 13 "and if the circumstances are such that it is 14 impracticable to seek the authority required in 15 paragraph 31". That relates to the Home Office 16 individual? 17 <b>A. Yes.</b> 18 Q. Do you think, Mr Skitt, that in all cases where you were 19 asked for your authorisation, you personally, as the 20 deputy director, that you were giving your authorisation 21 in cases of urgency and that it was impracticable for 22 the Home Office manager to give authorisation? How did 23 you satisfy yourself that that was the case? 24 <b>A. I mean, if people are on site, you have to go down and</b> 25 <b>kind of view. If you are on call, you have to talk</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 183</p>
<p>1 such that it is impracticable to seek the authority 2 required in paragraph 31 in advance, the centre/duty 3 manager (in a contracted-out or HMPPS-run centre) can 4 make the emergency authorisation so that the authority 5 is considered to begin at that point. In such 6 circumstances, the HOIE IRC manager (or the HOIE oncall 7 manager if out of hours) must be notified immediately."</p> <p>8 Our understanding, Mr Skitt, is, in a majority of 9 cases, the centre manager, or G4S, or one of 10 the managers, made the authorisation. Now, in your 11 experience, is that right?</p> <p>12 <b>A. It depends on the incident or situation. So I deal with</b> 13 <b>a lot of the rule 40s within my role, so if it's</b> 14 <b>a spontaneous incident and the decision is taken by the</b> 15 <b>person, I guess, in charge at the scene, they would make</b> 16 <b>a dynamic decision whether to move somebody onto</b> 17 <b>rule 40. And then, at the earliest opportunity, they</b> 18 <b>will let the duty director know, and if they feel it's</b> 19 <b>relevant to do that, the paperwork will be -- this is</b> 20 <b>during the day, and I guess night as well -- it would be</b> 21 <b>completed. They would then contact the Home Office as</b> 22 <b>well as the duty.</b></p> <p>23 Q. Pausing there, who would be the centre manager? Who 24 would be giving the authorisation in the case of 25 urgency?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 182</p>	<p>1 <b>through with the manager on call the circumstances,</b> 2 <b>gleaning as much information as you can on the</b> 3 <b>situation, and deem if it is appropriate to authorise</b> 4 <b>that. Then, normally, the next phone call from the</b> 5 <b>manager who has rung me up would be to the Home Office</b> 6 <b>oncall manager.</b> 7 Q. You're not quite answering the question. What I'm 8 asking is, how did you satisfy yourself that you should 9 give authorisation because it was a case of urgency, as 10 footnote 4 defines it, and in the circumstances where it 11 was impracticable to seek the authority required in 12 paragraph 31? Did you, in all cases, satisfy yourself 13 of those conditions? 14 <b>A. Which is the footnote at the bottom?</b> 15 Q. It is on the screen at the top: 16 "In cases of urgency and if the circumstances are 17 such that it is impracticable to seek the authority 18 required in paragraph 31 ..." 19 My question is, did you satisfy yourself, in all 20 cases, those conditions were satisfied where you were 21 asked for authorisation? 22 <b>A. Yes.</b> 23 Q. Is there a record of that? 24 <b>A. There will be records with the paperwork that would have</b> 25 <b>been completed.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 184</p>

46 (Pages 181 to 184)

