

## **BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY**

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### **Witness Statement of Stephen Webb**

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I provide this statement in response to two requests under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 15 June 2021 and 8 November 2021 respectively.

I, Stephen Webb will say as follows:

1. I make this witness statement pursuant to a Rule 9 request dated 15 June 2021 and a second request dated 8 November 2021. I attempted to provide the Inquiry with a draft witness statement on 21 November 2021 but I acknowledge that my draft was not in the correct format and did not cover all of the matters I was asked to cover.
2. On 16 February 2022 I was served with a Notice pursuant to Section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005 and on 17 February 2022, I instructed solicitors to assist me with the preparation of this statement.
3. I would like to note that my delay in responding fully to the Inquiry's requests for evidence is predominantly due to my lack of a computer and lack of IT skills and that no discourtesy toward the Inquiry, the Chair or its core participants was intended.
4. I would also like to make clear that over 100 documents have been transferred to my solicitors since I instructed them; the Inquiry were previously unable to send these documents to me because I do not have computer access. Owing to the short amount of time between my solicitors being instructed and the deadline for providing this statement, my solicitors have been unable to provide me with hard copies of the documents. In consequence, where I discuss documents in this statement then I rely upon the descriptions of those documents given to me by my solicitor.

### Evidence

5. Before I begin to address the questions asked of me by the Inquiry, I must first set out that following the end of my time working for G4S, I experienced severe mental health difficulties, I was diagnosed with [Sensitive/Irrelevant] and spent a considerable amount of time on medication and in counselling. With the help of medication, counselling, and the support of my family, I am now much better but during my counselling, I put an enormous effort into forgetting my time working for G4S; one of the reasons that I now feel much better is that I was largely successful in achieving this.
6. One of the ways in which I worked to forget my time at Brook House was to dispose of anything I had which related to the place such as my contract of employment and any training materials I was given.
7. In consequence, I have very little independent memory and no independent record of anything to do with Brook House and in making this statement, I have been entirely dependent upon the documents made available to me by the Inquiry.

### Background and Employment

8. I was originally employed by G4S (in or around 2010) as a DCO at Cedars which was a specialist IRDC designed for families; prior to this, I had worked as a HGV driver. I was attracted to the position because I needed a job, the money was ok and I had a genuine interest, it seemed as though it would be a position where you could help people and, at Cedars, it was.
9. Cedars was closed down and I was promoted to a DCM and told that the only available position was at Brook House. I would have preferred to go to Tinsley House because it was closer to the work done at Cedars but this was not an option.

10. I was made a Control and Restraint (“C&R”) instructor whilst I worked at Brook House; I don’t recall the dates that I held this role, but this will presumably be a matter of record for G4S.
11. I do not now recall what specific training I received but I presume it would have been standard training which all C&R instructors received and would again, be a matter of record which G4S may be able to assist with. Of what I do recall, I believe that there was an assessment day conducted by the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG) followed by a two-week training course involving classroom and practical modules.
12. The role of a C&R instructor involved, as may be understood from the description, instructing DCOs and DCMs in control and restraint techniques; this would be done both during a new officers’ induction training and then as refresher training periodically (I believe annually) I think that these refresher courses were a minimum of 7 hours in length.
13. My training as a C&R instructor would also be refreshed annually with the NTRG but I do not recall if I would have had to undergo annual C&R training in the same way as any other DCO or DCM in addition. The refreshers with the NTRG took place at either Kiddlington or Doncaster.
14. My employment with G4S concluded in September 2017 following the airing of the Panorama programme. Following an investigation by G4S, I was issued with a written warning, but the Home Office revoked my DCO certification and therefore I was dismissed.
15. I did initially consider an appeal against the Home Office’s decision but did not pursue one because I had come to realise that I was struggling with mental health difficulties and that being in Brook House and doing the DCM job was the cause. I am now employed in an entirely different sector which has no relevance to my previous roles with G4S nor to the Inquiry’s terms of reference.
16. I do not recall the G4S recruitment process, but I don’t recall feeling ill equipped to work at Cedars which had a calm environment. If the same induction course was used

for those starting at Brook House, Tinsley and Cedars then I do not see how the training could have prepared people for working at Brook House because it was a tremendously different environment to Cedars.

