

## **BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY**

---

### **FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF DEBORAH ANN WALKER**

---

I, **DEBORAH ANN WALKER**, G4S Limited, **DPA**  
will say as follows:

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. My date of birth is **DPA** and I make this statement following the Inquiry's Rule 9 request dated 21 December 2021.
  
2. The majority of my career has been with G4S Limited and its predecessor companies, which are summarised below:
  - 1993 – 1994 Communications Executive, Securicor Alarms Ltd;
  - 1994 – 1995 Communications Manager – Securicor Alarms Ltd;
  - 1996 – 1998 Marketing Manager, Finance – Securicor Cash Services Limited;
  - 1998 – 2000 Head of Marketing Services and Planning – Securicor Cash Services Limited;
  - 2000 – 2001 Head of Communications – Securicor Security Services Limited;
  - 2002 – 2004 Director of Communications – Securicor plc;
  - 2004 – 2013 Group Communications Director – G4S plc;
  - 2013 – 2021 Group Corporate Affairs Director – G4S plc;
  - 2021 – 2022 Corporate Affairs Director, International – G4S Limited.

#### **THE CONTRACT**

3. I have had no involvement in discussions about the contract between the Home Office and G4S to run Brook House nor any amendments to that contract and the extension of that contract. I did however from time-to-time as a member of the Executive Committee and Group Investment Committee review major or complex bids across the business. My input was however from a CSR perspective and did not involve a review or consideration of the contract itself.
4. It was not the role of the CSR committee to review contracts. It did not therefore review the contract for Brook House or any agreement or proposals to extend it.
5. I am asked as to whether the bid was reviewed by people independent of the bid with independent expertise. I assume that the Inquiry is referring to the bid in 2017, if that is the case, unfortunately, I am unable to assist as I have no knowledge as to what, if any, reviews, independent or otherwise, were conducted by CJS.
6. I have no responsibility for contract profitability and have no access to contract financial information.

**INTERACTIONS WITH BROOK HOUSE DURING THE RELEVANT PERIOD**

7. I had no dealings with Brook House during the Relevant Period.
8. I have never visited Brook House.
9. I do not recall having ever met any people in management positions at Brook House. Whilst I do recall that Mr Ben Saunders was in a small number of meetings where I was present shortly after the Panorama programme, unfortunately, I cannot recall, some four years later, the detail of any discussions or conversations with him.
10. I cannot recall how often I met with others to discuss Brook House, but I did have a number of meetings discussing the Panorama programme, the Verita investigation and its report/recommendations.

11. I would not normally meet with the Home Office to discuss Brook House, although I recall that I did attend a meeting with Mr Peter Neden (then G4S UK&I President) and Mr Jerry Petherick (then Managing Director of CJS) on 29 August 2017. There was a large number of people present at this meeting, but I cannot recall who they were or what was discussed. It is possible that individuals from the Home Office were present at this meeting, although I cannot say categorically that this was the case.
12. I do not believe I attended any other meetings with the Home Office.
13. Other than Verita, I did not meet with any other organisations to discuss Brook House.
14. Given that I have never visited Brook House, have no direct experience of the management and leadership culture there nor the values and priorities of the senior management team, unfortunately, I cannot provide an opinion on the management and leadership culture there.
15. Prior to the allegations made in the Panorama programme, I was not aware of any occasions where someone raised concerns about the treatment of detained persons at Brook House.
16. Prior to the allegations, in the Panorama programme, I had no knowledge or concern regarding financial, commercial or reputational pressure affecting staff at Brook House. I was aware that immigration and any form of detention came with pressures for all concerned, but I had no specific knowledge of concerns at Brook House.
17. I have no knowledge or understanding of; (a) what staffing levels at Brook House should have been; (b) whether such staffing levels were adequate; (c) any concerns about staffing levels; (d) any decision-making or discussions about leaving staff vacancies open to save money and maximise profits.