<p>1 Q. What's the nature of the paperwork where we would find</p> <p>2 it?</p> <p>3 <b>A. It would be the rule 40 paperwork.</b></p> <p>4 Q. Did DCMs ever authorise rule 40?</p> <p>5 <b>A. If they responded to a spontaneous incident initially,</b></p> <p>6 <b>they would make the decision whether a person would need</b></p> <p>7 <b>to go down to the CSU on rule 40.</b></p> <p>8 Q. So you're happy, Mr Skitt, that if we had them, the</p> <p>9 rule 40 authorisations, we would find that this exercise</p> <p>10 had been gone through every time that you were asked for</p> <p>11 an emergency authorisation?</p> <p>12 <b>A. I believe so.</b></p> <p>13 Q. Can I ask you about something else now, please. Coming</p> <p>14 back to Dr Aitken's interview with you, and we can put</p> <p>15 it up on screen, &lt;INQ000077&gt; at pages 2 and 3. I want</p> <p>16 to ask you about page 2, right at the bottom. This is</p> <p>17 an interview by Dr Aitken who, as I told you earlier,</p> <p>18 and I remind you, was doing research inside Brook House</p> <p>19 at the time. Do you see right at the bottom the last</p> <p>20 few words:</p> <p>21 "In my view, if a person wants to kill themselves,</p> <p>22 I think the person chooses the time, the place and how</p> <p>23 they're gonna do it. And I think if somebody does wanna</p> <p>24 do it you're never gonna deter them. Is my kind of</p> <p>25 view."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 185</p>	<p>1 <b>knowing the people that you look after.</b></p> <p>2 Q. When you said, "I think if somebody does want to do it,</p> <p>3 you're never going to deter them" --</p> <p>4 <b>A. I think what's meant by that is, if somebody is -- wants</b></p> <p>5 <b>to do -- to kill themselves, sometimes you may never</b></p> <p>6 <b>know, you may never pick up on the indicators, and they</b></p> <p>7 <b>will just do it. I have dealt with a lot -- I set up</b></p> <p>8 <b>a process within Birmingham for veterans in custody,</b></p> <p>9 <b>which is something I'm kind of quite close to, you know,</b></p> <p>10 <b>and a number -- there's a very high number of people,</b></p> <p>11 <b>you know, who have committed suicide, ex-veterans and</b></p> <p>12 <b>other people, where, you know, even when you hear their</b></p> <p>13 <b>friends talk, would have not even kind of picked</b></p> <p>14 <b>anything up that there was anything wrong.</b></p> <p>15 Q. But here, of course, this is an IRC where your officers</p> <p>16 are in control of people 24/7?</p> <p>17 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Did you think that the comment you made rather obscures</p> <p>19 the fact that part of that role should be the support or</p> <p>20 listening to people and picking up any signs that they</p> <p>21 might be suicidal?</p> <p>22 <b>A. Of course it is. Of course it is.</b></p> <p>23 Q. So when you say you can't stop them, it's probably a bit</p> <p>24 black and white because you probably can, can't you?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Sometimes you can't.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 187</p>
<p>1 I'm asked on behalf of Deighton Pierce Glynn to ask</p> <p>2 you whether you see a problem with that comment?</p> <p>3 <b>A. If a person is considering self-harm or suicide, they</b></p> <p>4 <b>will be the person that kind of will think it through,</b></p> <p>5 <b>how they want to do, where they're going to do it and</b></p> <p>6 <b>how they're going to do it. That is their thought</b></p> <p>7 <b>process. And I have been in -- involved in a number of</b></p> <p>8 <b>death in custodies, unfortunately, within other</b></p> <p>9 <b>establishments, and sometimes you had no indication</b></p> <p>10 <b>whatsoever about that person that they were ever</b></p> <p>11 <b>considering such an act.</b></p> <p>12 Q. Do you think mental health training would help officers</p> <p>13 to recognise signs?</p> <p>14 <b>A. It's -- I think any -- it depends what the mental health</b></p> <p>15 <b>training is. I know there's a lot of talk -- we do</b></p> <p>16 <b>mental health first aid training, but the staff are not</b></p> <p>17 <b>mental health professionals.</b></p> <p>18 Q. Yes.</p> <p>19 <b>A. You know, does mental health first aid training help?</b></p> <p>20 <b>Yes, it does. It can kind of identify signs that</b></p> <p>21 <b>somebody has kind of changed, they may have become</b></p> <p>22 <b>withdrawn from -- I've dealt with somebody recently</b></p> <p>23 <b>who's kind of withdrawn and has got severe mental health</b></p> <p>24 <b>problems; shown a different -- it's just picking up --</b></p> <p>25 <b>you know, and sometimes it is about understanding and</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 186</p>	<p>1 Q. You don't think so?</p> <p>2 <b>A. I'm being honest. Sometimes, you know, from experience,</b></p> <p>3 <b>and I've sat in coroners courts and with people I've</b></p> <p>4 <b>known for a long time, and sometimes you can't.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Another topic, please, Mr Skitt, and we are getting</p> <p>6 reasonably close to the end. Can we put up on screen</p> <p>7 &lt;IMB000202&gt;, please. This is the IMB annual report for</p> <p>8 reporting year 1 January to 31 December 2020,</p> <p>9 published May 2021. If we go, please, to page 5 towards</p> <p>10 the bottom, under "Main judgments", "How safe is the</p> <p>11 IRC?":</p> <p>12 "The board's view is that, due to circumstances</p> <p>13 relating to the Dublin Convention charter programme, in</p> <p>14 the latter months of 2020 Brook House was not a safe</p> <p>15 place for vulnerable detainees who had crossed the</p> <p>16 Channel in small boats."</p> <p>17 If we go to the top of the page, that comment was</p> <p>18 probably made in relation to the first bullet point:</p> <p>19 "Impact of the pandemic -- as the wider community</p> <p>20 was subject to restrictions following the March national</p> <p>21 lockdown, so too was the centre, its detainees and</p> <p>22 staff. In particular, throughout most of 2020 there was</p> <p>23 less free association and mixing off the wings;</p> <p>24 accommodation moved to single occupancy; and in-person</p> <p>25 social and legal visits were stopped or restricted."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 188</p>