### Culture

17. What recollection I have of Brook House was simply, that it was toxic. It was dangerous, you were always on alert, it was understaffed which contributed to these feelings and it was enormously stressful.
18. Problems at Brook House worsened over time as (I believe) more time-served foreign national offenders (TSFNOs) were brought to Brook House and the conditions became more cramped when a third bed was installed to a number of the rooms.
19. Prior to the introduction of the third beds, I warned that it would cause chaos and that staff did not have the training or resources to deal with three detainees in a room – particularly in situations where uses of force might be required.
20. I believe staff morale was generally low because of the environment I set out above; I have already set out the damage done to my own mental health through working in Brook House; I would not be surprised to hear that other DCOs and DCMs suffered adversely with mental health problems and I would certainly not be surprised to learn that detained people (particularly those who were not TSFNOs) suffered a deterioration in their mental health.
21. I do not believe that there was a culture amongst the DCOs and DCMs which encouraged the mistreatment of detained people and I do not believe that there was a racist, xenophobic or violent culture amongst officers generally. I think that the incidents portrayed in the Panorama programme are a product of the relentless stress and horrors officers had to deal with on a daily basis.
22. I also believe that the vast majority of officers tried to get on with and help detained people – on a practical level, there was no other choice; officers were so vastly

outnumbered by detained people that if you didn't get on with the majority, you would have lost any semblance of control over the centre in moments.

23. As to G4S, they are a private company contracted to run a detention centre; it should hardly come as a surprise that they would seek to maximise the profit they could make and the most obvious manifestation of this was the constantly low levels of staff at Brook House.
24. I do not recall being aware of any incidents where detained people were mistreated, nor do I recall any time any person raised concerns about the treatment of detained people with me.

### General Training

25. I do not recall the training I undertook before starting at Cedars beyond the fact that there was a classroom element and a practical element; I assume that this would have been the same training that other DCOs received including those posted to Brook House from the beginning of their employment.
26. From the documents provided, I have no reason to believe that I did not undertake an eight-week training course which involved one week of control and restraint training and two weeks of shadowing qualified DCOs. I do not recall the dates during which I would have participated in this training but it would have been before I began work as a DCO.
27. Because I worked first at Cedars, it is hard for me to offer an opinion on whether the training given prepared people for work at Brook House; I was able to come to Brook House with my experience from Cedars. I think that training is always a good thing but I think that the problems with Brook House are beyond the help of training. It is the way that three detainees are put in a room designed for one person and the mixing of hardened criminals with people who have done nothing more than overstayed their visa which are the root of many of the problems.

28. Beyond the training which is given, something on mental health awareness would be helpful (for both yourself and for detained people), stress coping techniques for staff might also be useful.
29. I believe that the only refresher training I attended was in relation to C&R but I have no clear recollection and may be mistaken on this point. I do not recall receiving any specific additional training when I became a DCM and it follows, I do not recall receiving any refresher training in this regard.
30. I believe that personal protection training and use of force training would have formed part of the same one-week module of the initial training course; the distinction between the two being that personal protection would teach techniques to defend yourself if attacked whereas use of force training dealt with techniques such as holds which could be used to draw compliance from or control over a detained person.
31. I am unable to say (even roughly) when I undertook initial and refresher training in personal protection and use of force, but I presume G4S will hold records; I have already noted that I think C&R refreshers were given annually.

#### *The Role of a DCM*

32. I have been provided with a copy of the job description of a DCM (CJS004296) and to the best of my recollection, it appears an accurate description of the role. I have been specifically asked about the role of a DCM during the ACDT process and my only recollection is that DCMs were required to carry out ACDT reviews daily and case manage ACDT cases.
33. ACDT was the system employed to monitor detained people who were at risk of harming themselves and involved DCMs, DCOs, the Home Office, healthcare and possibly others. An ACDT was opened in relation to a detained person if there was a concern about their welfare and remained open until the concern had been resolved.

