

BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

First Witness Statement of Paul Gasson

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 14 July 2021.

I, **PAUL GASSON**, date of birth DPA DES Litigation and Guidance Manager, employed by The Home Office at Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 3RR, **WILL SAY AS FOLLOWS:**

Introduction

1. I make this statement answering questions raised by the Brook House Inquiry.
2. In so far as the contents of this Statement are within my own personal knowledge, they are true, otherwise they are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.
3. The answers provided below are to the best of my knowledge and recollection, with reference to the documents noted in the Rule 9 request and to a limited set of documents drawn to my attention by those advising me in the period provided for drafting this statement. Should the Inquiry wish me to consult any other documents, I would of course be able to do so if given sufficient time.

Background

4. I joined the Home Office in November 2007, and have held the following positions:
 - a. Criminal caseworker: November 2007 – November 2008.

- b. Deputy Immigration Manager at Brook House IRC: November 2008 to October 2010 and also April 2012 to March 2013.
- c. Immigration Manager / Contract Monitor at Brook House IRC / Harmondsworth IRC / Colnbrook IRC: periods between October 2010 and January 2018.
- d. Business Change Manager / Communications Lead: January to November 2018.
- e. DES Litigation and Guidance Manager: November 2018 to present.

Attendance at Brook House and my role at Brook House

- 5. Whilst I was at Brook House, there was one Home Office team (until the pilot to split the monitoring and detainee engagement functions which commenced in late 2016/early 2017). The team consisted of:
 - a. One Immigration Manager/Contract Monitor who oversaw the immigration office and contact manager functions. They monitored the service and adherence to the contract and HO policies by the supplier.
 - b. Two Deputy Immigration Manager/Contract Monitors – similar to the above but more focussed on the immigration and operational side of the business and centre.
 - c. Seven to eight Contact Manager roles, who met with detained persons on a daily basis to update/inform on cases and serve paperwork issued by caseworkers.

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6. This did change in 2017: Brook House was chosen to run a pilot (I was not involved in the decision or its implementation) whereby all day-to-day functions of detainee engagement would be carried out by the same contact management team but under a different directorate and management hierarchy. The immediate impact on me of this pilot was that I was no longer responsible for the immigration functions. With regard to the impact on Brook House more generally, I recall that this rapidly increased the number of detained persons being called by the immigration office. The positive of that is that the number of people seen increased but the negative was that this was a sudden change and G4S took some time to adjust their operational model to adapt
7. I was based at Brook House and therefore normally attended there each day I was working. I was based in the immigration office but visited all areas of the centre. External meetings or visits to other areas of the business would occasionally take me away from the centre. There was also a period of working at home for 4 – 5 weeks in April and May 2017 during a bid evaluation process.
8. My job description as set out in 2013 was as follows (it is a fairly high-level description but essentially describes the broad role. Other ad-hoc duties and work were completed as and when required):
 - a. To monitor contractual compliance by the Centre's contractor, ensuring that the site is run in a healthy, safe and secure manner in accordance with Detention Centre Rules, providing regular updates to the Area Manager.
 - b. To chair weekly, monthly and quarterly meetings with the contractor, aimed at reviewing performances and challenging non-delivery. (I recall that monthly meetings were chaired by the Home Office Service Delivery Manager from November 2014 when this new post was filled. The quarterly meetings were chaired by a member of the Home Office Commercial team.)

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- c. To act as line manager and counter-signing officer to 7-8 staff, develop and enhance the potential of the team, ensuring contracts are monitored effectively.
- d. Ensure detainees within the centre are provided with an effective service in line with Detention Services Performance Standards Framework; update them on their case progression and to answer questions they may have on detention and wider immigration-related issues.
- e. To carry out UKBA's statutory duties around the centre, including authorising the temporary confinement or segregation of detainees when required and investigating complaints made against the contractor.
- f. To provide briefing and advice about the policies and procedures of the centre to senior managers as and when required in response to parliamentary questions and other official correspondence.
- g. To produce a monthly report and other Key Performance Indicator statistics about contract delivery and the population in the centre and UKBA performance.
- h. To provide an out of hours on-call service for the contractor – shared with the Deputy UKBA managers.

The Contract

- 9. The contract was made up of several schedules. This covered everything from mobilisation prior to the centre opening in March 2008 to demobilising at the end of the contract. The body of the contract and the schedules covered financial information; fixtures and fittings; staffing information; operational requirements and expectations broken down into a number of areas; (originally) healthcare requirements; and performance evaluation.