<p>1 The next bullet point, while we have it up:  2 "Change of contract provider from G4S to Serco ..."  3 The next bullet point:  4 "Charter flights to European countries ... shifted  5 to detainees who had arrived in the UK after crossing  6 the Channel in small boats."  7 Then this final bullet:  8 "The combination of the compressed nature of  9 the charter flight programme, with Brook House as its  10 sole base for Dublin Convention flights, and the  11 fundamental changes in the centre's population and  12 nationalities, their different vulnerabilities and their  13 needs, put the centre's systems, detainees and staff  14 under great stress and raised some serious concerns for  15 the board. Most notably, there was a dramatic increase  16 in levels of self-harm and suicidal ideation,  17 deficiencies in the induction process and increased  18 needs for legal support and detention centre rule 35  19 assessments."  20 So, against that background, "how safe is it",  21 again, we go to the bottom:  22 "... due to circumstances related to the Dublin  23 Convention charter programme, in the latter months of  24 2020 Brook House was not a safe place for vulnerable  25 detainees who had crossed the Channel in small boats."</p> <p>Page 189</p>	<p>1 statement nationally, I think, about -- I think there  2 was a lot of public concern and there were a few  3 statements about, "We'll put people on planes and take  4 them back".  5 I think this is around that time, and a lot of  6 people putting them back onto charters -- we had a very  7 difficult population on B wing, I think I remember it  8 was, who fell within that category, a lot of people whom  9 did not speak English, and a lot of people who realised  10 when they were going to be going on flights, we did have  11 a lot of self-harms. So that is in with that. But  12 that's not about, in my opinion, about in the way that  13 we treated them. It was around other concerns about the  14 numbers coming in and going out, effectively.  15 Q. But it still shows, and Mr Castle dealt with this a few  16 days ago, he was the Home Office area manager,  17 Ian Castle. Did you know him?  18 A. Yes.  19 Q. And he dealt with this the other day and said that it  20 was politically driven and made things very difficult  21 for everyone?  22 A. It was a very difficult time. I do remember it.  23 I think I was a duty director for a couple of those days  24 and I went down the wing quite a few times to -- where  25 the situations where people were distressed about people</p> <p>Page 191</p>
<p>1 Over the page, at the top:  2 "How fairly and humanely are detainees treated?  3 "From our monitoring and observations, the board's  4 view is that detainees are generally treated humanely at  5 Brook House. However:  6 "The board's view is that circumstances in  7 Brook House related to the Dublin Convention charter  8 programme amounted to inhumane treatment of the whole  9 detainee population by the Home Office in the latter  10 months of 2020."  11 The latter months of 2020 were, of course, when  12 Serco was the provider?  13 A. Yes.  14 Q. Do you agree with what I have just read to you?  15 A. Yes.  16 Q. Do you think it is a safe place now?  17 A. I'm not sure that it is referencing -- that it was  18 within our care. I think there was a -- I'm sure this  19 is the -- there was a big influx of residents within the  20 Dublin Convention which would mean that residents would  21 go back, an agreement residents would go back to the  22 country where they'd first sought asylum, not in the UK,  23 and we received a lot of people come in to the centre,  24 and I think it was particularly on B wing. Whether --  25 if I'm getting this right, there was also a political</p> <p>Page 190</p>	<p>1 being returned to where they came from.  2 Q. Do you think Serco is a different place today?  3 A. I think Serco is a totally different place.  4 Q. I mean Brook House under Serco?  5 A. Brook House, yes.  6 Q. My fault.  7 A. Yes. I mean, you know, and I think from -- if you look  8 back -- if I look back and, you know, from the Panorama  9 programme, there was a lot of work put in initially by  10 G4S.  11 Q. Including the action plan?  12 A. Including the action plan, the work within the centre.  13 There was a lot of, you know, bringing the centre up to  14 a reasonable standard around staffing and around  15 elements of that. That carried on.  16 Q. Lots of dismissals?  17 A. Sorry?  18 Q. Dismissals as well after Panorama?  19 A. It was a very kind of challenging, difficult time to --  20 you know, to pick up those bits and there was lots of  21 change. We learnt lots of lessons. It was an  22 horrendous programme. There's no getting away from  23 that.  24 Q. When you say lots of lessons learned, what do you think  25 the principal lessons learned by you have been,</p> <p>Page 192</p>