34. The ACDT process was used frequently during my time at Brook House and to the best of my recollection, it was an effective way of monitoring the welfare of people who might be at increased risk.
35. I am also asked about the SLP process which I am advised stood for Supported Living Plan but I have no recollection of this process or its use, unfortunately.
36. DCMs along with other staff, played a role in attempting to prevent the flow of drugs into Brook House. I do not now recall what steps were taken in an attempt to prevent drugs entering Brook House beyond perhaps, searches around visiting times but I do recall that the problem was not solved during my time there.
37. I do also recall that trying to stop drugs from entering Brook House seemed an impossible task and that if one route was closed down, another would open up. I feel confident that no DCO or DCM would ever have been involved in bringing drugs into Brook House; officers' lives were miserable in large part through having to deal with drug misuse and I don't believe that anybody in a detainee-facing role would ever have exacerbated this problem.

#### Disciplinary Processes

38. I do not recall being involved in a disciplinary process which related to other DCOs or DCMS.
39. The only disciplinary process I was involved in whilst employed at Brook House was my own in September 2017; I was suspended on 5 September 2017 following the airing of the Panorama programme (CJS000799). I had originally been redeployed following G4S being warned about the programme by the BBC before it was aired but following the broadcast this was changed to a suspension (CJS0073364 and CJS0072836).
40. From the documents made available to me, I was suspended for just over two months before a meeting took place at a hotel on 9 November with Steve Skitt and Michelle Fernandes; the outcome of the meeting is recorded in a letter from Steve Skitt dated 15 November 2017 (CJS0072868). G4S initially issued me with a final written warning as

a result of their disciplinary investigation but the Home Office had also suspended my DCO certification and, on 3 November, took the decision to revoke my certification; this meant that G4S had no option but to dismiss me.

41. As I mentioned previously, I did initially consider appealing the Home Office's decision but for the sake of my own health, ultimately decided that I did not wish to continue working at Brook House in any event. It will be noted from Steve Skitt's letter of 15 November that, had an appeal to the Home Office succeeded, G4S were prepared to reverse my dismissal.

42. I do not recall ever being involved in any grievance investigations or processes.

### Staffing Levels

43. I have already set out that, in my opinion, staffing levels at Brook House were insufficient. There was simply no time to carry out all of your duties and give proper care to detained people. This inevitably led to frustrations on the part of detainees, and I am sure, in some instances at least, contributed to incidents of aggression.

44. Staffing levels together with a general lack of sports and activities equipment would also have meant that there weren't as many activities for detained people as there perhaps could have been and this was another thing which would have contributed to their frustrations.

45. The low staffing levels were the main contributor to the stress experienced by staff; they also contributed, in my opinion, to the feeling amongst officers that you were constantly on edge and alert.

46. I don't recall specific incidences of raising concerns about staffing levels but I'm sure that I and others did do so. I don't recall what responses I received but clearly, nothing changed about the staffing levels.

### Treatment of Individuals and uses of force

47. I have been asked to comment on the Immigration Rule 35 process and how easy it was for detained people to access it and how swiftly it progressed. I do not recall the process in any detail and I do not recall being involved in it; this may have been a process that was led by healthcare since I am advised that it related to detained people who claimed to have been (or were suspected of having been) tortured or whose continued detention was injurious to their health.
48. Turning to uses of force, I was involved in many use of force incidents both planned and unplanned. I think the C&R instructors were always assigned to planned incidents if they were on shift and added to this, there were DCOs and DCMs who were reluctant to become involved in uses of force; this meant that the bulk of responsibility for this type of work tended to fall to a regular group of people. That is to say that nobody relished the prospect of engaging in a use of force but it was sometimes necessary and more often than not, the burden of carrying it out fell on the same people.
49. I do not recall witnessing any use of force incident that I thought was excessive or unwarranted and a significant proportion had the purpose of protecting detained people from harm (usually from causing harm to themselves.)
50. It has to be borne in mind that I was a C&R instructor so perhaps colleagues were more likely to work to the letter of their training when I was present but then I also do not recall ever hearing of excessive or unwarranted uses of force when I was not present.
51. To the best of my recollection I do not think that control and restraint techniques were used excessively at Brook House; I think that they were essential techniques required to gain control over situations which posed risk to both detained people and officers. Save in circumstances where there was an immediate risk to safety, verbal reasoning would always be the first resort and force was only used when there wasn't another option.
52. I am referred to a series of 83 use of force review reports completed by me between July and August 2017 (CJS000901; CJS000902; and CJS000903). I have no recollection of the incidents to which they relate.

