

## Summary of Interview with Ms Vanessa Smith on 24 January 2018

Start: 11:11 hrs

End: 11:39 hrs

Present on telephone:

Helen Wilkinson, Investigating Officer, Professional Standards Unit

Vanessa Smith, Immigration Enforcement, Brook House

The interview took place to clarify some points in the two witness statements provided on 22/23 January 2018. Background to the investigation was given and she confirmed that she consented to the interview being digitally recorded.

Ms Smith had been at Brook House for 3-4 years. She was an Engagement Officer and this was dealing with detainees and serving and explaining paperwork from their caseworkers and talking to the detainees about their immigration status.

She had met with Mr [D687] to give him his monthly report, a report that explains what has been happening with his immigration case since the last report. He was frustrated about being detained. After he had made the comment 'he will only go back to Somalia in a body bag...he had started to write a suicide note. He is going to give it a week and if things stay the same he will do something.' She explained to him about the immigration process and how long it might take to try and calm him down but had still remained worried and notified G4S managers and the immigration manager. She had felt he was just frustrated and said these things.

Ms Smith said that detainees would say things like this out of frustration. She would assess the comment by looking at the body language and deciding if they really meant the comment or not. If they were shaking and of low mood she would open an ACDT. She could not recall Mr [D687]'s actions that day but if it had been serious she would have opened an ACDT straight away. She thought he was just saying it through frustration so she had told G4S and Immigration managers and G4S spoke to him. Ms Smith said that this conversation would take place and she would not have been present. They did not put him on an ACDT so she assumed Mr [D687] had calmed down. She could not remember the feedback from G4S. She could not remember if she had emailed the caseworker as well as put the note on CID.

She said that if Mr [D687] had said these comments after receiving removal directions and not just a detention / immigration update, then she would have been more concerned he would do something to prevent his removal. Ms Smith would read this before serving this so she knew what was included in the update. Mr [D687] had been allocated to her and she would see him for anything when on duty to build up rapport with the detainee.

Ms Smith said that a lot of self harm threats were more frustration with the process and they would refer them to assistance i.e. solicitors and welfare groups and try and explain the immigration processes. She said that she would make an assessment whether or not to open an ACDT.

She had had contractor training on ACDTs in 2016/17. It lasted a couple of hours and was classroom training about when to open an ACDT and how to assess whether or not to open one. It suggested that once a threat was received the officer would then make an assessment if the person would carry that through or not. That would determine if an ACDT should be open. She would send details of this. This was not refreshed regularly. Ms Smith could not remember what her thoughts had been when she had seen that the drug abuse team had opened an ACDT a week later.

Ms Smith had not informed healthcare of the threat because "he was already on their radar regarding the drug taking." The G4S managers would have referred him to healthcare if they thought he needed to see them.

In response to what would have happened if Mr [D687] had followed through on his threat and she had not taken him seriously, Ms Smith said "I did my bit by referring him to the G4S managers to make the decision whether it was required or not. If at that point they had said to do it I would have opened an ACDT." She had not been overly concerned but had referred it to the G4S managers for their assessment.

Ms Smith said the DSO on ACDTs had changed recently and was being updated because of the pre-departure teams. She was aware the 2008 DSO was there. She would ask for manager's advice before referring to the DSO.

In response to how she would treat future self harm threats after her experience with Mr [D687], Ms Smith said she would continue with the same process. If they were shaken up and low mood and she thought they meant it she would open an ACDT. If she was unsure she would raise with G4S and immigration managers. Ms Smith said there was nothing that could be changed to assist in her role. The managers were there as support.

Ms Smith was to send in ACDT training details and any emails she sent to the caseworker. She asked for a copy of her written summary. She was happy with the conduct of the interview.