

IN THE BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

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FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF CHARLIE FRANCIS

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- I. I am providing the Chair and the Inquiry with this witness statement in response to the request for witness evidence issued under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, and in particular a focussed set of questions which the Inquiry sent to my solicitors.
- II. For ease, in this statement I have adopted the numbering of questions from the Inquiry's Rule 9 request.

Background

**1. Your name and date of birth.**

- i. My full name is Charles Francis. My date of birth is DPA

**2. Please set out the exact dates during which you worked at Brook House and the role(s) you held there.**

- i. I started at Brook House in around January/February 2011 as an 'ACO' – Assistant Custody Officer. ACOs worked front of house, and were not involved in the day-to-day management of detained people. I spent the majority of my working time in the gatehouse (the reception area, which you cannot get into the building without going through). At the gatehouse, my duties involved issuing staff with keys and radios, and dealing with deliveries and other vehicles coming in and out of Brook House. As an ACO, I also dealt with vehicles containing detainees going in and out of the centre. I checked the paper work was in order, and informed reception that there was a van coming in with detainees.

- ii. If I was not in the gatehouse, I could be tasked with the post room. I would check the names on incoming post against the computer. It would then get taken over to the wing to be distributed. Very occasionally, I was involved in the management of visits.
- iii. After I had worked at Brook House for about a year or so I had got to know the DCOs (Detainee Custody Officers). They told me that I should 'come over to the other side' and become a DCO like them. I applied to be a DCO in around approximately 2012. I have seen from the documents provided to me that I took a DCO test on 25 June 2012. I was accepted and undertook the DCO training course, which took 6 or 8 weeks, after which I started work as a DCO.
- iv. My first year or two years as a DCO was spent in the Control Room. However, I periodically had gone to the wing and got to know how it operated. After this time, I was assigned to a wing, and I spent much of my time on 'E Wing'.
- v. I was a DCO from approximately 2012 until my suspension and dismissal, which occurred as a result of the findings of the Panorama documentary.

**3. Please set out your employment history before that point.**

- i. Before I worked at Brook House, I was a builder. I am a bricklayer by trade, having completed an apprenticeship and City & Guilds qualification in bricklaying. Prior to working at Brook House, I had worked in various jobs as a bricklayer for many years. I had not had any experience working in a role similar to that of an ACO or DCO.

**4. Please confirm if you had ever worked for G4S before you were at Brook House.**

- i. I had not worked for G4S before Brook House.

**5. Please describe your current job.**

- i. Currently, I am unemployed.

- ii. Since my suspension and dismissal, I have worked intermittently in the construction industry and as a bricklayer.

**6. Please provide any comments you wish to make on the description of you that is set out by Rev Nathan Ward in DL0000141 on page 61 at paragraph 173.**

- i. I note that at paragraph 173 of Rev Ward's statement, he describes me in the following terms:

*'Charlie Francis was one of the old-school generation of 'boys don't cry' and had no other emotional framework to respond in any way to detainees. From what I witnessed while working at Gatwick IRCs, I did not perceive Charlie to have malintent [sic] but was incompetent and easily led. He was an example of someone who was caught up in the culture of Brook House – where he did not have any physical power, he would act up and try fit in with the macho culture when others were around. In both the incidents in which he is featured in Panorama, it is notable that he takes inappropriate action and uses inappropriate and offensive language when in the company of more dominant staff members....'*

- ii. I accept that some of the banter which took place was inappropriate. I never 'led' the banter, but I did follow and join in. I did not instigate, but I did contribute to it. I accept that my behaviour was inappropriate, I accept that my language was unacceptable, and I accept that I was led by more 'dominant' staff members as Rev Ward states in his statement. To the extent that I allowed myself to be led into this behaviour, I accept that Rev Ward has a point. I also agree that there was a 'macho' culture at Brook House and that I was led into that culture by other people. I will address Rev Ward's characterisation of my behaviour during the incidents he references later in this statement.