53. I do not recall receiving any specific training on the completion of these forms or what policies governed their use; I presume that this will be a matter of record with which G4S may be able to assist. I also do not recall what investigations would be undertaken before the completion of these forms though I presume I must have established that the components of the file were present in order that I could check the relevant boxes, I must also have reviewed the evidence in order to be able to complete the review outcome section of the forms.
54. I have no memory of the specific follow up processes but in general, I would have referred any problems to the SMT.
55. I have no memory whatsoever of who attended the specific meetings in the 83 review documents to which I have been referred. I am unable to remember even generally who would have been involved. I do not hold any minutes or records of these meetings, nor would I ever have removed any document from Brook House. I only ever had training materials and documents personal to me from G4S in my own possession and I have disposed of all of these.
56. I am also referred to CJS0005530 and again, to the first page of CJS000901 and asked why there were delays between use of force incidents and their corresponding review meetings and whether there were any advantages or disadvantages to such an approach. I can only answer this question in general terms but there might be a number of reasons why there is a delay between an incident and its review ranging from staff shortages and sickness to differing shift patterns. I don't recall any particular advantage or disadvantage to their being any delay between incident and review and I am not sure I would characterise these delays as an 'approach' they were most likely a consequence of needing to arrange a time when a group of people could be together.
57. I am next referred to a series of documents where it is said that I was involved in use of force incidents and also conducted the review of those incidents. The first series of documents are at CJS005552\_12-14 and CJS000901\_19. I do not recall the incidents and it is not clear to me that the documents relate to the same incident but I presume that if they do, there was nothing in the policies to prevent me from carrying out both

roles; I am confident that I would have only done this in circumstances where the relevant policies and procedures permitted me to do so.

60. I am next referred to CJS005533\_4-6 which is a use of force report completed by me and CJS000902\_7 which appears to be the corresponding review meeting form also completed by me. If the two documents are related, then my comments are as per the above. The same is true of any relationship between CJS005643\_27-31 and CJS000903\_11; CJS005616\_25-27 and CJS000902\_12; CJS00549 and CJS00902\_3; and CJS005619\_7-9 and CJS000903\_16.
62. I was then asked to review a use of force report completed by me on 3 August 2017 (CJS005587) and asked why I was not involved in the subsequent review meeting; I have not been referred to any document which shows that I was not involved in the review meeting. I do not recall the incident and do not recall why I was not (if I was not) involved in the subsequent review meeting.
63. I am next referred to 12 examples of me being recorded as using or authorising the use of force on a detained person; I am asked if this list is exhaustive or whether there were other examples. I was regularly involved in control and restraint incidents and I have no idea how many times I used force during the Inquiry's Relevant Period. I am confident however, that I would have completed the requisite reports on each and every occasion and therefore it ought to be possible from the documents available to the Inquiry to determine precisely how many use of force incidents I was involved in.
64. Whenever I used force or authorised the use of force, it would only be because it was necessary, reasonable and proportionate to do so and the minimum amount of force would have been used in order to achieve the desired objective. I would always have been guided in decisions about the use of force by my training and the policies and procedures in place at the time. I would also note that on many occasions the decision to use force and how much force to use was made in a split second to prevent injury; I believe that all officers make the best decision that they are able to under those conditions – being able to review a situation with the benefit of hindsight might sometimes result in a different decision being made but that is why the incident review

meetings included a section about whether lessons needed to be learned from any particular incident.

