

BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

First Witness Statement of Dean Brackenridge

I provide this statement in response to a Notice under Section 21 of the Inquiries Act 2005 dated 10 March 2022.

I, Dean Brackenridge, (D/O/B DPA) will say as follows:

Background

1. My background before being employed by G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Ltd (**G4S**) was in catering and hospitality, primarily as a chef and providing outside catering at events. I began the eight-week initial training course (**ITC**) at Brook House in March 2010. My initial role was as a Detention Custody Officer (**DCO**) based in the Control and Security department. The role involved monitoring the CCTV of the centre in the control room and carrying out duties such as escorting detainees to hospital or conducting room searches on the wings. I was later asked to act up as a Detention Custody Manager (**DCM**), and was subsequently promoted into a DCM role following an interview process.
2. At some point in 2016 I was temporarily seconded to oversee the Home Office refurbishment of Brook House and Tinsley House on behalf of G4S. This involved carrying out security checks on people entering the centres as part of the refurbishment works, and providing a liaison between G4S and the contractors. As a result of the temporary secondment I was based at Tinsley House until the works were completed in May 2017. At that time I returned to Brook House where I was allocated to the Activities department. I was sent on a two-week training course in May 2017 as I had no knowledge of Activities. As far as I recall, I remained in the Activities department for around a month before I went on sick leave as a result of

a knee injury in early July 2017. I remained on sick leave for several months as I required knee surgery and a hip replacement. I left my employment at Brook House in December 2017 as it was clear that I would not be able to handle the long shifts standing up. My current employment is as an account manager for a marketing company.

Use of Force

3. Due to (i) my temporary secondment to Tinsley House to oversee refurbishment works and (ii) the two-week training course for the Activities department and (iii) a period of sick leave from July 2017 onwards, I was not at Brook House for the majority of the Relevant Period. During the few weeks in which I was there, it is hard to say how frequently I was involved in incidents involving control and restraint (**C&R**), as this varied so much. During the time I worked at Brook House there would be occasions when I might have been involved in two restraints in one day, then periods when I might not have been involved in another one for a period of days or weeks. It was entirely dependent on a number of factors, for example, the nature of the detainees in the building, the timing of removal directions, and so on. There were never two days the same.
4. In my experience of working at Brook House, C&R was always used as a last resort when all efforts to encourage detainees to comply with officers had been exhausted. No-one wanted to be involved in restraints but it was part of the job. We had a variety of tools in our belts to use before resorting to force: sometimes there would be issues that we were able to resolve, for example, there might be a language barrier that could be resolved by accessing a translator, or a detainee might be resisting as a result of an issue that might seem trivial but was massive to them such as wanting access to a telephone or some clean clothes provided. We would always engage the detainees in dialogue to try and come to a resolution and were often able to deescalate situations by resolving detainees' immediate concerns. To assist with this process I received HMP training in hostage negotiation, which provided specific training in de-escalating situations without

the need for C&R. In my experience C&R was not used excessively at Brook House.

Individual Welfare

5. Mental health was not a heavy focus of the training we received but it did come up during the ITC, for example, during training on ACDTs and first aid. If I ever had any concerns about a detainee's mental state then I would immediately involve healthcare, as they are the trained professionals. I was not based on the residential wings so may not have picked up on individual detainee's behaviour as often as the wing officers, but if a detained person's behaviour caused me concern, or concerns were raised to me, I would ask for input from the medical team; that is what they were there for.
6. Drug use by detainees was an issue at Brook House at various times. It tended to go through peaks and troughs: you would have relatively quiet periods and then periods with a lot of drug related incidents after someone had managed to get drugs into the centre. The most common drugs used were Cannabis and Spice. There were various measures in place to prevent drugs from entering: staff searches; visitor searches; staff and CCTV monitoring of the visits hall and X-raying of detainees' post and parcels. At one time contraband was being thrown over the perimeter, and netting was installed over the courtyards to prevent that.
7. As far as I recall we did not have the facility to take anyone who was on any kind of drug rehabilitation programme. I believe there were other centres with specific addiction facilities where detainees could be transferred if they required ongoing drug rehabilitation services.

Abuse of Individuals

8. I did not have any concerns about the treatment of detainees by staff. There would be occasions where there was suspected bullying or mistreatment of detainees by

other detainees, although this would typically be detected by the wing staff who had more daily interactions with detainees. There were specific anti-bullying procedures in place to monitor those who had reported bullying or who wing staff were concerned about. I do not now recall the specific details of those policies.

The Panorama Programme

9. I worked with Callum Tulley for the short period when I was in the Activities department between May and July 2017. I was aware of him as an officer but did not work alongside him on many occasions. To the best of my knowledge I do not appear in the Panorama programme. I was not contacted by the BBC prior to the programme being aired.