- iii. I do not agree with Rev Ward's opinion of how I did my job. I had a basic level of competence in order to do the job, which is how I got my position both as a DCO, and my assignment to E Wing. E wing was for individuals that were at risk, were shortly to be removed from the UK, or who required closer attention from officers. If I was incompetent, as suggested by Rev Ward, I do not think I would have been on that wing.
- iv. For example, there are at least two occasions in which my actions saved the life of a detained person. On one occasion, there was an individual on an 'ACDT', which is a plan for particularly vulnerable individuals, also called an 'orange book'. When an individual was 'on orange book' I would always glance into the cell when I walked past, even if it was not time to do so according to the intervals for monitoring in the orange book. On this occasion I walked past and saw the detained person's legs and feet were on the floor, coming from the toilet. I went into the room and saw that he had a belt around his neck. I hit my red button on the radio, and really struggled to get the belt from around his neck. Thankfully, the man survived and soon after, he was placed on 'constant watch', ie there was an officer monitoring the person around the clock.
- v. On the second occasion, Healthcare brought a man with breathing problems to our wing. The man had also been using 'spice'. Although caring for people who had taken drugs was Healthcare's responsibility and not for officers on a wing, in my experience it was common for detained people who had taken spice to be brought to E Wing. When that occurred, we would put the person in a room, and monitor them, until the drug had worn off. This particular individual was on the opposite side of the wing from me, and at the time I was doing a constant watch of another detained person. A detained person on the wing ran over to the room where I was doing the constant watch, and he told me that the man on spice was choking. I took the man who I was watching with me. The man who had taken spice had swallowed his spit. I put him on the floor and cleared the air away from his neck, by clapping him on the back.

7. Please review document HOM002988, which states you had had no warnings or disciplinary action concerning your conduct at work at Brook House before the Panorama programme. Please confirm whether that is correct.

i. The document is correct.

### Training

8. Please refer to CJS004059 which is a copy of your original training exam you did before you started at Brook House.

a. Please set out the training you received.

i. I received 6 – 8 weeks of classroom-based training, with shadowing toward the end. I estimate that there were between 8 and 10 individuals doing the training alongside me.

b. Please confirm whether and explain why you felt as though your training was sufficient for the circumstances you encountered at Brook House.

i. Looking back, I do not think the training I received was sufficient. I recall that more than one person who had undertaken DCO training left after a short time in the job because they specifically said that the training was inadequate.

ii. Personally, I did not expect to see the violence or the aggression from some of the detainees. It was an eye-opener. The level of violence and aggression was similar to what I would expect from the prison service. When I was on 'E' Wing, there could be a criminal deportee, or an asylum seeker, who were placed in the same room at the same time. I was not trained to deal with the situations where asylum seekers and criminal detainees were being held in the same place, or the challenges I would face where individuals who had been detained for 2 years rather than two months.

9. Please confirm whether you were offered, and attended, refresher training courses. If you did, please provide details of the courses. Was there any other training that you think should have been provided on an annual basis?

- i. We had a DCO Refresher Course every 12 months. The course took place in a training room at Brook House, and was undertaken with approximately 8, 10 or 12 DCOs.
- ii. During the training, we would run through the training manual, and we were taken through any changes to procedures in the manual. Often, officers on E Wing had to get involved with the healthcare and psychological issues of detained people. I recall saying that as officers, we needed to receive psychological training to understand and respond to what the detainee was experiencing. I remember that I was not alone in thinking this, and from my memory those who were on my shift thought the same thing.

10. Please refer to HOM000992 which states that you undertook refresher C&R training in July 2017.

a. Please explain what the refresher training in July 2017 involved.

- i. I have no specific recollection of this C&R training specifically. Ordinarily, when C&R refresher training was provided, those who received it spent 2-3 hours in the classroom, running through the manual. From there, we then went down to the gym, we called it the Dojo, and practiced Control and Restraint. We went through the scenarios led by the C&R Instructor (who could be a DCM, or DCO dependent only on whether they had the certification to hold the training).
- ii. The training took from approximately 8 am – 5 pm, during which time we had to be out of uniform, in tracksuit bottoms and trainers and soft shoes. There was a dummy cell set up, which had soft material on the floor and on the walls.

- b. Please describe how often you undertook refresher training.
  - i. Annually.
- c. Please set out any changes in the Control & Restraint training during the time you were at Brook House.
  - i. From my memory, the C&R training stayed pretty much the same throughout.
  - ii. I recall one minor change during the time I worked at Brook House. I think that the change was in procedure, so that DCOs could not restrain detainees on their front, but rather their side.

#### Case Reviews

- 11. On page 5 of CJS001035, in an interview dated 26 April 2017 it is stated that you “Gave Info” in a case review.
  - a. Please set out what this involved and the sort of information you would generally give.
    - i. Generally, ‘give info’ was where an individual DCO would provide an account of what had happened to the detainee during their shift or during a period of time.
    - ii. For example, if an individual was under constant supervision, an officer from the wing who may have undertaken that monitoring may be asked to provide information about the individual at the case review. ‘Gave Info’ in this particular case may have been in relation to the regularity with which monitoring took place, and the behaviour and needs of a detained person, or if he or she needed to be moved to another wing.