65. I do not recall any use of force incident that was disproportionate because to me, that means that the decision taken in the heat of the moment was unreasonable. I am sure the Inquiry may identify examples where better decisions could have been taken but I do not recall any incidents where the decisions taken in the heat of the moment were unreasonable.
66. After a use of force incident, detained people would be assessed by healthcare and monitored by officers if necessary to the best of my recollection.
67. I am then asked to describe the completion of the DCF-2 form and accompanying documents and how long after an incident they ought to be completed. I do not recall whether there were specific timetables but, to the best of my recollection, as soon as possible following an incident. This doesn't necessarily mean immediately afterward as an officer might be immediately called to something more pressing; I would have thought that usually, it ought to be completed on the same day as the incident, before their shift finished. I don't recall witnesses discussing their accounts with one and other, I do not believe there was ever any element of collusion in the preparation of statements though and certainly no sense of people 'getting their stories straight'.
68. I am next referred to CJS005135 which deals with a concern about the arts and crafts teacher being followed and then prevented from passing through a door by a detained person. The document contains an email from Nick Jones who was the security collator, to Juls Williams noting that he has asked me to give the teacher some C&R training. I do not recall this incident, I do not recall giving any instruction to the teacher and I do not recall giving any informal C&R instruction to any other person. My only recollection is that teachers were instructed to press a panic button if they were in difficulty.

### Individual Welfare

69. In relation to welfare training, I am told that the introduction training plan (CJS006085) shows that there is a period of first aid training, an introduction to mental health and a section relating to safeguarding.
70. I have no reason to suspect that I did not undertake this training but I have no recollection of the mental health or safeguarding components. I do not believe that there was any refresher training in relation to mental health or safeguarding. As I have said earlier in this statement, I believe that greater and more regular mental health training would have been helpful – not just for an officer's understanding of detained people but also for an awareness of their own mental health.
71. Insofar as I can recall, the only involvement I would have had with the mental health of detainees would have been through the ACDT process.
72. I do not recall any difficulties in detained people accessing the healthcare team or medical care generally whether that be in relation to their physical or mental health.
73. For many of the detained people, one of the major impacts on their mental health was drug use, either through use of the drugs themselves or from having to witness other people acting under the influence of those drugs which, of itself, could often be terrifying.
74. I am not sure what (if any) drug rehabilitation or support services were available, and I would imagine that this was an area led by healthcare.
75. Where a detained person's mental health did break down to such an extent that they harmed themselves or were at risk of doing so, the ACDT process was used. I do not recall any incident where the ACDT process was not adhered to correctly. If there was a high level of risk, then the person may be moved to E-Wing so that they could be monitored continuously.
76. Generally, I do not recall having any concerns about the ACDT process – as it was a collaborative system involving different specialisms, I think it probably worked as well as it could to avoid detainees harming themselves. For some people on ACDT, the

regular or constant observations could prove to be an irritant and might worsen their mood for a period of time, but I do not understand what alternative there could be; if you don't observe the person then you leave them in their room knowing or suspecting that they might hurt themselves.

77. I am asked about food refusal policies; I do not recall the specific policies, but I have no reason to suspect that I did not follow whatever those policies were. I do recall that food refusal was, in some ways, a complicated issue because there were a number of reasons why detained people would not eat from the main eatery; chief amongst which was that the food was dreadful. Detained people had the option of purchasing food from the shop or cooking for themselves in the cultural kitchen so it may not always have been straightforward to know whether a detained person was refusing to eat or not. I am asked whether the food refusal policies at Brook House were adequate though as I cannot remember them, I can only add that I do not recall any detained person requiring medical attention as a result of malnutrition or lack of food.

78. I am next referred to CJS005871 and CJS005915 which is my letter to D157 in relation to a complaint he had made seeking to be permanently located on E-Wing and the notes of my interview with D157, respectively. D157 claimed to feel unsafe on the residential wings as other detained people were referring to him as a "crackhead" and a "pedo". I do not recall the incident or what action I took to ensure D157's safe being. A Request to be permanently located on E-Wing would, to the best of my recollection, have been rare. I have no concerns about how I dealt with this complaint from the documents made available to me; there were reasons beyond my control which meant it would have been impossible for D157 to reside on E-Wing permanently and I think that I have explained these reasons to him as sensitively as possible.