<p>1 Mr Skitt?</p> <p>2 <b>A. One, that staff need to be afforded the opportunity to</b></p> <p>3 <b>feel safe to report a wrongdoing, because if you don't</b></p> <p>4 <b>know, you can't do anything about it.</b></p> <p>5 Q. Yes.</p> <p>6 <b>A. And to provide an environment that is safe, clean,</b></p> <p>7 <b>decent, that we have appropriate staffing, we have</b></p> <p>8 <b>appropriate mechanisms in place to support and look</b></p> <p>9 <b>after people, and that our staff are all suitably</b></p> <p>10 <b>trained to deal with individuals. You know, there's --</b></p> <p>11 <b>I mean, since Serco took over, there's been -- with the</b></p> <p>12 <b>contract, you know, the staffing levels that have been</b></p> <p>13 <b>specified by the Home Office on what they want and, you</b></p> <p>14 <b>know, with the new company taking over that, you know,</b></p> <p>15 <b>the centre is a completely different place, in my</b></p> <p>16 <b>opinion.</b></p> <p>17 Q. So if somebody -- not you, but if somebody -- had been</p> <p>18 in Brook House in the period we are looking at and was</p> <p>19 to go into Brook House now, are you saying that they</p> <p>20 would see a very different place?</p> <p>21 <b>A. In my opinion, yes.</b></p> <p>22 Q. I suppose one could argue you would say that, wouldn't</p> <p>23 you?</p> <p>24 <b>A. You could take somebody in and let them have a look.</b></p> <p>25 Q. I have been in, as a matter of interest.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 193</p>	<p>1 "This 'culture of silence' across the work force at</p> <p>2 Brook House, coupled with a lack of demonstrable</p> <p>3 oversight, interest and engagement from Ben Saunders and</p> <p>4 his senior management team, allowed the abusive culture</p> <p>5 in Brook House to fester and go unchecked. The</p> <p>6 confidence that officers and managers had to, in front</p> <p>7 of other members of staff, flagrantly brag and joke</p> <p>8 about abuse, or speak in derogatory or even racist terms</p> <p>9 about detainees, demonstrated their faith in the culture</p> <p>10 of silence which allowed the abuse to persist."</p> <p>11 Over the page, at paragraph 169:</p> <p>12 "Furthermore, it is clear from the evidence that</p> <p>13 I amassed during my employment at Brook House, that</p> <p>14 although the abuse of detainees was consistent</p> <p>15 throughout my time there, the staff members responsible</p> <p>16 for that abuse changed over time. Some abusive members</p> <p>17 of staff left Brook House, only for others to continue</p> <p>18 the abuse. This, in my view, demonstrated that the</p> <p>19 abuse at Brook House was not because of a few bad apples</p> <p>20 operating unbeknown to others, but because of cultural,</p> <p>21 [he says 'systematic'; he probably means 'systemic']</p> <p>22 failings which gave rise to this behaviour, allowed it</p> <p>23 to go unchallenged and dissuaded members of staff from</p> <p>24 raising concerns about it. Detainees suffered as</p> <p>25 a consequence."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 195</p>
<p>1 <b>A. I know.</b></p> <p>2 Q. But, there again, I have got nothing to compare it with,</p> <p>3 Mr Skitt. But you think, looking back and everything</p> <p>4 you have learned from Panorama and since, that</p> <p>5 Brook House is not the place it was?</p> <p>6 <b>A. No, it's not.</b></p> <p>7 Q. Let me ask you a few more things, then. Some criticisms</p> <p>8 which you have been asked to consider.</p> <p>9 First of all, Callum Tulley.</p> <p>10 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p>11 Q. He made a witness statement to the inquiry last year,</p> <p>12 and if we put up on screen &lt;INQ000052&gt; at page 42, it</p> <p>13 comes back to something I have asked you about already</p> <p>14 at paragraph 167:</p> <p>15 "In the majority of examples outlined in this</p> <p>16 statement ..."</p> <p>17 And in that statement Callum Tulley had set out</p> <p>18 instances of abuse, some of which he recorded, some of</p> <p>19 which he didn't:</p> <p>20 "... members of staff were present during</p> <p>21 mistreatment of detainees, and for admissions of abuse</p> <p>22 and malpractice, who were otherwise well behaving</p> <p>23 officers. This underlines the lack of confidence staff</p> <p>24 had in raising complaints about such behaviour."</p> <p>25 At paragraph 168:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 194</p>	<p>1 Anything about any of that you want to disagree</p> <p>2 with, Mr Skitt?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I wasn't aware of those things. I mean, the one thing</b></p> <p>4 <b>I would like to say, I think, I also formed the opinion</b></p> <p>5 <b>that Callum Tulley worked for G4S and, had he had the</b></p> <p>6 <b>integrity to raise these concerns to us rather than sit</b></p> <p>7 <b>on them for what I would consider some time before</b></p> <p>8 <b>reporting them, we may have had an opportunity to</b></p> <p>9 <b>understand what was going on.</b></p> <p>10 <b>He was -- as I say, he worked for us. There are</b></p> <p>11 <b>a number of ways he could have put that information</b></p> <p>12 <b>through.</b></p> <p>13 Q. But he had no confidence.</p> <p>14 <b>A. He could have gone to the IMB, he could have gone to the</b></p> <p>15 <b>police, he could have gone to the Home Office. There</b></p> <p>16 <b>are a number of ways -- you know, he could have put in</b></p> <p>17 <b>a "Speak Out" for himself. There are a number of ways</b></p> <p>18 <b>I believe, and it is my opinion, that Callum Tulley</b></p> <p>19 <b>could have reported these.</b></p> <p>20 Q. The irony, Mr Skitt, is what encouraged him to go to the</p> <p>21 BBC was the Medway programme, which went out, if my</p> <p>22 memory serves me, on 12 January 2016 -- no, the 11th,</p> <p>23 and he emailed the BBC on the 12th. It was that that</p> <p>24 influenced his behaviour.</p> <p>25 <b>A. Yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 196</p>

