



Detention & Escorting Services

Shaw Programme Board

10 January 2019

Verita (Lampard) report on Brook House

Actions requested:

The group is asked to:

- Note the key points and themes of the Lampard report on Brook House;
- Note the recommendations from the report intended for the Home Office and how we intend to respond
- Note our approach to continued engagement with G4S on their response to this report and progress against their own post Panorama action plan

Introduction

G4S commissioned Kate Lampard CBE of Verita consulting to undertake an investigation into behaviours and operational practices at Brook House IRC as part of their Panorama action plan. Terms of reference were agreed with the Home Office in advance. Kate Lampard previously undertook a similar investigation into Yarl's Wood on behalf of Serco.

Work on the investigation commenced in November 2017 and concluded in April 2017. G4S provided Stephen Kershaw and Alan Gibson access to a redacted copy of the report at their offices on 21 September but a copy of the report was not provided to the Home Office until the day before publication on 4 December. Media coverage of the publication was limited and relatively balanced.

The report is 284 pages long and contains 52 recommendations 5 of which are aimed at the Home Office.

Summary of Verita Report

There are three broad, recurring and interlinked themes throughout this report to which many of the issues identified and criticisms made can be traced back: management approach and style; staff training, capability and confidence; and, staffing levels. These issues are, on the whole, for G4S to resolve but there is criticism of the way in which the Home Office manages the contract and an assertion that neither G4S nor the Home Office have taken appropriate action to address issues which have been apparent for some time.

G4S senior management at Brook House are portrayed as detached, out of touch and largely invisible. The approach of some was heavy handed, lacking in empathy and unlikely to encourage staff to raise concerns. This perception of senior managers led to staff relying extensively on support from colleagues which allowed particular assertive and confident individuals to have undue influence. Such an environment was not conducive to the operation of an effective whistleblowing policy.

Quality and appropriateness of training is criticised for not being tailored to the IRC and for the way it is delivered and a lack of acclimatisation of new recruits (leading to high staff turnover). There are issues identified about the experience, capability and confidence of staff and managers, how this undermined performance and outcomes for detainees, but also provided an environment in which confident and assertive DCOs held sway.

Concerns about low staffing levels and high levels of staff churn are pervasive throughout the report and directly contribute to a wide range of other issues such as availability of activities and detainee engagement.

The report comments that the Home Office on-site team were driven by the need to service immigration removal processes and that our contract monitoring was focussed on financial penalties. The report comments that the Home Office should take greater responsibility than we appear to have done in the past for monitoring the overall experience of detainees. This comment has not however been included as a formal recommendation. Both G4S and Home Office performance management and assurance functions are criticised for not having focussed sufficiently on some of the issues identified, issues which the report says have been apparent for some time.

The Recommendations

There are 52 recommendations under seven broad headings. G4S have recently shared their internal response (attached at Annex A) indicating that they have accepted all of the recommendations. They are showing 40 as having been completed, with the other 12 either in-progress or under consideration.

At face value their response appears appropriate although lacking in dates for actions that remain outstanding. As part of the recent contract extension, G4S have reduced the DCO working week to 40 hours, increased staffing numbers and continue to recruit new staff. They have also taken steps to address the management issues; most significantly by the appointment of a highly experienced senior manager and former governing governor from HMPPS, Phil Wragg, as Centre Manager. Other operational management changes are likely to follow shortly and it is evident that Mr Wragg has been appointed to drive change in the Gatwick estate. With the announced departures of Peter Needen, Jerry Petherick and Paul Kempster, G4S will have replaced the entire management chain who may be regarded as having presided over the Panorama events.

We will be working with G4S to ensure the changes they have committed to are embedded and timely progress is made on outstanding actions. We will do this, starting in January, alongside a stock take and challenge of the actions from the G4S post-Panorama action plan which they have reported as complete.

Wider implications

Staffing

Staffing levels (and associated costs) were a key driver in the postponement of the last Gatwick re-procurement and the two year extension awarded to G4S. This has been recognised as a critical issue for the coming Gatwick procurement and, for the first time, we are proposing, *inter alia*, to set a benchmark staffing profile for front line officers which gives a material increase in DCOs and DCMs on duty at any one time. In addition the quality:cost ratio for bid evaluation has been altered to put greater emphasis on quality.

This will drive cost up – initial modelling suggests this could add c35% to overall operating cost – however both DES and HO Commercial will work with suppliers during the negotiating procurement process to best-mitigate any cost increase.

Assurance

On assurance we have taken steps to separate the servicing of the immigration removal system from assurance of contract and service provision through the separation of these functions on site. This division between Detainee Engagement Teams and Compliance Teams is well established at Gatwick and Heathrow and will be rolled out to the three remaining IRCs in the New Year.

We have simultaneously reviewed our approach to assurance and are embedding a "Whole Centre" approach for our compliance teams. This has, at its heart, a shift in focus from assuring delivery of the contract (with its contractual performance measures and service credits) to holistically assuring the operation of the IRC. Contractual performance remains a key measure, not least because of our duty to manage public money effectively, but will now form part of a more blended approach. We will develop this approach during 2019, engaging with NHS and third sector providers and improving the availability of management information to further drive the focus on safety and reducing detainee vulnerability.

Handling

The Verita report was commissioned by the Divisional Chief Executive of G4S Care and Custody Services and as such publication was a matter for the supplier. However it was disappointing that IE was only given 24 hours notice of intended publication (and this came initially from Danny Shaw to HO Press Office). This is likely to be raised by Crown Commercial Services at their next meeting with G4S.

We are yet to formally brief Ministers on the report and G4S/HO response to the recommendations. In line with this paper DES will provide a summary for the Immigration Minister, setting out progress in meeting the recommendations and also our plans for the future stocktake.

Phil Riley
2 January 2019