

Confidential

Independent Investigation into Brook House

Monday, 5 March 2018

**Interview with
Sarah Newland
Head of Tinsley House**

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157. A. No, because they are not having any direct contact with the detainees, which is the concern from the Home Office, if they haven't undergone the DBS checks, that someone who shouldn't be in this environment.
158. Ms Lampard: Tell me about the recruitment and retention issues at Brook House in so far as they have had a knock-on effect at Tinsley. Let me just add a bit of colour to that. There is a suggestion from John Kench that in Ben Saunders' day, anyway, Ben would press John to take staff from Tinsley House to Brook House because the fine regime in relation to Tinsley House is less onerous than it is in relation to Brook House.
159. A. Yes, that's true.
160. Q. Do you want to explain some of that?
161. A. Yes. Commercially it is better to have staffing penalties at Tinsley because, frankly, it costs less. A hundred points at Tinsley is, I think, a half to a third of what it would be at Brook.
162. Q. In managing Tinsley House, which is what you do, how often do you find that you are, as it were, compromised or under-staffed because you have had to service Brook House as well?
163. A. It has been daily. Not now, because we are quarantine, so they are not allowed to cross-deploy, which is interesting because they seem to be coping without us.
164. Q. Who's in quarantine? You are in quarantine, or Brook House?
165. A. Both sites have flu, so we are not allowed to cross-deploy because our timelines are different. With flu you have to be five days clear of the last case that presents before you can come out of quarantine, so you have to effectively keep your staff teams separate, otherwise you are blurring your timelines. We have had flu for probably three weeks now, and we haven't been routinely cross-deploying. We have had Tinsley staff do hospital escorts for detainees out of Brook who are symptom-free of flu to assist, but we haven't been down in the centre and staff here have enjoyed it.
166. Q. They may have been managing without you at Brook House, but has it had a noticeable effect here on how many people are actually on the wings now?
167. A. No, the staffing levels appear to have been fine at Brook despite the fact that Tinsley hasn't been able to assist, so there have still been three Officers and a Manager per wing.
168. Q. Is it your sense that Lee's plan to have more staff in is going to land in April, or do you think it is at risk?
169. A. I think it is at risk because I think attrition continues to be high. I think there was a hope that as staffing levels stabilised that people would feel more settled, less vulnerable, but attrition is still high and I go back to my point about the salary. I think people think, I could probably earn roughly the same just x-raying bags at Gatwick. Why would I want to take the grief of a 13½-hour shift in Brook House? The quarantine has also helped at Brook, because the numbers are much lower there than they would routinely be, so they are down below 250, which for a centre that normally holds around 450, of course, that's going to feel much quieter. There are less detainees, so Brook has been, I think, more settled because of its own flu, not just because of everyone else's.

267. A. Yes.
268. Q. Ben, we get the impression was good at managing that. He was good at doing bits that mattered in terms of overall G4S performance. Getting people out of the door, accepting to take people in, prepared to put up more beds at the expense of the quality of the service that was being provided. Managing upwards, do you think that that is something that is an issue within G4S wider than just what we think we've heard about Brook House?
269. A. Yes.
270. Q. You do?
271. A. Yes.
272. Mr Marsden: Just going back to the contract and the director's role in it. This is a question: it is the director's role to make it profitable?
273. A. Yes.
274. Q. Describe the pressures around that. What does that result in in terms of behaviours? Say here, to make the Brook House/Tinsley contracts profitable, what do you do? I can see what you do, but I am just interested.
275. A. You would agree with aggressive staff profiling. You would agree with running the staff vacancies. There are a couple of contracts within C&DS that are onerous, so there's pressure on those that aren't to make more to buoy them up so that the business unit as a whole fares okay.
276. Q. The pressure would be that you might have a profile that says three, four on a wing and a DCM, but you might in order to attain the profit, say, "we will run it at two."
277. A. I know that was what Nathan Ward was accusing and I did chuckle because I know that he was in a room when those discussions have happened in the past. To point the finger was a bit hypocritical, but it was factually accurate. Our biggest cost as a people business is staff, and if you aren't employing them, then that –
278. Q. Therefore, in constructing the bid there is no profit built in?
279. A. There is, but it is small.
280. Ms Lampard: Is this one of the more onerous contracts?
281. A. No.
282. Mr Marsden: A director would have in his or her mind all the time - how do I make this profitable?
283. A. Yes, so commercial pressure is always there.
284. Q. That would manifest itself at the monthly trading review?
285. A. Yes.
286. Q. In between?
287. A. We start with the finances.
288. Q. Yes.
289. A. You would have an exec summary, and then the first functional chunk would be money.