

Private and Confidential

David Waldock



03 May 2017

Grievance Outcome

Dear David

I have previously written to arrange a meeting whereby I could go through your grievance outcome with you however you have declined this.

Therefore I am writing following the meeting we held on 6 March 2017 to discuss your grievance, concerning the fact you feel you have been treated unfairly following a meeting with Steve Skitt Deputy Director.

You submitted a grievance against Deputy Director Steve Skitt entitled "*corporate bullying*". The grievance is centred around a meeting that took place between David and Steve Skitt, with Caz Dance-Jones also in attendance, on 02nd February 2017. You claimed in the meeting;

- You were told a complaint had made against yourself by the Home Office, but you were not allowed to see the complaint
- You were not permitted to explain your version of events
- You were removed from your position in Visits
- You had formal action initiated against you without an investigation

During your grievance hearing, you also claimed that on 17th February 2017, following a staff briefing in the Visits Hall, Steve Skitt looked at you and commented to Juls Williams; "*that is disgusting*". You believed Steve was referring to you and that he made such a comment because you are gay, and you believe Steve doesn't like gay men.

I have investigated this by reviewing relevant paperwork and interviewing staff including yourself Caz Dance-Jones, Steve Skitt and Home Office personnel.

Each of these points is considered below;

a. Not allowed to see the complaint from the Home Office

You claimed that Steve explained that a complaint had been received from the Home Office, but that you were not permitted to see it. You explained in your grievance meeting that once Steve had explained what the complaint related to (a heated debate between yourself and DCO Gayatri

Mehraa) you had a suspicion that the complaint had come from Vanessa Smith, who is apparently friendly with Gayatri.

You claimed that there were no Home Office staff present in the Visits area at the time he and Gayatri had their heated debate. You believed Vanessa was asked to submit the complaint by Gayatri after the event.

Steve Skitt confirmed that he had not permitted you to see the email complaint from the Home Office, nor did he confirm to you who had made the complaint.

You were not allowed to see the complaint from the Home Office, this would be standard procedure whilst the complaint is investigated. You would only be notified of who the complainant was should this lead to formal action under the disciplinary process arising from a full and thorough investigation.

b. Not permitted to explain his version of events

You claimed that when you tried to explain to Steve Skitt what had happened between yourself and Gayatri, Steve said; *"I'm not interested, it has come from the Home Office so it must be true"*.

Steve Skitt confirms that he did say to you that it wasn't the time or the place to go through the incident in detail and also mentioned that it wasn't the first time that Steve had had to address your behaviour with him.

You were not permitted to explain your version of events. However as Steve deemed it not the appropriate time to discuss this in detail, this would be correct as the complaint would need to be investigated and you would have your full opportunity to explain your version of events at an investigation interview.

c. Removed from his position in Visits

As a result of the meeting on 02nd February 2017, you were moved from Visits to B wing, which you felt was unfair and on the basis of *"idle gossip and unproved allegations"*. Steve reported that it was not the first time he had had to speak to you about your behaviour. He stated there had been previous issues with you swearing and making flippant comments to a Home Office senior manager. Steve explained that he told you that Visits is *"front house, the face of G4S"* and that he couldn't allow the pattern of behaviour that you had demonstrated to date to continue.

Caz Dance-Jones confirmed that she had been present when Steve had spoken to you about the comment made to the Home Office Senior Manager. She also explained that Visits was under significant scrutiny at the time, due to a high number of late visits and as such it was considered prudent to move you rather than risk more customer complaints.

Therefore you were removed from Visits following the meeting held on 02nd February 2017 although both Caz and Steve claim that the action was taken as a result of continued issues with your behaviour. I believe this was explained to you during the meeting and formed the correct course of action following a complaint. However I believe this could have been better explained with a letter detailing the rationale behind the decision and the expected timeframe for the change of work location. This may have helped provide clarity for you and structured your expectations about the changes required from you before you would be permitted to return to Visits.

d. Formal action initiated without an investigation

It has been established that no formal investigation into the complaint from the Home Office took place prior to you being moved out of Visits. Given the previous issues encountered with you and the formal nature of the complaint, it is reasonable to assume that a formal investigation would have been the most appropriate course of action. Whilst the level of risk in Visits at the time meant that your removal from the area was required as an immediate response, an investigation would have helped establish the facts and provide a more concrete basis for the actions taken.

It is clear from speaking with yourself and Dave Roffey that the any formal or informal action has not happened in the manner that was perhaps initially expected and as such you have been left with a level of uncertainty about your role and your future within the organisation. Should performance management issues be addressed with yourself I recommend a meeting with your manager Dave Roffey to benefit from the policy and framework that sits behind the initiative. I appreciate this may have added to your frustration about the way in which the issue was managed.

e. “Disgusting” comment made by Steve Skitt

At interview, Steve Skitt was adamant that he would not make such a comment about a member of staff and was clear that he harbours no hostile feelings towards homosexual men. Steve explained that the use of the word “disgusting” was likely linked to a conversation with Juls Williams about the cleanliness of Brook House, specifically the showers. Juls Williams corroborated this explanation, stating that there had been much discussion at that time about how dirty the centre was. He also stated that as far as he is aware, Steve has no issue with gay men. Therefore I conclude that this comment was made in the context of a conversation with Juls Williams and was not directed at you.

Following these findings I have recommended that a formal investigation takes place into the complaint raised and you are provided the full opportunity to explain your version of events at an investigation interview.

You do have the right to appeal against my decision and should do so within 7 days of receipt of this letter.

Your appeal should be addressed to Ben Saunders Centre Director at the address above.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Newland
Head of Tinsley House Borders and PDA
G4S Central Government Services (UK) Ltd