



**Joe Plomin**  
Producer Director  
BBC Panorama  
Zone D, Floor 4  
BBC New Broadcasting House  
Portland Place  
London. W1A 1AA  
**Tel:**

**Email:**

**Peter Neden**  
G4S Regional President UK and Ireland

CC:  
**Nigel Fairbrass**  
Public relations officer (G4S)  
 /

**Matthew Magee**  
Public relations officer (G4S)  
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**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons**

**Home Office**

24<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Dear Mr Neden,

We have been conducting research into the arrangements for immigration and removal of individuals who do not qualify to remain in the United Kingdom. Our programme will focus on information related to and concerns about the management of and staff culture at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre ("the IRC").

I am writing to invite you to respond to a number of issues arising from our research so far. As the programme nears its broadcast date there may be other issues and matters to which we will also invite you to respond.

We have written to other organisations where appropriate, as well.

I have set out further details about what we are considering reporting in relation to points 1 and 3 (below) in "Annex A", at the end of this document, but would summarise the issues to which we are inviting your response as follows:

**Due to the actions and attitudes of some officers and managers, the IRC is failing to satisfy its statutory purpose: "to provide for the secure but humane accommodation of detained persons in a relaxed regime with as much freedom of movement and association as possible, consistent with maintaining a safe and secure environment." There is a culture of menace towards some detainees and a conspiracy of silence and/or misrepresentation concerning incidents of violence or neglect.**

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*Our research has shown (see “Annex A”) that:*

- a. Known drug dealers have been moved onto the induction wing, which should inculcate good behaviour in new detainees. We understand this happens because the induction wing is effectively being used as an overflow wing and that such mixing of detainees is inappropriate in a custodial environment that there is no good explanation for it.
- b. A number of employees (who we are not naming) have raised concerns and been assured issues would be resolved which have not been resolved. Officers labelled “snitches” or “grasses” can be singled out at the IRC, leaving some staff afraid to speak out about concerns to management.
- c. On a number of occasions staff at the IRC could not correctly count or locate all detainees. At times there are insufficient detainee custody officers to provide good pastoral care and those low staff numbers have caused detainee custody to lose confidence and affected morale.
- d. Illegal narcotics are used regularly in what should be a secure centre. There are specific security lapses particularly within the visits regime. This suggests illegal narcotics are not taken seriously enough by staff and management at the IRC. There is an allegation that some officers are corrupt and have smuggled in contraband.
- e. Unprofessional and/or insulting attitudes and poor behaviour demonstrated by a number of staff. This includes towards detainees with pre-existing mental health difficulties who are not treated appropriately at times by some staff at the IRC. This directly undermines the Home Office’s policy that detainees with mental illnesses can be “satisfactorily managed” within the IRC. It also includes an officer sleeping when he should have been closely monitoring a detainee who posed a risk to himself and on another occasion officers not informing healthcare about an incident of self-harm in order to avoid having to conduct a constant supervision.
- f. Poor attitudes demonstrated by one nurse (Jo Buss), one detainee custody manager (Nathan Ring) and one G4S restraint trainer and supervisor (John Connolly) towards detainees. These attitudes were known to senior managers at G4S but which have continued as has their supervisions of detainees, some of whom are vulnerable.
- g. A poor attitude by at least two different detainee custody managers, towards food refusal by detainees. At least one incident of food refusal was covered up by being deliberately not reported.
- h. There have been incidents of near loss of control and incidents of violence.
- i. There have been repeated incidents of self-harm or attempted suicide by detainees.
- j. There have been occasions where a number of detainee custody officers have mistreated detainees in their care, including deliberately hurting them. At



least one incident of harm or mistreatment has been covered up because the events surrounding were deliberately not reported.

- k. A larger number of officers and other G4S employees have turned a blind eye to or helped to cover up those actions. This includes some managers and medical staff.

**We understand that concerns related to a number of the above matters (a. to k.) were raised previously including with you directly, but the issues have not been resolved.**

- l. The IRC has a toxic atmosphere in which some detainees struggle, psychologically. Detainees who were never in jail before have been frightened and left at risk of exploitation or violence by being mixed with convicted criminals at the IRC.
- m. The mental health of some detainees who did not have pre-existing mental health conditions can decline significantly in detention. This is particularly true for those detainees in respect of whom there is neither a realistic prospect of removal or of release. Those detainees are in indefinite detention, which we understand is inappropriate and should cease.