**b. Please set out the circumstances of this case.**

- i. That particular incident was one where the individual tried to self-strangulate. We went in and stopped him from hurting himself. Someone had called for help and we went in and sorted it out.

**Culture and Attitudes**

**12. Please review document CJS005973, which is a handwritten note of your interview on 6 September 2017.**

- i. Document CJS005973 has not been disclosed to my solicitors. As a result, I am not able to comment on the specifics within it. However, I will endeavour to answer the questions generally in this section. I may provide further clarification if and when I have had an opportunity to view the document.

**a. On page 3 you describe yourself as being “a bit soft” compared to other officers. Please explain why you said that.**

- i. By ‘a bit soft’, I believe I meant that I was a bit softer, more approachable and less ‘regime-ish’.

**b. Please describe the culture amongst staff at Brook House.**

- i. Generally, there were some very hard-nosed and regimental types, and there were others who were a bit more placid, more human. Some were uncaring, some had an attitude of ‘I have finished my shift, I am going home now’.
- ii. Some, including me, would ask how a detainee was getting on after an incident, or after they had applied for bail. Others just were not interested. There was a culture of inappropriate banter also, which looking back I can see was offensive. I clearly participated in that banter, and I now feel regret and sorrow that I did so. However, sometimes I would say things to get a reaction from a detained person. By saying something that may be considered offensive or inappropriate, I would do so to snap a detainee



out of an emotional or vulnerable state. I now know that that behaviour falls below the standard of a DCO.

iii. Sometimes, the banter and words used would be insensitive. I believe that this was a way of coping with the level of responsibility, and the often violent, aggressive or troubling things with which we regularly dealt. That behaviour and the culture it created I believe reflected that we were not properly trained to deal with these situations and how to respond to them. When I say this, I am in no way trying to excuse this behaviour. I wish to impress upon the Inquiry that there are no excuses for the behaviour which is shown in the video clips.

**c. You also say on page 3 that Yan Paschali would not be your choice to be working on E Wing. The handwriting is quite difficult to read at that point. Please confirm what the writing says and explain what you meant by this.**

i. As I stated above, I have not had a chance to review this document. As a result, I cannot comment on specifics of what I said, and I do not have enough context to know why I made specific comments.

ii. I will try and expand on my comment from my memory of Yan. I know that Yan came from a prison environment. All detainees on E Wing had particular issues, and I believed that Yan was too regimented, too hard a person to deal with the people housed on that wing. There was no compassion or softness in him.

**d. On page 2 you describe the work as difficult. Please explain why.**

i. I think that the video clips show that many of the situations we found ourselves in were very challenging. I can see how very upset Callum was when he was recording. The work was really tough and was mentally very tiring. Every detainee had a different issue, with self-harm, with solicitors' papers, or with drugs.

- ii. The work was constantly juggling plates, with detained people having problems and officers having to respond to a crisis with each detained person. I would go home after a 12 hour shift, and we would come back 6 hours later to do the same thing again which really took it out of me. I remember a new member of staff coming onto the wing. They asked 'how can you do this day in, and day out?'

**e. Please set out the working conditions.**

- i. On the E Wing, your usual colleagues may be elsewhere (sick, in training, or assigned elsewhere etc). The staff who would be brought in to make the numbers up, may have never experienced work on that Wing. E Wing was different, it was more involved, there were R40s, detainees had to be reviewed and officers had to be aware of issues for lots of detained people.
- ii. All the time a R40 is in the block, an officer had to be in that part of the wing. Most of the time there were not enough officers to cover that role. Usually, there would be two officers on E Wing, and one officer would have to go down to conduct those searches, or monitor, or appear at a case review. Very often I was the only officer on the wing, and it would increase the pressure I was under.
- iii. As above, it was common for Healthcare to bring an individual who was on drugs into the wing. When the drugs started to wear off, the person could become violent. As a result, there was always the threat of violence hanging in the air, because when people were coming off spice or other drugs people could be unpredictable, or violent.