<p>1 Q. There is an irony there. I'm not going to take you 2 through the Medway report, but there are comparisons. 3 You must have read it. There are comparisons, aren't 4 there, between what happened at Medway and what happened 5 at Brook House, and it was that that encouraged him to 6 go to the BBC. 7 One understands your criticisms of him, but he made 8 a decision and here we all are. 9 <b>A. Yes. I accept that as well. You know --</b> 10 Q. Michelle Brown -- sorry, I interrupted you. 11 <b>A. You know, we failed on that. I understand that.</b> 12 Q. A couple more things. Michelle Brown, who we may hear 13 from next week. &lt;INQ000164&gt;. She made a lengthy 14 statement to the inquiry, and there are a couple of 15 things I'd like to ask you about there, please, if 16 I may. That's her first, and I think only, witness 17 statement. On page 6, at the top: 18 "When I agreed to take up the post as head of 19 security in June 2017, I did not receive any assistance 20 from Steve Skitt before, during or after taking this 21 role. I remember attending a meeting with him for 22 a handover as he was previously covering security. This 23 meeting was merely minutes long and I remember being 24 told at the time it is like round pegs and round holes." 25 Probably meant "square pegs and round holes". Or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 197</p>	<p>1 <b>here and try and ...</b> 2 Q. No. But the point is, as deputy director, people expect 3 behaviour beyond reproach, don't they? 4 <b>A. And, you know, I thought the conversation was -- I mean,</b> 5 <b>my recollection, Michelle will have a kind of banter</b> 6 <b>with other staff, for want of a better word. I don't</b> 7 <b>particularly like the word "banter", but that's the only</b> 8 <b>word I can kind of --</b> 9 Q. It is a word we have heard from a lot of people, 10 Mr Skitt, that it was all just banter. 11 <b>A. I mean, she would joke with other people about certain</b> 12 <b>things. I misread the situation. I shouldn't have said</b> 13 <b>it, end of story.</b> 14 Q. Next paragraph: 15 "As I continued to work with Steve, I did not 16 believe him to be vindictive towards staff or detainees. 17 I witnessed numerous occasions in meetings whereby Steve 18 would make random/unrelated comments out of topic that 19 caused confusion or awkwardness -- which became an 20 accepted custom. I sensed some frustration towards 21 Steve from the Home Office as local personnel would come 22 to me rather than Steve for clarity, information or to 23 get things done." 24 Do you agree, disagree? 25 <b>A. Agree partly with some of it, yes.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 199</p>
<p>1 "round pegs and round holes"? Do you remember saying 2 it? 3 <b>A. I can't recall exactly saying it.</b> 4 Q. "He also expressed that he had just been baby-sitting 5 the role as he was aware that there would be a permanent 6 appointment at some point. I do not recall any 7 discussions in terms of role requirements, delivery, 8 objectives or strategy." 9 Do you accept the criticism or do you reject it? 10 <b>A. I reject it.</b> 11 Q. Next but one paragraph, about halfway down, she says: 12 "There was also an occasion where I was attending 13 a C&amp;R refresher course and I was in the admin area 14 waiting for it to start and Steve called me a 'chav' in 15 front of several other staff, in which I took offence 16 at. I do not believe that was Steve's intention and he 17 was merely clumsy in his words. I recall talking to him 18 about this and he passed it off in jest -- making 19 a reference that he was also from a rough area, ie, 'the 20 Black Country'. 21 Did you call her a "chav"? 22 <b>A. I did, and I regret that those were not appropriate</b> 23 <b>comments to say.</b> 24 Q. In front of other people, presumably? 25 <b>A. There were a few people there. I said it. I can't sit</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 198</p>	<p>1 Q. "Steve Skitt and I did occasionally meet up in his 2 office. He would be caring in his nature towards me, 3 however, in professional terms, I found it difficult to 4 get a definitive response to queries and as much as 5 I could rephrase questions or push for answers -- often 6 I left his office more confused than when I initially 7 went in. A good analogy of interactions with 8 Steve Skitt between myself and others would be the 'fork 9 handles/four candles' -- the Ronnie Barker scene, 10 without the humour." 11 It takes a person of a certain generation to 12 understand what she's talking about, Mr Skitt. 13 <b>A. Yes, I know --</b> 14 Q. But I suspect you and I certainly do? 15 <b>A. Yes, we do.</b> 16 Q. Do you understand what she's saying? 17 <b>A. Yes.</b> 18 Q. And do you agree? 19 <b>A. That's her opinion.</b> 20 Q. One other thing I do need to ask you about, her page 57, 21 please. Paragraph 119. She has read, she says, 22 &lt;VER000221&gt;: 23 "... regarding my interview with Kate Lampard and 24 Ed Marsden ... I can distinctly recall stating to 25 Ben Saunders and Steve Skitt in January 2016 ..."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 200</p>

50 (Pages 197 to 200)

