

Brook House groups feedback – OFFICIAL

Three groups, mainly to explore issues from survey and other intelligence: mixed, 2;
Pakistani, 7; Nigerian, 4

Italics = SMT comments on groups and survey

Safety

- Tascor escorts okay but long waits in reception, 4-5 hours. *Doesn't sound right. Gets busy from 3pm onwards. Get people off vans quickly following recommendation but don't think waits are so long.*
- Sometimes brought into unit very late, and one case of cell mate who was angry as had been woken up.
- Feel safe overall, not seeing physical assaults but mentally torturous. *Have been some incidents that may have skewed perceptions of assaults in survey: some related to Spice, a lot of finds. One serious assault in March related to NPS and theft. A lot of people involved in some incidents (4.7% of population involved in altercations last month acc. to Michelle). But spikes rather than a trend and only two assaults last month.*
- Lots of mental health problems and some examples of self harm.
- Lack of staff makes it harder for them to pick up on warning signs.
- No access to immigration staff, little liaison with caseworker. Don't get to see people face to face, written response to any request. *This is true and the reason they want to have welfare staff working with HO staff. HO staff also a bit nervous about seeing detainees without custody staff. Detainees no longer get an induction from HO if been in detention before, although circumstances may have changed.*
- Too much security and lock up, many barriers getting from one unit to another. Feels very restrictive. Locked into rooms. *Planning to get a turnstile system installed so that detainees can get on and off of wings without referring to staff.*

Respect

- Most staff quite good, but some rude and don't take detainees seriously.
- Ventilation a big issue, can't breathe and too much smoke. *Have spoken tot HO about it, few solutions.*
- No curtains or toilet screening. *A full set of curtains currently on order.*
- Food is okay, but some complained of uncooked food.
- No faith in complaints system.
- Healthcare staff can be abrupt or rude and quality of treatment can be poor. *Not aware of particular problems with healthcare. For mental health care have an RMN always on duty.*
- Example of someone taken off medication to hasten deportation process (chasing), treat you like prisoners.
- Chaplaincy is good helps 'to keep us alive'.
- Lack of official interpretation, prisoners help out. *Big Word bill in the thousands, think good use is made of interpretation. An assessment of competency in English is done on arrival and helps to track whether use of BW has been appropriate. Last figures show healthcare using 47% and reception 30% of the interpretation. Welfare team also use it.*

Activities

Brook House groups feedback – OFFICIAL

- Not enough staff but reasonably positive view of activities.
- Can get job or do education and it is possible to fill your time here. Can use gym too.
- No photocopier.

Preparation for release

- Quite positive about welfare, although a few said have to wait too long to see someone.
- Phone signal a problem, particularly bad in cells. *Loss of boosters does not seem to have reduced signal for all. In fact may even have improved in some areas.*
- Main problem is poor internet access. Lots of issues about blocked sites [BID and Freedom from Torture blocked when checked.] *Have had some difficulties with internet, filtering system, which failed in July and led to a reset. But didn't realise any appropriate sites were blocked. IT man here in the morning, will refer to him.*
- *Charter flights: some problems with Tascor, concerns about logistics and macho attitude of staff. Has improved but still some issues. The area can still be crowded when charters are leaving.*

Main positives

- Staff x 2
- Gym
- Chaplaincy

Negatives

- Ventilation x 2
- Healthcare
- Limitations on IT
- Mental stress of being in detention