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10. Performance was measured as per Schedules D and G of the contract. Schedule D of the contract deals with “Operational Specifications”, and deals with the various requirements which G4S were required to meet. Examples of headings under Schedule D include “Maintenance of Security and Safety”, “Healthcare”, “Catering”, and “Welfare and Regime”. Within each section there is a list of requirements which the Home Office requires G4S to meet. These are output based, and can be measured.
11. Failure to meet a requirement in Schedule G Performance Evaluation would lead to the award of a performance measure. Schedule G prescribes a points value which will be awarded for each relevant failure. When the relevant conversion rate is applied to the points awarded in a given month, the total would be subtracted from the monthly payment to G4S. In that way Schedule G provides a financial incentive to meet the operational requirements in Schedule D.
12. The process involved weekly, monthly and quarterly contract meetings with the supplier and included discussions around Schedule D Operational Specification and Schedule G Performance Evaluation.
- a. Weekly meetings would raise issues or failures from both sides.
 - b. Monthly meetings would include the agreed performance points from the previous month performance
 - c. Quarterly meetings focused on the longer-term commercial aspects of the contract and any changes to the centre and operations.
13. Schedule D Operational Specification and Schedule G Performance Evaluation were considered important from the point of view of the contract monitor. These included: reception and discharge timings, staffing levels, production for

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interviews, rule 40/42 decisions and paperwork, welfare provision, room availability, regime availability, and self-audits.

14. The measures used to assess G4S's performance were: weekly/monthly supplier self-declaration; regular proactive and reactive contract monitoring and observations in the centre; ensuring the regime was fully open; reviewing raw staffing level data; and feedback from staff through talking to them. We would talk to staff when walking through the centre (proactively) and also when specific issues cropped up requiring a conversation (reactively). I personally talked to staff when I walked round the centre at least once or twice a week as Immigration Manager and also when joining staff on a Detention Centre Rule 40 (Removal from Association) or Rule 42 (Temporary Confinement) visit a couple of times a month (the Deputy Managers were responsible for conducting the Rule 40 and Rule 42 visits every day, and I did this on a daily basis when I held that role). Examples of contract monitoring involved checking that services and regime were available to residents; checking the cleanliness of the centre; ensuring that the correct authorisation had been obtained and paperwork had been completed for Removal from Association and Temporary Confinement relocations; reviewing use of force reviews; dip sampling complaint responses, checking security requirements had been completed.
15. The weekly meetings between the Home Office and G4S highlighted any issues, or failings, which were being considered a performance failure. The final agreement of performance measures for the month was agreed and sent to the Home Office Commercial team to issue the monthly invoice, which included any deduction for performance failures, to G4S and to the Home Office Service Delivery Manager.
16. At times it was clear that the supplier had used the performance feedback or the applied measures to improve operation, as the same issue would not be reported at subsequent meetings, or incur penalties on subsequent invoices. In this way, trends could be identified and longer term or repeat issues addressed.

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17. The welfare of every detained person at Brook House was a priority and the responsibility of all those who worked at the centre. This would begin at the outset in the reception process (such as risk assessments, welfare questionnaires, health screening); through the induction process (which included welfare and religious visits); during visits by the immigration team; and in the estate layout, including the presence of the healthcare centre on-site. The Detention Centre Rules 2001, Detention Services Orders and other published guidance made clear the importance of welfare. As mentioned above, there were also clear operational requirements in relation to welfare built into the contract itself via Schedule D. The expectation was that the supplier would adhere to this and ensure that the expected standards were met at all times. I would question the levels of staffing if they fell below the minimum and ask what contingency plans were in place or plans in motion for areas such as the welfare office, ACDT reviews, and constant watches if staffing levels were low. A member of the local DES Management team, together with G4S, would complete a daily visit on everyone in Detention Centre Rule 40 (Removal from Association) or Detention Centre Rule 42 (Temporary Confinement) accommodation in the centre. This included a check on their welfare, meals/exercise provision, and if they understood why they were where they were. The local DES team were aware of all those on an open ACDT and kept the supplier informed of proposed actions such as service of removal directions, service of appeal outcome paperwork, as these could be potential or recorded trigger points for the individual.
18. There was not a specific list of things in relation to welfare that we were required to report on.