## Incidents

25 April 2017

13. In relation to the unplanned Use of Force against D1527 on 25th April 2017, please consider the footage/transcripts at: • KENCOV1007 V2017042500020 (08:47-26:36) / TRN0000001 • KENCOV1007 V2017042500021 (00:00-27:49) / TRN0000000

- a. Please summarise your involvement in this incident, in particular whether you have anything to add or clarify to your account at SXP000105 (interview with police dated 4 November 2017).
  - i. I am happy to rely on the account I gave to the police at SXP000105, particularly because the events were fresher in my mind at that time than they are now. My involvement in the incident is as I described in that interview and as shown in the footage.
- b. Please provide any comments you wish to make on the footage.
  - i. Looking back at it now, I know that I should have picked better words to use to the detainee. I believe that I was quite calm, because I had become very used to situations where people were extremely upset. I believe that I had almost become numb to the emotion of the situation. I fully accept that the things I said were offensive and were not appropriate. At the time, I was dealing with a difficult situation. Looking back, I should not have said those insensitive things.
  - ii. Having reviewed the footage preparing this statement, I am shocked and surprised at how I behaved and how I reacted to that situation. I did not want to have someone die on my shift, and that may have made me unsympathetic in the moment. When I first dealt with someone who had tried to commit suicide, it was shocking and upsetting. After a time, it became part of my every day. You cannot go home and explain to your wife or your friend what you had done that day, because they would not or could not understand what happened regularly at work. However, I regret that my behaviour was inappropriate.

- c. At page 5 of SXP000120, Callum Tulley states at one point you took the detained person's arm. Please detail the exact Control & Restraint that you employed during this incident.
- i. The Control and Restraint I used was to take hold of the detainee's arm which I believe was what we were trained to do. I knew that the detained person had a battery, but I was not sure where the battery was. The reason I took control of the person's arm is because I wanted to make sure he did not put the battery in his mouth.
- d. Please explain whether you were asked to provide an account of your involvement at the time for the purposes of a use of force record, and if not, why not.
- i. Nobody in management asked for a Use of Force or Incident Report in relation to this incident at any time from the time of the incident until my termination.
- ii. I cannot say why I was not asked to provide an account by other people. From my perspective, Control and Restraint is where there are three officers or more involved in the management of a detained person. My impression at the time was that there were no more than two people who were touching the detained person during this incident. My understanding of the requirements to give an account were that if only two DCOs were touching the detained person, no Use of Force Report had to be made.
- iii. Additionally, I anticipated that if a Report was necessary Yan would do it. When I spoke to the police, I told the police officer that I saw Yan doing paperwork later that day and I assumed that he would be producing an Incident Report.

- e. Please comment on whether you consider that the force used during this incident was reasonable and proportionate.
- i. I believe the force that I applied was reasonable and proportionate, but I stated at the time that I thought the force Yan had used has gone too far.
- f. Please set out whether you had any concerns about any other staff members involved in the incident.
- i. I did not have any particular concerns about any staff members at the time because their behaviour was typical of the culture, and their behaviour was normal to me then. As I have said elsewhere in this statement, however, my opinion has changed about the language used by staff and the culture at Brook House.
- g. Please review document CJS005973. On page 7 you state “I was concerned that (Mr Paschali) had gone too far, I should have reported it”. Please explain what you meant by this.
- i. As I have said above, this document has not been disclosed to me so I cannot comment on specifics. However as I have said above I was concerned that Yan had gone too far.
- h. Please provide any comments on the suggestion at page 5 of document CJS004318 that “perhaps [you] didn’t report it to save Yan”.
- i. I do not know why I made the comment in this interview. I believe that at the time I was interviewed, which was 4 months after the incident, I may have been speculating.
- i. Please provide any comments on the suggestion that you did not write a use of force report because what DCO Paschali had done could be close to illegal.
- i. It is not true to say that I did not write a Use of Force Report because DCO Paschali had used illegal force on the detainee.

