

BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

First Witness Statement of Ben Saunders

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 3 November 2021.

I, Ben Saunders, will say as follows:

1. I provide this statement with the benefit of seeing the documents that were subsequently disclosed to me by the Inquiry. Having left G4S in 2017, I have had no access to any documents from G4S. It appears from the documents disclosed to me that there may be other documents of relevance that I no longer have access to. In the course of preparing this statement within the time available, I have tried to answer the questions asked of me as fully as possible to the best of my ability and recollections.
2. I qualified as a social worker and worked for West Sussex County Council for approximately 10 years, in Children's Services within both secure and community children's homes. I left West Sussex County Council and joined G4S in 2002. I remained in Children's Services and went to work at Medway Secure Training Centre (STC) in Kent. My appointment formed part of a new management team at the STC following a management reorganisation after a period of disruption and instability. I spent a total of 10 years at Medway STC, approximately 5 of those years as Centre Director.
3. In 2012, an opportunity arose within G4S and I moved from Children's Services to Custodial and Detention Services to take on the role of Centre Director for the

1

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
Statement No: [INSERT]
Exhibits: [INSERT]

- Juls Williams - as Residential Manager at Brook House, he had quite a large area of responsibility managing all issues of a residential nature. There were some things he did well. He could also become quite defensive and abrupt and there was tendency for him to be more critical rather than giving praise.
- Caz Dance-Jones - she had been DCM for long time. She was respected and trusted, we had good a good working relationship.

167. Any complaints and/ or grievances from G4S members of staff, detained persons, Home Office, IMB, GDWG and/or other external organisations would be recorded and I am not confident I can recall with accuracy the detail.

SMT Performance

168. My expectation of SMT members was that they would perform in line with their responsibilities set out in their job descriptions, have clear understanding of the contract and their areas of responsibilities under the contract, how to manage effectively their areas of responsibility in line with policy and procedures including responding to audit findings and lessons learned, and to carry out their responsibilities with the professionalism, compassion, respect and other leadership qualities I have spoken to.

169. [VER000216 at paragraphs 239, 357, 364 to 365] On a day to day basis, Steve Skitt and his team were responsible for operations in Brook House. The Duty Director would also have daily operational responsibility with the Operations Managers. Ultimately, I had overarching responsibility as Centre Director.

170. [CJS000503, CJS001567; CJS001496 see pages 4, 8, 12 to 13, 17 and 20] There were a number of IT issues that meant detained persons were unable to access the internet. The provision of internet access was important to detained persons for their communications. We would typically have incurred performance penalties

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