<p>1 That is, of course, when the Medway programme went 2 out: 3 "... 'we are going to have a Panorama on our hands 4 here if we do not learn from Medway'. I believe 5 Stacie Dean and Jules Williams were also present in 6 [the] room. I can recall this as I remember I was 7 disturbed by the images that I saw from the Medway 8 broadcast that I watched a day earlier and feeling in 9 a place of total bewilderment. There was no reaction or 10 acknowledgement from Ben Saunders or Steve Skitt." 11 First of all, did she say that? 12 <b>A. I can't remember the specific date or time. What I can 13 remember, there was a lot of talk amongst a lot of 14 people, amongst the SMT, over a period of time, about 15 Medway. We could, of course, get a first, kind of, hand 16 experience of some of the issues, because obviously Ben 17 had went there later, but it was talked about, and 18 I think, most probably, other centres and everybody else 19 would look at that and try and learn lessons from it.</b> 20 Q. But if she said this, and if you accept she did say such 21 a thing, "We are going to have a Panorama on our hands 22 if we don't learn from Medway", the obvious question, if 23 you knew nothing was going on, Mr Skitt is, "What do you 24 mean"? 25 <b>A. Well, what's the context of it? I could make that</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 201</p>	<p>1 there was little/no outcome. I continued to raise 2 concerns with Ben Saunders and Steve Skitt. I did not 3 see an improvement and, as previously disclosed in my 4 statement, I used the whistleblowing hotline to report. 5 I honestly did as much as I possibly could but that 6 clearly wasn't enough." 7 Did she raise concerns with you and Ben Saunders, 8 because if she did, Mr Skitt, it presents a completely 9 different picture that the one that you have painted? 10 <b>A. It may have been concerns that had been investigated and 11 dealt with, I mean, which is going back to 2012.</b> 12 Q. What about bullying detainees by staff? 13 <b>A. Well, I'm --</b> 14 Q. Because you will remember you say in your witness 15 statement, and you have told us, in effect, you were 16 unaware of it? 17 <b>A. Well, I don't know whether it is going back to 2012 18 or ... you know, you need more context on that.</b> 19 Q. Well, I'm sure, when she comes, she will be asked that 20 question. But if she was talking about more recent 21 events post-Medway, what do you say? 22 <b>A. Again, I have no kind of context into --</b> 23 Q. You have no context, all right. We will take that 24 answer, Mr Skitt. 25 Finally -- a word, I'm sure everybody has been</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 203</p>
<p>1 <b>comment.</b> 2 Q. What did it mean to you when she said that? 3 <b>A. You know, "Medway has come out. We need to make sure we 4 learn lessons from that and look at some of 5 the underlying issues around that".</b> 6 Q. What were the underlying issues in Medway? 7 <b>A. I can't recall them all now.</b> 8 Q. Well, there was excessive use of force? 9 <b>A. Yes.</b> 10 Q. Staff problems? 11 <b>A. Mmm.</b> 12 Q. Abuse. I mean, if these things were going on in Medway 13 and she was trying to get a message across that that 14 could happen here, isn't the natural instinct to say, 15 "Well, what are you talking about? We don't have those 16 problems here"? 17 <b>A. Yeah. I mean, I can't recall that. I know there were 18 a number of conversations, and I'm not saying that 19 Michelle didn't say that. There were quite a number of 20 conversations around that.</b> 21 Q. If we drop down to the next but one paragraph: 22 "In addition, I investigated and substantiated 23 several complaints regarding staff bullying each other, 24 staff bullying detainees, displaying racist and 25 inappropriate conduct - dating back as far as 2012 but</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 202</p>	<p>1 looking forward to -- Aaron Stokes, who gave evidence. 2 Do you remember Aaron Stokes? 3 <b>A. I do, yes.</b> 4 Q. He was a DCO and he gave evidence to the inquiry on 5 9 March. Can we just put up on screen a transcript, 6 &lt;INQ000167&gt;, please, at page 43. Top left, page 169, 7 line 13. He was asked about the completion of his 8 training, and he worked in the centre from the start of 9 2017, but he handed in his notice on 14 August, and 10 there were two reasons for leaving. The first was 11 because he got a career opportunity in an area in which 12 he wished to work, and he said, "That's correct". And 13 he was even maybe actively looking for jobs while he was 14 there: 15 "Answer: Yes, that's correct. As soon as -- 16 I obviously worked as a baggage handler, then had what 17 you would call a -- like a step-up job, sort of thing, 18 a gap job, waiting for my employment in electrical 19 engineering, so I was just scrolling through all the 20 recruitment websites to see what I could find ... 21 "Question: ... another reason for handing in your 22 notice ... which you have talked about already with us 23 ... so the shift work and also the nature of the role; 24 is that fair? 25 "Answer: Yeah, that's fair.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 204</p>