79. I am then referred to a series of Security Information Reports which detail violence and threats of violence perpetrated by detained people against both other detained people and staff. My recollection is that both forms of violence were very common, there was always an underlying threat of violence; every effort was made to protect detained people from violence and these Security Information Reports were one method; information about threats would be disseminated to the staff on the wings so that they

knew to be extra vigilant. At this distance of time, I do not know what policies would have being relevant to these situations.

### TSFNOs

80. I did not work on reception for TSFNO individuals.
81. I do not think my approach to TSFNOs generally was different to the approach I took with other detained individuals but if there was a planned control and restraint then a violent criminal record might have been one of the factors considered in the planning – it might make the use of PPE more likely for instance.
82. My impression was that more TSFNOs were sent to Brook House as time passed and that they could typically be more difficult to deal with than non-TSFNO detained people.
83. I think that the reason for this was that TSFNOs arrived directly from prison; they were used to a harsher, stricter environment with more controls (such as no access to mobile phones); they were also more likely to have been exposed to a culture of drug misuse. In comparison to a prison, I think that to many TSFNOs, Brook House was more like a holiday camp.

### Abuse of Individuals

84. I have already set out that I do not recall having any concerns that detained people were verbally or physically abused by staff at Brook House; I do not believe that I witnessed any such abuse.
85. I am advised that the inquiry holds footage which shows staff swearing about and sometimes at detained people. I have already referred to the extremely stressful environment under which officers worked and I did witness and indeed did myself, swear about detainees when they were not present. In the largest part, this was simply letting off steam and I think that what is important is that (to the best of my knowledge)

officers (including myself) acted correctly and then went to let off steam away from the detained people.

86. Where officers swear at detained people, this could be for a variety of reasons, the most usual being that it was simply the environment in Brook House that 'bad' language was the method of communication – where the detainees use this language, speaking to them in a similar way can be a way of gaining their acceptance, compliance and in some ways, respect.
87. An inmate might also be sworn at paradoxically, to defuse an escalating situation. If you can say something to shock an inmate who is becoming unreasonable or violent, then that momentary shock can give them pause for thought and cause them to calm down.
88. I do not consider that swearing with or at detainees in these circumstances amounts to verbal abuse; I did not ridicule or belittle or otherwise make fun of detainees maliciously and nor do I recall any other officer doing so and as such, I do not recall any verbal abuse of detained people.
89. I certainly do not recall any physical abuse of detainees; force was of course used when it was warranted but, within the confines of use of force policies, this does not amount to abuse.

### Complaints

90. In so far as I can remember, complaints could be made by detained people by completing a form and posting it into a locked box. I think this then went to the Home Office who I presume shared them with the SMT and who then in turn, allocated them to DCMs to investigate.
91. I do not recall what decided whether a complaint was investigated by a DCM or the PSU – I presume this would be up to the Home Office and I assume the PSU would be more likely to investigate allegations of staff misconduct.

92. I am asked for my opinion on the complaints process and whether it could be improved; I really cannot remember it or my involvement in investigating complaints so I don't feel able to offer an opinion.

93. I am next referred to a series of documents which concern complaints involving me:-

a) CJS002741 concerns a complaint made by D191 which included an allegation that I had used excessive force and caused pain to his thumb. I do not recall the incident but am confident that I never knowingly used excessive levels of force; I note that the Home Office investigations concludes that D191's allegations were not substantiated and the no officer had committed any disciplinary offence. I do not recall any further interactions with D191 and owing to my lack of recollection of the incident and D191's cipher, I am unable to identify who he was.

b) HOM002725 is a Home Office investigation report concerning allegations made by D687 that I was verbally and racially abusive towards him and used excessive force; I have no recollection of the incident and I know that I have never racially abused any person.