18. I have no knowledge or understanding of issues relating to recruitment or retention of staff at Brook House.
19. I am only aware of a single whistleblowing policy in operation across the G4S Group which is known as Speak Out.
20. I am asked to address the whistleblowing processes in place at Brook House and the wider G4S Group during the Relevant Period. I believe the processes that were in place at Brook House are addressed in the corporate witness statements of both CJS and G4S Health Services (UK) Limited ('G4S Health'). I have no knowledge of any other whistleblowing policies in operation at Brook House during the Relevant Period.
21. As explained above, the whistleblowing policy in place across the G4S Group is known as Speak Out [CJS000707] and was in place during the Relevant Period. Again, I believe this is addressed in the aforementioned corporate witness statements.
22. I believe the Speak Out policy was adequate.
23. My original role in Speak Out was to assist G4S businesses in communicating the policy and supporting them to put in place communications processes to make colleagues aware that Speak Out was available to them.
24. I set out below the extent of my involvement with whistleblowing at G4S.
25. The Group Ethics Committee (also referred to as the Ethics Steering Committee, of which I am a member) would review the most serious of whistleblowing allegations. The Committee would also look at the trends data to identify any specific significant or recurring issues which would prompt further scrutiny/consideration in order to determine whether action plans or further interventions would be required. There were however no indicators in any of the whistleblowing allegations to indicate to the Committee that there were any particular trends at Brook House, including in relation to the mistreatment of detainees.

26. I am asked to explain why the process shifted from me personally scrutinising whistleblowing cases in the first two quarters of 2017 to it being done by a member of my team with the legal team. However, I believe there may be a misunderstanding, perhaps arising from paragraph 137 of my Verita transcript.
27. It was never my role to scrutinise all whistleblowing complaints. Whistleblowing complaints data would be reviewed at a high level to identify patterns and trends for the CSR Committee. In the early days, the process of extracting and collating the data was a manual one and done by me. There was no specific reason for this other than I had capacity at the time. Reports are now automated.
28. I am asked to provide a summary of my understanding of the 11 whistleblowing cases referred to in paragraph 154 of my Verita interview. As I have explained earlier, I did not scrutinise or investigate specific complaints (save as otherwise described in this statement). I do however believe that G4S has disclosed to the Inquiry a full summary of all Speak Outs from April 2016 to April 2018 [ref: CJS0073631].

### **OVERSIGHT ROLE**

29. I did not scrutinise any whistleblowing cases in 2017 except as I have described above.
30. The CSR Committee's main functions were to review and agree the G4S Group's CSR strategy, develop and recommend policies on all aspects of CSR, including employment issues, health and safety, human rights, workforce diversity & inclusion, the environment, community and social investment and compliance with ethical trading & business practises. It should also develop and encourage effective communication within businesses around CSR issues, ensure that CSR issues are considered during any acquisition due diligence, to review best practice in key CSR areas and benchmark where appropriate and to consider any other related matters that may be referred to it by the Board.

31. I was a member of the CSR Committee from January 2012. The Committee was dissolved on 6 April 2021 following G4S plc's delisting and dissolution of its Board.
32. Other than perhaps being included within a summary of the contracts held by the UK & Ireland, prior to the Panorama programme, I have no recollection of Brook House being discussed by the CSR Committee.
33. I am asked to what extent, if at all, Brook House was part of the CSR materiality exercises. However, the CSR materiality reviews did not focus on any specific contracts but were instead designed to set the CSR priorities for the Group.
34. I am not aware of any CSR Committee conference calls in connection with Brook House other than minuted meetings. As above, I do not recall Brook House being discussed by the CSR Committee in any detail prior to Panorama, but my recollection is that there was a meeting in September 2017 to update the Committee following Panorama. There were then a small number of meetings where the Verita review was discussed and how the report was to be disseminated.
35. It was my belief that during the Relevant Period, the G4S plc Board had a good understanding of the nature of Brook House and CJS' role in running it.
36. I did not subsequently form the view that I was wrong on that. Although I did form the view that some members of the Board may not have been clear on certain detailed aspects of the contract, I was not on the Board and did not have any knowledge as to whether that was actually correct. Also, as the Board of a large multinational organisation operating many thousands of contracts across the world, I wouldn't expect it to be across the intricate details of every one and as far as I am aware, there was no reason for the Board to have paid Brook House any particular attentions prior to the Panorama programme.
37. As indicated above, I was not on the Board. I cannot therefore comment on whether it would have taken any action had its understanding of the contract been any different.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER BODIES**

38. I had no relationship with the Home Office or IMB.

39. I had no interaction or involvement with HMIP.

## **REACTIONS TO PANORAMA AND EVENTS THEREAFTER**

40. In terms of G4S' media response to the Panorama programme and other related enquiries. These were handled by G4S plc Media Team. I had overall responsibility for the media responses and any stakeholder communications.