<p>1 "Question: Did G4S know what your leaving reason 2 was, do you remember?" 3 Line 11: 4 "Answer: From what I recall, no. I remember 5 handing in my notice and then that was it. That's all 6 I heard of it, really." 7 Then at the top of the next page, line 8: 8 "Question: Did you tell the staff at Brook House 9 anything about your reasons for wanting a transfer ..." 10 He had been talking about wanting a transfer to 11 Tinsley House: 12 "... or did you just ask for a transfer, if you 13 remember?" 14 "Answer: I asked for a transfer from -- I think it 15 was a higher manager -- senior manager at the time, 16 Stephen Skitt I believe his name was, from memory. 17 I requested to him saying -- I went to him saying, 18 basically, I couldn't really handle the stresses anymore 19 and I needed a new environment to see if I could take me 20 away from my current situation and see if that would 21 benefit me at all in the long run. 22 "Question: Yep. 23 "Answer: But then after that, yeah, I didn't really 24 hear much back, to be honest with you. 25 "Question: So you never heard back about your</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 205</p>	<p>1 Q. So if he requested a transfer, that had to be 2 between September 2016 and May 2017? 3 <b>A. I can't remember the exact dates.</b> 4 Q. The problem is, he started at the beginning of 2017 and 5 he handed in his notice on 14 August. Although it's not 6 entirely clear from this, other than if we go back to 7 page 170 -- let's just see if he said when he handed in 8 his request for a transfer. At line 14: 9 "Question: ... in May 2017 you wanted to transfer 10 to Tinsley House, so you referred to an email, which you 11 sent on 5 May ... requesting a transfer to Tinsley." 12 So that was when Tinsley had re-opened, wasn't it? 13 <b>A. I'm not quite sure. I'm not quite sure.</b> 14 Q. Well, that's what we have been told, Mr Skitt. 15 September 2016 it was closed for refurbishment, 16 re-opening in about May. But can you remember any 17 reason why a transfer would be denied, other than -- 18 <b>A. There could be a number of reasons why you would deny 19 a transfer. I mean, it is a long time ago, and I'm 20 trying to recall on my memory to try and assist.</b> 21 Q. Did you think you were supportive of staff, or 22 unsupportive, as Mr Stokes seems to be suggesting here? 23 <b>A. I don't think so, personally.</b> 24 Q. You don't think so what? 25 <b>A. I mean, I can't recall this particular --</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 207</p>
<p>1 request to transfer to Tinsley? 2 "Answer: It took a while. I got the request back 3 saying that it was denied, basically, in short." 4 Dropping to the next page, at line 10: 5 "Question: What sort of help other than the 6 transfer to Tinsley were you hoping or expecting to 7 have? 8 "Answer: I would say more support from management, 9 really. They saw -- they could see me, I came to them 10 struggling, I was hoping they could've provided more. 11 As in such, they did recommend me to a healthcare 12 professional, which is okay, but I needed help at that 13 point in time, and, from my belief, I believe they 14 failed in that completely." 15 He was then asked: 16 "Question: ... I know you can't be completely sure, 17 but you think it might have been Mr Skitt you spoke to. 18 Do you remember anyone else you spoke to seeking this 19 sort of help? 20 "Answer: Yeah, I think it was -- I vaguely remember 21 having an interview with Ben Saunders, which I believe 22 was the overall manager at the house itself." 23 Any recollection of any of this, Mr Skitt? 24 <b>A. I think so, and I think -- I think at the time he 25 requested a transfer to Tinsley, I think it was shut.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 206</p>	<p>1 Q. So you think you're supportive of staff? 2 <b>A. I think I'm supportive of staff, yes.</b> 3 MR ALTMAN: 5.22 pm. Those are all the questions I'm going 4 to ask, chair, leaving you eight minutes for yours. 5 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Altman. I do have 6 a couple of questions, Mr Skitt, but I will try very 7 hard to keep them to within now nine minutes we have 8 until 5.30. 9 Questions from THE CHAIR 10 THE CHAIR: The first question I have is in relation to 11 something you said about -- Mr Altman asked you about 12 some of the comments you made in your interview with 13 Kate Lampard, I believe, or it might have been 14 Ed Marsden who you actually spoke to, where you were 15 referring to certain risks that were associated with 16 certain groups of people in the IRC estate. 17 <b>A. Mmm.</b> 18 THE CHAIR: You said -- I'll just check my notes to make 19 sure that I'm quoting you accurately -- that it was 20 information that the Home Office were doing a lot of 21 work around, which detained populations might present 22 certain challenges across the IRC estate. Can you tell 23 me a bit more about that? Do you mean that they were 24 doing work in the form of security intelligence, 25 briefings? Was it done locally? Was this something</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 208</p>