Specific Incidents

Incident on 22 May 2017

10. I have been referred to a log of use of force incidents which records that I attended an incident on 22 May 2017 during which it is recorded that force was used to prevent a detainee from jumping on the netting [CJS000897, row 87, tab 'BH DCF 2 UOF LOG']. Unfortunately no further details have been provided in relation to this incident which might assist me in being able to recall it. However, I can comment on an incident of this type in general terms. If a detainee was trying to get onto the netting, officers on the wing would notify First Response (the team of officers allocated to respond to emergency incidents on that particular day), or if the control room had seen it they would notify Oscar 1 (the manager with overall responsibility for managing the centre that day). Oscar 1 would determine how to manage the situation depending on the nature of the detainee's actions and behaviour. Force would always be used as a last resort and officers would attempt to de-escalate the situation using dialogue. The number of warnings given to a detained person before force was used would depend on the nature of the situation and the risks involved. Officers were not allowed to go onto the netting, so once a

detained person was on the netting and refusing to come off, the National Tactical Response Group (NTRG) would be called in if force was required.

Incident on 30 June 2017 involving D87

11. I have been asked to consider officers' reports of an incident involving D87 on 30 June 2017 [CJS001604]. My report of the incident is at pages 2-3. It indicates that I was detailed to cover Oscar 1 duties when I was informed by the duty director that D87 was to be placed on a Rule 40 (removal from association order) and moved to the Care and Separation Unit (CSU). I assembled a team of officers in PPE and also requested that a C&R instructor (DCM Trott) was present. Although the report does not state the reason for this, I recall that I asked DCM Trott to attend as D87 was a very big and strong man, who was highly trained in martial arts, and I felt that the officers may require assistance with applying C&R techniques.
12. I presented myself to D87's room and kept the team out of sight whilst I explained to D87 why he was being moved to CSU and attempted to persuade him to walk compliantly. I gave him several opportunities to comply but he became verbally aggressive, making comments along the lines of '*do you want to fight me?*' In any potential force situation I would always ask the detainee whether there is anything I could do which would persuade them to walk out of the room compliantly. On this occasion D87 became increasingly aggressive and so I gave the team instructions to enter the room and try to gain control as quickly and safely as possible.
13. In my report I state that '*Myself and DCM Trott gave guidance to the team but due to D87's strength he was overpowering them*' (p2). Without seeing the footage it is difficult to recall precisely what these instructions were; however, I believe that due to D87's size and strength the officers were struggling to apply the holds. The officers used for this restraint were bigger, stronger officers, but D87 was able to

throw them off him due to his size and strength. D87 was aggressive throughout the restraint. I have never before or since been involved in a restraint with a detainee as strong as D87 and I believe the force used was entirely necessary, reasonable and proportionate. My report indicates that two DCOs were taken to hospital with injuries following the restraint.

14. After D87 had been moved to the CSU there was a second incident in which he made a ligature in his room. A further team was assembled and at that point DCM Robinson took over the running of the incident. This was partly due to the fact that I was Oscar 1 that day so had other duties to fulfil, and partly to de-escalate the situation as D87 had made threats to kill me and I believed that my continued involvement may aggravate him further.
15. My report indicates (at page 2) that I had not carried out Oscar 1 duties for approximately 10 months prior to this incident. This would have been because I was based at Tinsley House during the preceding months to oversee refurbishment works. As far as I can recall I did not receive refresher training on returning to Brook House.
16. I have considered Inquiry document HOM003183, which is an email exchange between Kim Shipp (Investigating Officer at the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) and Karen Goulder (G4S Administrator). The email exchange discusses allegations made by D87. I am also asked to consider an telephone interview summary of D87's interview with Ms Shipp on 11 July 2017 and comment on his allegation that I 'wanted an attack' [HOM002721, p12]. This allegation is entirely false. I have explained in paragraph 12 the circumstances leading up to this use of force and the steps I took in order to de-escalate the situation.
17. Although I recall D87's complaint in general terms, I believe I was on sick leave at the time of the PSU investigation. Having reviewed the email exchange referred to above[HOM003183] – in which Ms Shipp notes *'I have absolutely no issues with the way the officers involved dealt with D87 or the control and restraint used; in fact I will be recommending that they are commended for the way they*

dealt with him – and the PSU Investigation Report [Inquiry document HOM003153], I can see that D87's allegations were investigated by the PSU and found to be unsubstantiated.

18. The PSU Investigation Report concludes: *'All the officers involved in the two incidents should be commended for their dealings with D87 and recognised for their effort during two particularly challenging and protracted incidents. It is evident from all the information obtained that D87 could be a difficult gentleman to deal with; and he was clearly a strong individual. In the circumstances all the officers remained professional and polite with D87 and treated him with respect, despite the manner in which he spoke to them'* [HOM003153, p34].