Adults at Risk and Rule 35

19. The Adults at Risk policy was peripheral to my role, so I cannot answer Question 18. In terms of Question 19, regarding the Rule 35 process, I ensured that the Rule 35 process on our side was completed for every case. This involved passing a received completed Rule 35 report from Healthcare immediately to the caseworker,

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updating CID and adding the details to a dedicated whiteboard table in the immigration office and local Rule 35 spreadsheet and ensuring that each case was dealt with promptly, escalating to the caseworker's line manager if required. All responses from caseworkers were also checked by me before going to the individual, which involved ensuring that the report has been fully considered by the caseworker and a justification provided for the decision. I would ask my team to check the dates and ensure signatures were included as part of the response before passing to me to check the content. If the paperwork didn't meet the standard that I expected on a case-by-case basis and was, for example, insufficiently detailed, it would be sent back. Whilst there may be examples that slipped through (and I would be happy to address them if identified by the Inquiry) my overall impression was that compliance with the Rule 35 process was seen as important. One illustration of this was that it formed one of a small number of whiteboards in the office which would be seen by all those who were in the office.

20. My team's role in the Rule 35 process was pivotal in ensuring things were moved on and dealt with as soon as possible. In terms of our role in the process I was of the view that it operated effectively, but I cannot comment on other parts of the process, for example the substantive caseworking decisions, as these aspects of the process rested with other people.

Detainee Forum Meetings

21. I cannot recall any exact details (e.g. specific agenda items) of Detainee Forum Meetings taking place at Brook House during the Relevant Period or how frequent they were during this time. From memory, G4S chaired them on a monthly basis and a member of the local Home Office attended. I attended a number of them. My impression was that sometimes when there was Home Office attendance there would be lots of individual immigration-related queries rather than focusing on broader welfare issues but there were undoubtedly helpful matters raised by individuals, whether it concerned their own circumstances (such as arrangements

for non-urgent medical procedures) or ways to improve the centre (such as the induction process).

Complaints

22. My team's role in the complaints process was that we would collect forms from the locked complaint boxes, and pass them on so that they could be distributed to the correct place. It was also part of contract monitoring to ensure that forms were available in every residential unit and the library. Without those things happening, the complaints system would not function, but my team was not directly involved in the substantive handling of complaints.
23. In response to the Inquiry's question I set out my understanding of the respective complaints process otherwise than I have described. My understanding of the complaints process (as per the relevant DSO) was that complaint forms, translated in up to 20 different languages, were available on every residential unit (including the Care and Separation Unit which housed those under R40/42)) and in the library. These were clearly signposted. Any posted complaints were collected each morning from a locked post box by a DES member of staff. This formed part of the early shift duties of the Contact Manager on arrival at the centre. The complaints would then be passed to the Home Office Deputy Immigration Manager to scan and send to the DES Complaints Unit and the original complaints filed.
24. My understanding of the process for internal investigations conducted by G4S was that a senior member of the G4S management team would be responsible for completing any investigations in the centre. Where these investigations related to staffing issues, they would be shared with me to inform me of the nature of the investigation and I would consider if the revocation of DCO status was appropriate in line with the current DSO on DCO Certification. I would liaise with the HO Certification Team (who at times would receive the suspension of a member of G4S staff before I did) and confirm my decision about any suspension of certification. I

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suspended the DCO certification of a G4S officer in May 2017 for alleged inappropriate conduct towards a detainee and security breach. I used to perform a dip sample of G4S complaints and responses on a monthly basis (as per the Complaints DSO). I am aware that the DES complaints team filtered complaints, and that some were dealt with by the Home Office and some by the Professional Standards Unit (PSU). I had limited involvement with PSU reports, sometimes they contained supplier recommendations, in which case I would pass them on, and if asked would provide feedback from the supplier on where they were with those recommendations.

25. A minor complaint (such as being rude) made by a detained person against a member of the local immigration team may come to me to investigate. The only investigation I recall having been personally involved in was following the Panorama programme where I was interviewed by the PSU. I do not have a view on whether the complaints processes could be improved.

26. My understanding of the process for detained persons who wished to make complaints about any other matters, including healthcare, is that they could speak to an officer, manager, chaplaincy service, welfare officer, member of Home Office or the IMB if they wished. In addition, there was a complaints mailbox outside healthcare in the centre. Complaints could be submitted (via a mailbox located outside of healthcare, or online via the NHS website) to the local healthcare supplier. Occasionally, Healthcare complaints would be collected from the yellow complaint boxes by Home Office staff who would then pass them onto healthcare. However, the Healthcare complaints process was separate to the Home Office process so I cannot comment further on this system.