I note that page 13 of the report confirms that I was not present during the incident from the CCTV available and page 25 confirms that all of the officers who were present, confirmed that I was not there. It would therefore have been impossible for me to have verbally, racially, or physically abused the detained person.

I note that D687 alleges that I regularly called him a "prick" and told him to "fuck off back to your own country". I do not know who D687 is or what interaction I had with him during his time at Brook House, but I have not behaved in this way towards him or any other person. Given that the detainee was mistaken about my identity in the specific incident to which his complaint relates, it seems likely that if anyone actually said these things to him, it was someone other than me. I also note that at page 40 and 41 of the document, D687 is recorded as having entirely fabricated my attendance in order to bolster his claims of excessive use of force.

I do not recall the Home Office investigation into this incident nor being asked to participate in it (though I do not say that I was not asked). I cannot recall why, if I did receive a request, I did not participate though I note the date of the investigation and this was at a time when I was disillusioned with the Home Office as a result of their revocation of my DCO certification.

- c) TRN0000017 concerns an incident with D728 who I believe was being held on E-Wing for his own safety. It appears from the beginning of the transcript as though he is sticking something across the viewing panel, using his own faeces as an adhesive. D728 is requesting a shower and it has been explained to him by Charlie Francis that he can have one as soon as there are sufficient staff to take him for one. The exchange continues and it appears D728 continues to re-cover the viewing panel every time it is uncovered – at page seven, I say “help us and we’ll help you [...] dick us about and we’ll make your life a living fucking misery”. At page six of the transcript I am recorded as saying to Charlie Francis that I will “fucking punch the cunt”. I have no recollection of saying such a thing.

By page 15 of the transcript, it appears that D728 has calmed down and I give him a cigarette and by page 19, I tell him to come to me if he has any problems and I will sort them out.

I have no memory of this incident but I do not accept that this incident was a “verbal assault” on D728 – this was a frustrating situation which had been caused in no small part by Callum Tulley being more interested in getting something on film than actually doing his job. There should have been no need for me or Charlie Francis to be involved in this incident – all Callum had to do was observe D728 and remove any obstructions from the viewing panel as they were put up.

The transcript clearly shows me attempting to reason with D728 and ultimately, reconciling with him at the end of the transcript. I did not call the detainee a “cunt” or a “twat” within his earshot and these are examples of me blowing off steam with colleagues. I would clearly never have actually punched a detainee.

Further, it is clear from the transcript that we were understaffed and that a number of first responses were being called whilst we were trying to deal with D728 – this would have added to my stress.

I do not recall D728 or what other interactions I might have had with him.

d) CJS001558 appears to be a chronological record of incidents at Brook House, it is said at line 123 that I was aggressive toward D612 when he was leaving with Tascor. I have no idea who D612 is nor do I have any recollection of such an incident though I do not believe I would have shown aggression toward a detained person.

e) CJS001578 contains a complaint by D642 that I grabbed him by the neck; the subsequent Home Office investigation found no evidence that I assaulted the detainee nor that I subsequently denied him medical attention. The Home Office conclude that the use of force was reasonable and proportionate and that D642's version of events was not consistent with the body of evidence available to the investigation. I deny that I would have used excessive force and I would never have refused a detained person medical attention, particularly after a use of force incident.

I do not know who D642 is or what other interactions (if any) I had with him. Elsewhere in his complaint, D642 has alleged that he was subject to homophobic abuse by other officers; as I have said previously, I never saw any sort of abuse directed toward a detained person by staff based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or other defining characteristics.

94. I do not recall these complaints nor do I recall being made aware of any others.

95. I am next referred to VER000192 which appears to be someone's notes of the Panorama show which note, at page three, that I am said to have said "I've got no sympathy for him - if he dies, he dies". I don't recall the incident and am unable to confirm whether or not it was me who made this comment. I can only make a comment in general terms

that there was often a sense of frustration that you could reason with a detained person who had misused drugs, think you had gotten through to them and then within hours they would be back on spice.