<p>1 coming centrally from the Home Office? What can you 2 recall?</p> <p>3 <b>A. I believe -- we knew from -- and the data will be there.</b> 4 <b>We know we had a lot of incidents over a period of time.</b> 5 <b>We know we had a lot of escapes, a lot of the concerted</b> 6 <b>indisciplines at here and Heathrow and other sites,</b> 7 <b>indicated that it was the Albanian population who would</b> 8 <b>be more inclined to do these demonstrations -- nettings,</b> 9 <b>you know, I think the (inaudible).</b></p> <p>10 <b>I think recently -- I know -- I think it's DES,</b> 11 <b>Detention Escorting Services, were kind of doing a piece</b> 12 <b>of work around this, particularly around the makeup</b> 13 <b>within the estate, and I think they try and keep -- we</b> 14 <b>continue to monitor the numbers in wings that we will</b> 15 <b>put certain -- you know, that population on.</b></p> <p>16 THE CHAIR: So is your understanding that you -- presumably, 17 individual centres produce the data, because you're 18 saying about which incidents happen, and identifying 19 which groups of detainees might be involved, and then 20 that gets fed up to somebody centrally and then fed back 21 down as a kind of collated piece of data?</p> <p>22 <b>A. So we now produce -- we used to do it before, but we</b> 23 <b>didn't have to do because it wasn't contractual, but we</b> 24 <b>were recently asked if we could do it again to highlight</b> 25 <b>on a daily basis our breakdown of population. So that</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 209</p>	<p>1 <b>either previous reports -- I mean, I know one of</b> 2 <b>the ones certainly at Brook House is the use of</b> 3 <b>restraints on escorts, you know, and I think it was</b> 4 <b>highlighted in an HMIP report previously that we were</b> 5 <b>using restraints too often, you know, so we have done</b> 6 <b>a bit of work on it. That's closely monitored by the</b> 7 <b>IMB, because they had the same view, and there's been</b> 8 <b>a dramatic reduction, in my opinion, about the use of</b> 9 <b>restraints on escorts. So that would be just one</b> 10 <b>example.</b></p> <p>11 <b>I think with IMBs, I think I have always found</b> 12 <b>through my career, you know, you have a professional</b> 13 <b>positive relationship with IMBs, and they will tend to</b> 14 <b>talk to you when you're going around and raise any</b> 15 <b>particular issues, if they feel it's appropriate. So</b> 16 <b>sometimes, you know, you can deal with them straight</b> 17 <b>away. But, you know, they do provide a -- their yearly</b> 18 <b>report, which is obviously a number of recommendations,</b> 19 <b>if there are any, that we will act on.</b></p> <p>20 THE CHAIR: Obviously, the inspection works in a very 21 different way, so these are not people that are there 22 routinely in the same way that the IMB are. Is your 23 experience the same in that regard? Does the 24 inspectorate tend to identify issues that you as an SMT 25 are already aware of?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 211</p>
<p>1 <b>information goes up so they can be monitored I assume by</b> 2 <b>the Home Office.</b></p> <p>3 THE CHAIR: Okay.</p> <p>4 <b>A. So you don't get too many particular population in one</b> 5 <b>centre.</b></p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. You gave us the name of 7 the department you believed it was. Thank you. That's 8 great.</p> <p>9 The other question I had is, in relation to -- 10 obviously, you have got very many years' experience 11 across secure settings, both in public sector settings, 12 private sector settings, and in all different 13 categories, different types of security. You, 14 therefore, will have had lots of experience of having 15 been inspected, and also having had the IMB produce 16 annual reports. For both of those organisations, 17 obviously part of their statutory remit is to identify 18 areas of concern or to identify recommendations. I just 19 want your opinion about this, so I'm not going to quiz 20 you about any individual inspection.</p> <p>21 In your experience, is it usually the case that the 22 issues that are identified to you are issues that are 23 a surprise to you at an SMT level, or do they tend to be 24 issues that you are aware of?</p> <p>25 <b>A. Probably normally issues that we may be aware of from</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 210</p>	<p>1 <b>A. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Because sometimes,</b> 2 <b>you know, their remit is a specific remit on what</b> 3 <b>they'll look at and, you know, they may pick up things</b> 4 <b>that, you know, you may not have been acutely aware of</b> 5 <b>that you need to look at.</b></p> <p>6 THE CHAIR: Thank you. One final question. Again, in 7 relation to your experience of having worked in other 8 secure settings, and you have told us a little bit, we 9 have heard some evidence as well about the experience of 10 other members of SMT, did you feel, and we are talking 11 about the relevant period, obviously, here, if you had 12 concerns regarding -- I'm going to give you a specific 13 example, but there might be others as well. If you had 14 had concerns about the number of staff that you needed 15 to keep a certain number of detainees safe, based on 16 your experience in other secure settings, do you feel 17 that that voice was listened to as part of the SMT?</p> <p>18 <b>A. Yes, and I think we tried, on a daily basis, to do --</b> 19 <b>you know, utilise the resources that we had got, and</b> 20 <b>I know some work was done afterwards around extra</b> 21 <b>resourcing for staffing, and taking it outside, just on</b> 22 <b>my experience, it's a similar situation that is not</b> 23 <b>unique to Brook House. It's a similar situation in</b> 24 <b>other places I've worked. You know, when you're working</b> 25 <b>around profiles, you're working around profiles that</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 212</p>

1 were designed potentially some time ago, with the  
2 contract. I think, you know, there were a number of  
3 contractual extensions, and I guess in some respects you  
4 would look forward to the renewing of – you know, the  
5 specification coming through, but I think in the case of  
6 last time, the staffing levels didn't change.

7 THE CHAIR: Are you talking just about other private sector  
8 places that you have worked, or are you applying that  
9 to --

10 **A. No, public sector. I've probably had more difficulties**  
11 **in public sector prisons than I have within private**  
12 **sector prisons with the staffing.**

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Skitt. Those are all the  
14 questions, and we have one minute to spare.

15 MR ALTMAN: Chair, the bad news is, I don't think we can sit  
16 tomorrow, but the better news is we will be back,  
17 I think, at 10.00 am on Monday.

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I'm very grateful that you have  
19 stayed late today. I know it's been a very long day.  
20 I do really appreciate your evidence, so thank you very  
21 much for coming today, and I will see you Monday at  
22 10.00 am.

23 (The witness withdrew)

24 (5.32 pm)

25 (The hearing was adjourned to

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1 Monday, 21 March 2022 at 10.00 am)

2

3

4 I N D E X

5

6 MR STEWART MICHAEL POVEY-MEIER .....1

7 (sworn)

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9 Examination by MR ERDUNAST .....1

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