Contact with Detained Persons

27. During the relevant period, it is likely that I visited the Care and Separation Unit (which housed the R40 and R42 accommodation) during a daily visit or saw

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detained persons in the centre. I do not recall specifics. If I was approached by a detained person in the centre, I would speak with them and attempt to answer any questions they may have had. Sometimes these were questions about their time in the IRC but often they were about their immigration case. If I did not know the answers, I would take their details and inform them that I would get back to them if it were something I could deal with or could find out on their behalf. Otherwise I would advise them to submit a request to see the Home Office, or for minor complaints about the running of the centre or their experience I would advise them to either speak to an officer in the first instance or submit a complaint.

28. If seeing someone who had been relocated to R40 or R42, as part of the daily visit, a telephone interpreter would be used if required. From memory, the company used by G4S for interpretation provided a consistent service. The Home Office also had an account with a telephone translation service which was used frequently by Home Office staff when engaging with detained persons in the interview rooms.

Culture

29. I did not identify a particular culture within any areas of the centre or across Brook House during the Relevant Period. I do not recall having a view on staff morale immediately prior to, during and subsequent to the Relevant Period. The engagement that I witnessed between staff and those detained was always positive and professional. I had no particular concerns about the impact of values of G4S and/or the Home Office or its culture. In terms of the management and leadership culture at Brook House, in particular the values and priorities of the senior management team (both G4S and Home Office) and how this impacted on staff, my opinion (albeit one that I did not share formally) was that the G4S senior management team was under resourced for certain areas. Individuals had a large area of responsibility for what was a very busy IRC (such as the residential and regimes manager who had to cover at least the entire centre). Whether or not this impacted on the staff is probably a question for them, the DSMs and the DCOs.

30. I do not recall any occasions where someone raised concerns about the treatment of detained persons (either individuals or collectively) whether informally or as a "whistleblower". I did not experience and do not recall being aware of racist, homophobic and/or misogynistic attitudes or behaviours amongst G4S or Home Office staff. In terms of drugs, I recall a time when a member of the cleaning team was bringing drugs into the centre for detained persons (I cannot recall precisely when this occurred). There was an investigation and G4S involved the police. The person was arrested on-site in the car park. From memory, there was evidence to charge her with the supply of drugs.
31. I did not experience bullying by any other staff (either Home Office or G4S) related to Brook House, and I do not recall having concerns about G4S or Home Office staff being bullied or having to deal with a staff complaint regarding bullying.

Oversight, monitoring and outside involvement

32. I was not involved in the action plan referred to by the Inquiry [VER000116] in terms of accepting or rejecting recommendations or ensuring that they were implemented and so cannot express a view on these matters nor on how effective the action taken was in meeting the recommendation. I would have been aware of the inspection and the final report, and it is likely that I was copied into updated versions of the action plan and read it. But I don't remember being specifically involved in reviewing and/or implementing any of the recommendations.
33. I do not recall receiving any complaints from detained persons about victimisation by staff. Any such written complaints collected by Home Office staff were sent to the DES Complaints unit and then should have been passed appropriately for investigation.
34. The Independent Monitoring Board primarily monitor the welfare of the individuals detained at the centre, as well as the IRC environment. They would raise any

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questions or issues they had about the centre, the people detained or any incidents with G4S or the HO. They were regular visitors to Brook House and had access to all areas of the IRC at any time. I had what I considered a good, open working relationship with all members of the IMB. The Chair of the IMB would regularly come to see me in the immigration office. They would raise any concerns or issues they might have had with me. Other than that, unless I saw them around the centre, I would see them on a monthly basis at their meeting

35. The Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group was a befriender service to those detained who did not have any outside social contacts. They attended social visits on a regular basis. I met with James Wilson, Director of GDWG on at least three occasions during 2016/2017 to discuss the work that GDWG were carrying out within Brook House.
36. I recall that I found James approachable, open to hearing concerns raised by G4S and myself at the meetings and agreeable in finding a resolution to them. However, I am aware that he has previously expressed some frustration about their relationship with the Home Office. It was widely acknowledged that GDWG provided a valuable service to those at Brook House.
37. I found the meetings useful in clarifying the role that GDWG carried out at Brook House and they assisted in agreeing the routes of referral for people that GDWG had concerns about. As explained at the meetings, the reason for this was so that the welfare needs of any potentially vulnerable detained person were not missed by the centre due to them being signposted by GDWG to organisations external to Brook House, which had previously happened. Services and support networks were available in the centre to assist all people in the care of the Home Office and part of the role for the Home Office was to see that the care and welfare of people was completed to the expected standards. If a concern noted by GDWG had not been raised directly with the centre, it could impact on the welfare of that individual.