41. I am asked to comment to what extent G4S and the Home Office acted in concert in response to the Panorama programme, and my particular attention is drawn to document CJS000758. As the Home Office's contractor, G4S was required to liaise with it in respect to any media enquiry or response. Document CSJ000758 is an e-mail in which the Home Office gave advance notice of its response to the Panorama programme, but as far as I am aware, G4S did not 'act in concert' on this.

42. I am asked to what extent I consider that G4S were required to take certain actions by the Home Office, but I do not understand the question and cannot therefore respond.

43. I had no involvement in notifying the CQC of the Panorama programme and I had no discussions concerning their role. I may have been copied into some e-mail communications with the CQC (for example CQC000002), but that was for information only given the on-going media attention around the issue at the time. I believe that I was contacted by the CQC directly on one occasion [CQC000012] to put me in touch with their media team. I responded with a copy of the G4S press release. I do not believe I had any further contact with the CQC.

44. When allegations of a serious nature are made by a journalist regarding the conduct of G4S or its employees, the role of the media team is to inform the business concerned and to ask for the allegations to be fact checked/investigated.
45. In most cases, the media team is the first point of contact for journalists (in this case the BBC). The media team will seek information from the business and liaise directly with the journalist.
46. In the case of BBC000009, the clarifications to the allegations were provided by members of the CJS operational team. Whilst it is the role of the media team and myself as Corporate Affairs Director to challenge the business to ensure that responses are accurate and true, it is not our role to fact-check and evidence every point made by the journalist.
47. In the case of BBC000009 (e-mail to Joe Plomin dated 1 September 2017), I trusted that my operational colleagues were providing accurate information which was passed to the BBC. Therefore, I consider all of the clarification points outlined in the document to be correct.
48. I have no direct knowledge of the specific matters, only the responses that were provided to the media team, I cannot therefore answer any questions as to whether any of the matters-as set out are correct or otherwise.
49. We did not receive any response to the aforementioned e-mail of 1 September 2017.
50. By separate e-mail on 1 September 2017. Sophie McMillan e-mailed Joe Plomin requesting a call with her and myself to discuss the inaccuracies [BBC000014]. However, the invitation was never accepted and no such discussion took place.
51. My immediate reaction to viewing the Panorama programme was one of disgust, shock and disappointment. Disgust that any person could treat another in the way shown in



the programme and shock and disappointment that G4S employees had behaved in such a way.

52. I am asked to address the extent of my involvement in the drafting of a letter to the BBC [BBC000003]. I don't recall specifically my involvement in the letter, but I believe the media team had a discussion with Jerry Petherick and others at G4S which concluded that it would be helpful to have access to all of the BBC footage so that a full investigation could be conducted.

53. It is likely that I reviewed the draft letter, but I do not have any specific recollection of comments made by me about the specific content.

54. Other than a short acknowledgement, I am not aware of any further response.

55. I was asked to join the project team with the remit of stakeholder communications - ensuring that the business considered which stakeholders we needed to communicate with, the content of communications and the methods of reaching them.

56. The project team coordinated actions in a number of areas: (1) Operations; (2) Investigations; (3) Human Resources; (4) Communications/stakeholder management; (5) Commercial matters and (6) Administration

57. I was informed of a staff suspension in document CJS000799. I was informed of this purely for information purposes and in case the media team needed to respond to any enquiries on the status of employees at Brook House who had featured in Panorama.

58. For the same reasons, I would have been notified of other disciplinary actions against other members of staff.

59. I played no role in the disciplinary investigation processes for any members of staff.

60. I understand that a staff survey of Brook House and Tinsley House employees took place at the end of September 2017. Of a total population of 332 colleagues, 160 completed the survey. I had no involvement in the staff survey process and do not have access to it.

61. I have no knowledge of how management at either CJS or UK reacted to the survey.

62. I recall being involved in discussions regarding the terms of reference for the Verita review but I do not recall any specific comments or points raised by me.

**STATEMENT OF TRUTH**

**I believe / the Defendant believes that the facts stated herein are true.**

**I am duly authorised to make this statement.**

**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.**

Signed:

**Signature**

Dated: 11 February 2022.....