19. The Inquiry has referred me to the expert report of Mr John Collier [INQ000111, p80-87], which comments that techniques were applied incorrectly as staff struggled against D87 who was a strong and powerful individual. This was an unusual situation and restraint which officers handled to the very best of their abilities but there are always lessons to be learned. Mr Collier also comments that the duty director approved the restraints but there is no record of the duty director being present at the incidents or debriefs. It was common practice at Brook House for briefings to be led by DCMs.

Incident on 22 May 2017 involving D52

20. I have been referred to CJS005620 which is a report of an incident involving force on 22 May 2017. I have also reviewed the body-worn camera footage of the incident [UOF129.17 BWC]. This incident is recorded in the use of force log CJS000897, row 82, tab 'BH DCF 2 UOF LOG.' I can see from the footage that I am wearing an officer's blue T-shirt as opposed to a manager's white shirt so I assume that I was doing an overtime shift as a DCO that day. The reports indicate that DCM Dave Aldis was Oscar 1.

21. My report of the incident [CJS005620, p31] indicates that DCM Aldis had asked me to accompany the team of officers he had assembled to speak to D52 after a decision had been taken to move him to E wing. The footage shows that I remained outside the room when the team entered and engaged in dialogue with D52 to try to persuade him to move down to E wing compliantly. Although the footage does not show me entering the room, my report indicates that I was asked to enter the room by DCM Aldis after D52 became extremely agitated and began lashing out when officers were instructed to assist him to his feet. It is noted at p31 of my report that DCO Marshall was bitten by D52.
22. The reports indicate that D52 was on a removal direction and was being asked to accompany officers down to E wing as he had earlier made threats to harm officers and had made it known he was refusing the leave Brook House. It was common to relocate detainees to E wing to facilitate their removal. The reason for doing so was that E wing was a much smaller wing with single cell accommodation, so it was easier to lock the wing down if force ultimately had to be used during the removal. It would have been a decision of the duty director in discussion with Oscar 1 to relocate D52 to E wing to facilitate the removal. In my view this was an entirely appropriate decision in circumstances where D52 had made threats to staff and was resisting his deportation.
23. In a situation such as this one, Oscar 1 would enter the room first and try to obtain the detainee's agreement to walk compliantly to E wing. The footage indicates that there is around 10 minutes of conversation between DCM Aldis and other officers in an attempt to persuade him to come out of the room. It is explained to him that he will have access to all his personal belongings in E wing. D52 makes it clear that he will not accompany the officers to E wing. Once those efforts had been exhausted, the instruction could normally be given by Oscar 1 to the officers to move towards the detainee. Although I was not in the room at this time, it appears that as the officers moved towards D52, he began lashing out, and force had to be used.

24. I am asked to comment on why there was no verbal instruction from me to use force. It is clear from the reports and the footage that I am not the manager on this occasion as I am dressed in the blue shirt of an officer and remain outside the room until asked to go inside and take control of the body-worn camera. DCM Aldis is clearly directing the use of force, as supported by the reports of all present. I am also asked to explain why it was necessary to take control of the detained person's legs. The footage is not clear at that point; however, I state in my report that I took control of D52's legs as he was violently kicking out [CJS005620, p31]. As soon as D52 became compliant I released control of his legs and took control of the body-worn camera. As the detainee is walked out of the room the footage shows me handing the camera over to someone called Jim (I cannot recall who this was), as I go ahead to act as an anchor for the team who are walking D52 down the stairs.
25. The Inquiry has asked me to explain why I put my hand over the camera at one stage, and what was happening whilst the camera was covered. Having reviewed the footage, it is clear to me that I turned the camera towards me and, having realised the angle was off, I twisted it so that it was facing the right way. In doing so my hand obscured the lens for a few seconds. You can see from the footage that the officers were in exactly the same position immediately before and after the few seconds when the lens was covered.
26. D52 was moved to the CSU and placed on a Rule 40 ahead of his planned deportation the following day. A Rule 40 would be used for a number of different reasons: to facilitate removal directions; to maintain good order of the centre; to protect staff and to protect other detainees. Staff would have access to the Rule 40 policy. In practice, detainees would be moved to the CSU where they would be visited daily by the duty director, Oscar 1, healthcare and the Home Office. They would also be offered a visit by the Chaplaincy. Each day a multidisciplinary discussion would take place to determine whether it was appropriate to return the detainee to normal association, or whether an extension to the Rule 40 was required.

27. I had no concerns about the actions of any of the officers involved in this restraint and consider that the force used was reasonable and proportionate.

<u>Statement of Truth</u>	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Name	Dean Brackenridge
Signature	<div>DocuSigned by:</div> <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> Signature </div>
Date	<div>4B8368EFCE32487...</div> 22/3/2022

Witness Name: Dean Brackenridge
Statement No: First witness statement