Brook House had the facilities and resource to respond immediately to any concerns.

38. Medical Justice raise health and welfare issues on behalf of those in immigration. I did not have any direct contact with them.
39. Bail for Immigration Detainees provide information for those detained, including about applying for bail if detained under immigration powers. They also campaign to end immigration detention. I did not have any direct contact with them.
40. I cannot recall any other similar organisations involved at Brook House.

Training

41. I started my role at Brook House in November 2008, prior to the centre opening. From memory, apart from personal safety training (PST) and first aid training, led by arrest trained immigration officers, I do not recall any structured training. The training consisted mainly of shadowing of counterparts and colleagues at other established IRCs; working in the contact officer role (face-to-face engagement with those detained) at other IRCs prior to BH opening; and familiarising myself with the DC Rules 2001, DSOs and other related detention guidance at the time. I would have completed any mandatory e-learning for Home Office staff and remember attending a training course for new line managers. Apart from PST, I do not recall attending any refresher courses. I am aware that those assisting me with this statement have been looking for any training records which may help with the answer to this question. I would be happy to update this statement should such records be located and shown to me.

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42. The shadowing of colleagues at other IRCs and working in the contact officer role gave me a good understanding of the purpose of an IRC, how different processes worked, the purpose of an IRC, and the role of the Home Office staff in a centre.

Relationship with G4S staff

43. I had a good working relationship with the different levels of G4S staff. I would say that many of the G4S staff at Brook House knew who I was or that I worked for the Home Office, through working in the centre over the years, seeing me present at their ITCs, collecting their DCO Certification card from me in the immigration office and/or just seeing my Home Office ID on the lanyard.
44. My approach with the G4S senior management team in relation to performance measures was firm but fair.

Staffing levels

45. I am asked to comment on the following: *G4S was contracted to provide 668 hours of DCO time per day. The contract required at least two DCOs on duty on each residential wing throughout the day.*
46. If the staffing requirements were met and the correct number of DCOs were present and managed accordingly, then this number of officers was adequate to perform their roles under normal conditions. At times, circumstances (medical escorts, bed watches, constant supervision, incidents) would put a strain on staffing if G4S were only meeting the minimum staffing requirement, which is what the figure of 668 represented.

47. Any concerns about staffing levels generally would likely have been raised at the Monthly Contract Review Meetings by the Service Delivery Manager. Those meetings were minuted.

48. I do not recall specifics of any impact on the care and treatment of detained persons due to staff shortages. Records (weekly meetings and monthly meetings) might indicate what impacts any staff shortages might have had on the availability of the regime and other services. I do not know what impact any staffing shortages may have had on G4S staff.

49. In terms of healthcare, as far I knew, the service available to those detained at the centre was the equivalent to what would have been expected in the community. The healthcare service was supplied by and overseen by NHS England.

50. I do not recall having any concerns about the staffing levels of the activities team.

Treatment of detained persons

51. Use of force: the Home Office Team was informed of and provided with copies of all recorded use of force incidents and a monthly, detailed summary of all use of force incidents. The then DES team would actively chase for use of force paperwork if not received on time. Any paperwork from this period therefore would be available. I do not recall witnessing any use of force incidents during the relevant period but have witnessed use of force incidents during my time working at Brook House. I have witnessed this when, for example, on Rule 40 or Rule 42 visits and individuals were brought into the area under restraint. I have also witnessed planned use of force where, for example, individuals have made it clear in advance that they will not be cooperative when required to leave their room on the day of their return. From memory, the G4S Control and Restraint instructors would review all or some uses of force and feedback to G4S management. There were monthly use of force meetings from at least 2015, chaired by the G4S Head of Security. A member of the

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local Home Office management team would attend, and it was an opportunity to ask any questions we might have about any specific incidents. I do not recall specifics from these meetings but don't remember having any concerns about any incidents of use of force.