96. I am then referred to a series of complaints that I was tasked with investigating and the Inquiry notes that in respect of at least some of these complaints, I was also the subject of a complaint made by the same detainee. I do not know whether it was usual practice for this to happen, I would simply have dealt with the complaints that were assigned to me. I have no recollection of the complaints made against me or the complaints I investigated but at all times I would have relied upon my training and relevant policies and procedures in investigating the complaints that I was tasked with.
97. I am next referred to CJS001546 which is a collection of papers concerning an allegation by D1747 that he was assaulted by DCO Murphy. At page five of the document, there is an email to me setting out that the police had investigated, found DCO Murphy to be at no fault whatsoever having reviewed CCTV footage and that D1747's complaint would not be upheld – I was asked to notify D1747. I have no reason to believe that I did not act upon the request made of me.
98. I do not know how often allegations of assault were made against officers (though my perception was fairly regularly) nor do I know what proportion of any such complaints were upheld (though my perception would be very few); these are presumably statistics which the Home Office would hold. It was not uncommon for detained people to make a complaint if an officer said "no" to them.

### General

99. I am referred to a series of Security Information Reports and which typically ask me to speak to a detained person about their behaviour or alert wing staff to a detainee's erratic behaviour. I have no reason to believe that I did not comply with the requests made of me but I have no recollection of them or how frequently I was asked to do this. I do not know what policies governed this process (if any), I was complying with directions given to me by the Security Department. I do not know what records were made or kept of these incidents and presume that any such records would have been the

responsibility of the Security Department. I do not personally hold any records whatsoever.

100. I am then referred to CJS004722 which is a further Security Information Report with information that D2144 had behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner toward an officer. I am asked by Daniel Robinson to speak to D2144 about his behaviour and to check whether he has any intention of harming himself. I agree to do so and say that I was thinking of using the Rule 40 process if D2144's behaviour persisted – I note that D2144 had a flight for the following day and say that this might “kill two birds with one stone”. I do not recall the incident nor whether I asked D2144 about any thoughts of self-harm though I presume I did act in compliance with the request made of me.

101. When I say that two birds might be killed with one stone, I mean that the net result of either the Rule 40 process or the detainee being placed on ACDT through an imminent intention to harm himself is that he will be moved to E-Wing and he is going to need to be moved to E-Wing in any event in preparation for his departure.

102. I am asked whether there were any changes at Brook House following the airing of the Panorama programme and whether any such changes were effective. I would never have known what changes were made or whether they were effective as I was suspended immediately after the broadcast and never returned.

103. I have then been given a list of 20 members of staff (including myself) who featured in the Panorama programme, and I am asked my opinion of their professional conduct, whether I ever witnessed any of them make derogatory remarks about detained people and whether I ever witnessed them verbally or physically abusing detained people.


104. I set out at the beginning of this statement that I had very little recollection of my time at Brook House and I have very little recollection of most of the people included in the list given to me. I have set out that I do not recall ever witnessing what I consider to be verbal or physical abuse at any time.

105. I have also set out that I and other members of staff would blow off steam away from detainees, and this might involve what might be considered to be the making of derogatory remarks. I'm sure those remarks wouldn't have been made if I knew I was being filmed but I also know that there was no malice behind them; what is important in my opinion is the actions that I and other officers took rather than the thoughts we expressed in what we thought was a private setting.

106. For the avoidance of any doubt, I do not recall any specific incident of any of the 19 people put to me making derogatory remarks about a detained person.

107. Finally, I am asked what changes I think could be made to Brook House to improve the health, safety, and welfare of detained people. I have very little to offer beyond the obvious of increasing staffing levels. I think it is the concept rather than the execution that is problematic because if you lock people in what is effectively a prison for an indefinite amount of time then ultimately, however good the care is, they are going to suffer, particularly in respect of their mental health.

108. I have nothing else to add which might help the Inquiry with its work.

| <b><u>Statement of Truth</u></b>   |   |
|--|---|
| I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth. |   |
| I am content for this witness statement to form part of the evidence before the Brook House Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.  |   |
| Name   | Steven Webb   |
| Signature  |  |
| Date   | 21 February 2021  |