

BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

First Witness Statement of Michelle Clare Brown

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 24th February 2022.

I, Michelle Clare Brown, of DPA
DPA will say as follows:

Introduction

1. I am a former G4S employee and Senior Manager. I worked for the company from 16th December 2008 until 20th May 2020, when the contract tender was then transferred from G4S to Serco. I remained with Serco for a further six month period in hope that things would improve under a new service provider, however, in October 2020 I handed in my resignation for my own mental wellbeing due to poor working conditions and witnessing of inappropriate behaviour and bullying. My last day of employment was the 20th November 2020.
2. Below is a summary of roles I covered during my employment –
 - Detainee Custody Manager - Oscar One/Oscar Two/Residential – Brook House – March 2009 – March 2011
 - Residential Manager – Tinsley House – March 2011 – 2012
 - Head of Care and Regimes – Brook and Tinsley House – 2012 – May 2016
 - Head of Safeguarding - Brook and Tinsley House – June 2016 – May 2017
 - Head of Security – Brook and Tinsley House – June 2017 – June 2019
 - Business Intelligence Manager - Brook and Tinsley House / Head of Security Brook and Tinsley House – *simultaneous role* - March 2019 – June 2019
 - Business Intelligence Manager – Brook and Tinsley House – June 2019 – December 2019
 - Head of Residential and Regimes – 2020 – left 26th November 2020

Witness Name: Michelle Brown
Statement No: One
Exhibits: None

Contract Review Meetings) as well as Quarterly Contract Review Meetings and via Part C's.

98. I have read the SMT meeting minutes dated 23rd August 2016 (CJS000462) referencing Ben Saunders suggestion of a weekly performance meeting to manage penalties and mitigation so it can be submitted to the Home Office in time. From my perspective, I always provided mitigation / or no mitigation in the event of any contractual failures identified in my area within adequate time, therefore, I did not feel the need for the creation of another meeting for the sake it and the individuals that did not respond or provide information for their areas should be addressed independently.

I do recall that weekly meetings were implemented between Steve Skitt and the Home Office. I am aware of this because the Home Office regularly approached me for information as they did not feel the meetings were productive.

99. I can confirm that during the relevant period, I declared penalty points for my area, this could be for failing to present a Detainee to escorts for transfer or flight. If a Detainee was refusing to transfer or leave the Centre and the escorting crew were not prepared to accept the Detainee under restraint or deemed not suitable, then the use of force for G4S would not be justified and was therefore deemed as a "failure to release".

In addition, there were circumstances whereby Detainees would not be presented to the Home Office for legal visits within the specified time. The contract stipulated that upon request from the Home Office to see a Detainee, G4S were required to present the individual at legal visits within 15 minutes – this did not always occur and G4S would regularly declare this and provide information regarding the circumstances for Home Office to determine if a penalty award was warranted. For example, if a Detainee refused to attend and G4S had made reasonable attempts then this would be deemed a failure but mitigated. There were occasions whereby, there was no mitigation and I would declare this also. The failure to present was an easy element of the contract for the Home Office to monitor and focus on as it was relating to their work and was time bound to measure against.

100. In terms of steps that I took to ensure staff complied with the contract, I met with every Functional Head to talk through their contractual requirements, I created a matrix reporting system for DCMs and Functional Heads to demonstrate delivery and compliance.

I would say there was a desire to mitigate performance points, however from my own perspective, I was open and honest and accepted if there was a failure and offer no mitigation – which is demonstrated in the performance table in CJS004584. I believe this gave me credibility with the Home Office in terms of being open and honest in failure of service as opposed to trying to blag it. Upon taking on the role of Business Intelligence Manager in 2019, I was pressured not