52. In my view, the use of control and restraint is appropriate either as a spontaneous action or as a last resort to protect individuals and/or control a situation, or to enforce a legal return in line with the guidance. From memory, I did not consider at the time that the use of force incidents in the centre was excessive. The number of use of force incidents were discussed at the Monthly Contract Review Meetings and any spikes in use would be discussed, with G4S being required to provide an explanation.

53. I am not trained in control and restraint so have limited knowledge of this area, but I know that use of force should be used as a last resort and engaging with the person in an attempt to follow instructions without any use of force was always the first approach. In most cases that I was aware of either through reading reports or witnessing the incident, use of force was used as a last course of action to relocate a person either for the security and safety of environment or to legally enforce a return (from an IRC perspective, handing the person over safely to the escorting contractor). I recall at least one incident of use of force where there was criticism that force was used too quickly and more could have been done in the approach to obtain compliance with whatever instruction was being issued i.e. the complaint did not concern the nature of the force but instead concerned the fact that further attempts at compliance should have been made before force was used. I cannot recall the date of this incident but it was before the period with which the Inquiry is concerned (perhaps a year or so prior).

Detained Persons as time served foreign national offenders (TSFNO)

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54. I cannot think of any specific difficulties in managing the welfare and/or behaviour of detained persons caused by the co-location of TSFNOs with other detainees. Prior to arrival, each TSFNO is risk assessed for suitability for the centre. The reception process includes the Room Sharing Risk Assessment process which should have highlighted any risks of sharing with a particular person, as well as first-night in detention documentation. In my experience, the officers at Brook House did their best to match people with those that they had something in common, be it nationality religion etc. There was also the option to request a room change.

Abuse of detained persons

55. I did not have any specific concerns about the abuse (verbal or physical) of detained persons (either individually or collectively) at Brook House by staff, or about the abuse (verbal or physical) of detained persons (either individually or collectively) at Brook House by other detained persons. Although as set out below at paragraph 63 I do recall past instances involving inappropriate behaviour by G4S officers towards detained persons involving verbal and physical abuse, however these seemed to me to be isolated incidents and were dealt with appropriately by G4S, so I would not say that I had specific concerns.

The Panorama Programme

56. Callum Tulley: I didn't work with him. I vaguely remember talking to him one time in E wing where I asked him if he knew if the ground floor IT room had been in use. I don't recall seeing him or having any other interactions with him when walking around the centre, on the residential units or during visits to the Care and Separation Unit.

57. I do not believe that I appear in the programme. In terms of the impact that the Panorama programme (which aired on 4 September 2017) had on staff morale at Brook House, I think initially there was shock. Other than that, I can't recall what

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impact there was (I was away on planned annual leave shortly after the programme aired). I cannot recall the impact on detained persons at Brook House.

58. In terms of changes following the Panorama programme, I recall that an immediate change was the dismissing of DCOs within hours and days of the programme and the resignation of the Centre Director a couple of weeks later, which showed the level of seriousness being taken in relation to the Panorama programme. A 3-month action plan was completed by G4S within a couple weeks of the programme. I understood the plan to be that changes/feedback from the 3-month action plan and an independent review would have been fed into a comprehensive review for longer term changes. I left Brook House in January 2018 so I do not know how effective any measures taken were.

59. I acknowledge that the Panorama programme clearly showed that there was some inappropriate behaviour – before the programme I was aware of what I and (as far as I understood) G4S also considered to be isolated incidents in the past that were quickly dealt with by G4S in disciplining the relevant staff and bringing the information to the attention of the Home Office. These highlighted a small number of staff who did not live up to the expected standards of a Detainee Custody Officer representing the Home Office and responsible for the welfare of individuals in their care. There was no indication from these incidents that there was a wider issue. The behaviour of the individual staff shown on the Panorama programme was shocking.

Specific individuals

60. Whether I knew specific individuals listed by the Inquiry, I do not recall knowing them aside from the following:

- a. Nathan Ring: I knew Nathan as a DSM at Brook House. My understanding was that he covered the reception and discharge area and from what I witnessed, was professional in his approach. I did not have any concerns about his

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behaviour that I witnessed or knew about. I had limited interaction with him. He was sometimes in the morning operational/handover meetings and may have attended charter planning meetings. He was at a stag do I attended in the summer of either 2013 or 2014.