**How would you respond to the following issues?**

*Our research has shown:*

G4S management drafted in significant additional detainee custody officers, who would have normally been on leave or resting, during HMIP's October inspection thereby undermined the purpose of the inspection process by presenting a false and seriously misleading impression to HMIP of the regime at the IRC so as to flatter the performance of the IRC in its inspection. We have been told that this sort of activity is common practice for G4S during inspections – and that additionally money is made available to improve the décor at such times.

G4S has been regularly making annual profits close to 20% at both the Gatwick Immigration and Removal Centres (Tinsley House and Brook House) in stark contrast to the 6 to 7 per cent envisaged by the original contract for the running of those centres. We have calculated that if throughout the contract's term and extensions, the payments to G4S had continued to be calculated / made by reference to delivering an envisaged annual profit in the region of 6 - 7%, rather than at a level which has in fact delivered annual profits of around 20%, this would have led to savings of unjustified overpayments from public funds (and consequent associated gain to the taxpayer) amounting to upwards of £2million in one year alone from the Gatwick Centres. At Brook House, the original contract envisaged G4S earning profits that would be the equivalent of a little under one million pounds per year. In fact they have accrued profits of around £2.5m. We have been told that to generate this profit, G4S deliberately keeps staff vacancies open, does not pass on annual increased payments from the government to its workers and charges the Home Office for 13 hours per shift per worker while only paying those workers for 12. Many of the concerns listed in points a-m, above, would be / could have been ameliorated if that excess profit was / had been invested into the IRC.

In this context it is also to be noted that Schedule S to the contract between the Home Office and G4S includes that:

“1. The Service Provider shall at all times during the Contract Term and at its own cost use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that:

1.1 it shall work with Service Provider Parties and Sub-contractors to continually improve its systems, operating procedures and processes in delivering the Services under this Contract so as to reduce the costs to the Service Provider of delivering such Services to the Authority;

1.2 in complying with paragraph 1.2, it proactively (and in any event at least monthly) monitors such systems, operating procedures and processes and seeks to identify benefits to the Authority in improving the delivery of the Services (including, without limitation, the reduction in costs and charges) (the "Service Improvements"); and

1.3 the Authority receives a share (in accordance with the provisions of this Schedule) of the benefits of any Service Improvements and reduced Service Provider and/or third party costs and charges relevant to the provision of the Services (including, without limitation, endeavouring to source supplies, equipment and any software from suppliers at best value rates).”

BBC Panorama has been told that the IRC regularly operates below its contractually required level of staffing and that the full extent of this is disguised by the way manning is required to be reported to the Home Office.

**The designation of the IRC as an “Immigration and Removal Centre” which was originally designed only to hold detainees for 72 hours has been undermined by a repeated failure to remove detainees?**

*Our research has shown (see “Annex A”) that:*

A number of removals and planned returns (as we understand it, when a detainee is willing to leave) often fail for administrative reasons or because of poor planning and coordination between different agencies – resulting in avoidable extra expenditure, inconvenience and/or distress to detainees and extra work for detainee custody officers.

We understand it is questionable whether detainees who have committed no crimes other than immigration offences should be detained – particularly those who are later released from detention or just transferred to other Immigration and Removal Centres.

Between 40 to 50% of detainees at Brook House are transferred to another immigration and removal centre or released – not removed from the country. We understand that it is questionable whether the original detention of those detainees who are later released is appropriate.

As I mentioned at the top of this letter, Annex A provides further details about a number of incidents.



Your response to the above issues could take the form of a statement or a filmed interview. If you choose to participate by way of an interview we would be grateful to hear from you by Wednesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of August to make arrangements. If you propose to respond by way of a written statement, we would need that statement at the latest by Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of September to enable us to reflect G4S' position in the programme, currently intended for broadcast on the 4th of September on BBC1. As the current employer of all but one of the employees listed below, we ask you please to forward and or deliver the enclosed letters to the individuals named, and confirm to us that you have done so. We thank you for your assistance in that matter.

DCM Nathan Ring  
DCM Steve Webb  
DCM Chris Donnelly  
DCO Calvin Sanders  
DCO Derek Murphy  
DCO John Connolly  
DCO Dave Webb  
DCO Clayton Fraser  
DCO Charlie Francis  
DCO Aaron Stokes  
DCO Mark Earl  
DCO Slim Bassoud  
DCO Sean Sayers  
DCO Ryan Bromley  
Nurse Jo Buss

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email  
 or my mobile

Yours sincerely,

**Joe Plomin**  
Producer Director  
Panorama