- b. Steve Webb: I knew who he was and would have said hello if I saw him, but no other interaction that I can recall. I did not have any concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about.
- c. Chris Donnelly: I've known Chris since Brook House opened. He was the Duty Operations Manager (Oscar 1) on many occasions when I completed R40/R42 welfare visits, so we visited individuals together, discussed extensions, return to normal association etc. We had a lot of interaction about detained persons over the years. I thought he was professional in his approach, although I was aware that he'd had a few disciplinary hearings during his time at Brook House which from memory were linked to leaving internal secure doors unlocked. I did not have any concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about. He was at a stag do I attended in the summer of either 2013 or 2014.
- d. John Connolly: I've known John over the years to say hello to and have brief conversations. I knew that he was at Tinsley House before Brook House opened. He was sometimes at Brook House but not sure in what capacity other than a C&R trainer. He led at least one PST refresher course at Brook House that I attended. I did not have any concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about.
- e. Dave Webb: I knew him to say hello to. Occasionally, I would see him on E Wing. Other than that, I don't recall any specific interaction with him. I did not have any concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about.

- f. Charles Frances: he was normally based in E Wing and was often in the unit office there when I went down to complete the R40/42 welfare visits. We sometimes had a chat, and he seemed like a nice person. I did not have any concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about.
- g. Slim Bassoud: I knew him because he was investigated for a reported alleged, inappropriate, remark he made and I took the decision to revoke his DCO accreditation whilst this was being investigated. He was suspended whilst the investigation was completed by G4S. He returned to work. I would say hello to him if I saw him on a wing and I remember him approaching me in the Home Office's office to ask about getting a new Home Office DCO ID card. I did not have any other concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about.
- h. Babatunde Fagbo: I remember saying hello if I saw him in the centre. I did not have any concerns about his behaviour that I witnessed or knew about.
- i. Nurse Jo Buss: I don't remember her, she may have been at meetings that I attended and may have been part of email exchanges with healthcare.

61. Other than this, I would usually say hello to any officer if I saw them in or around the centre.

Suggestions for Improvements and Any other Concerns

62. I left Brook House in January 2018, and so I have no further opinions to add regarding what could be changed or improved at Brook House in order to improve the health, safety and welfare of detained persons.

63. What added to my shock of the documented behaviour was the fact that not a single member of the G4S senior management team was aware of it. I was under the

impression that the G4S senior management team had a good hold and understanding of the daily interactions taking place in the centre, that staff knew how to escalate witnessed inappropriate behaviour, and that the senior management team were proactive in identifying and bringing to account any officers who acted in a way below the expected standards of someone responsible for the care of detained individuals. This was because G4S seemed to me to be able to identify incidents of staff misbehaviour and to deal with them appropriately and report them to the Home Office. I recall past instances involving inappropriate behaviour by G4S officers towards detained persons involving verbal and physical abuse. These were brought to the attention of the Home Office and investigated, resulting in the dismissal of the individual officers involved. A couple of examples I can recall is a case from around 2011 where a detained person on constant supervision informed the G4S Duty Director and me during a daily visit that there were scary faces at his room door window during the night. The Duty Director followed up on this remark by viewing the CCTV footage from the previous night state and witnessed two officers putting on a mask and standing at the window. From memory, following an investigation, both of these officers were dismissed. Another occasion, around the 2015 period, during a planned use of force, a G4S officer involved in the incident reported that a fellow officer had deliberately stamped on the detained person's foot during the control and restraint incident. This was investigated and the allegation was found to be true. From memory, the officer resigned before G4S could dismiss him. These reported instances did not suggest a problematic atmosphere at Brook House to me as they all appeared to be isolated incidents with single staff members. It appeared to me that G4S were robust in disciplinary processes and would certainly dismiss officers where it was appropriate to do so. I am not aware of any sanction of G4S itself in these cases (and G4S were visibly and proactively taking action in these instances against the identified members of staff).

64. It is also frustrating that the behaviour shown on Panorama wasn't raised by any of the witnesses at the time with the G4S senior management team as I believe that it

Witness Name: Paul Gasson
Statement No: First
Exhibits: None

would have been appropriately dealt with, based on my knowledge of how G4S investigated officers when a concern has been raised in the past.

<u>Statement of Truth</u>	
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.	
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.	
Name	Paul Gasson
Signature	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Signature</div>
Date	09/11/2021

Witness Name: Paul Gasson
Statement No: First
Exhibits: None