- j. **Please confirm whether you were told by anyone not to write a use of force report, or whether there was an agreement not to do so. If so, provide details.**
  - i. To the best of my recollection, I was not aware of any agreement not to write a use of force report and I was not involved in any decision-making if any were made. I do not recall that I was asked or told not to write a use of force report by anyone.
- k. **Please provide any comments or corrections you wish to make in relation to Callum Tulley's account of this incident set in SXP000120.**
  - i. I do not recall Callum being opposite me, on the other arm of the detainee. Although my memory of the events are not fresh, having seen the video, and having considered Callum Tulley's statement, his recollection appears to me to be correct.
- l. **At page 2 of document CPS000019, Yan Paschali stated that he was "bracing [the detained person's] neck". Please provide any comments you wish to make in relation to this statement.**
  - i. I do not agree with Yan's statement. In my opinion, Callum Tulley's account is accurate.
  - ii. When restraining a detainee by holding the head, in my experience everyone holds the detained person's head differently. For example, my practice was to hold the head between my knees and thighs from a kneeling position, and holding the head down to prevent the detainee thrashing upwards to harm themselves. When restraining, the hands of the officer should be on the head, not on the neck. Having reviewed the video in the process of preparing this statement, it is clear that Yan is not bracing the head as would have been appropriate.

- m. Please review document CJS005973. On page 7 you state that you "nudged" Mr Paschali to get him to stop. Please describe anything else you did to get Mr Paschali to stop.
- i. I cannot remember nudging Mr Paschali, but I know that this is what I said when the memories were fresh in my mind. I do not remember that I did anything else to get Mr Paschali to stop.
- n. Please review page 8 of document TRN0000002 and explain why you told the detained person to "stop being stupid".
- i. I believe that I wanted to bring the detainee out of his state, to stop him shouting and screaming. I wanted to bring him down, settle him down, so that I could talk to him. I wanted to bring him back to reality. However, I now realise these comments were inappropriate and offensive and I regret having made them.
- o. Please detail exactly what you said to D1527 and why.
- i. I cannot remember now exactly what I said, but my words are recorded on the video that was made by Callum.
- p. Please identify which member of staff cut off the detained person's shirt at page 6 of SXP0000120.
- i. I cannot remember but, again, this may be shown on the video.
- q. Please review page 10 of document TRN0000002. Please explain why you made the following comments later on "we're getting bored of this", "are you a man or a mouse" and "stop being a baby".
- i. As I said above, at question (n), I believe that I wanted to bring the detainee out of his state, to stop him shouting and screaming. I wanted to bring him down, settle him down, so that I could talk to him. I wanted to bring him back to reality. However, I now realise these comments were inappropriate and offensive and I regret having made them.
- r. Please review document CJS005973. On page 9 you state "it wasn't me saying that, it was Steve Webb". Please explain what that comment was in relation to.

- i. I have not been able to review CJS005973 because it has not been provided to me. For the avoidance of any doubt, the comments at question (q), above, were said by me.
- s. In the G4S investigation [please see document CJS004318], it is recorded that you described the Panorama showing of this incident as “clever journalism” (at page 6). Please explain what you meant by that comment, and whether you still agree with it.
  - i. I did not mean to undermine the Panorama programme, which has been important in bringing the problems at Brook House to light. What I meant to say was that the Panorama report did not show that I was using these words to bring the detained person back to reality. This was a comment by way of an aside, and does not reflect my attitudes toward the programme or these issues. I do not wish for that comment to be seen as me attacking the Panorama report.
- t. Please identify who in this incident would be required to complete a use of force report.
  - i. My understanding is that every individual who puts ‘hands-on’ the detainee needs to complete a use of force report.

6 July 2017

14. In relation to the alleged verbal abuse against D728 on 6 July 2017, please review:
- Video KENCOV1044 V2017070600006 (at 01:00-30:00)
  - Video KENCOV1044 V2017070600007 (at 00:00-30:00)
  - Document TRN0000094 at pages 5-18
- in which it is recorded that:
- You said: “you won’t go anywhere you fucking carry on like this you’ll stay in there”;
  - You said: “piss us off and you won’t have a shower you won’t have anything”;
  - Another member of staff shouted at the same detained person, “if I have to come back here again you will not be going anywhere you will be staying here permanently do you understand?” and later said he wanted to “punch the cunt”, to which you replied, “if you don’t I will”.
- a. Please summarise your involvement in this incident.



- i. I was in charge on E Wing CSU (Care and Separation Unit) that day. The detained person had not been receiving his medication from healthcare and so he was distressed. I remember that quite a few people would end up on CSU due to disruptive behaviour over medication issues. I believe that the individual was on constant watch, and that he was putting toothpaste over the window so he couldn't be monitored.
- b. Please provide any comments you wish to make on the footage.**
  - i. Steve Webb was the manager in charge on that day. As the footage shows, he became angry with the detained person. My comments were inappropriate and I should not have said what I said. I was supporting, or agreeing, with Steve, which I should not have done. I do not believe I became particularly angry with the detained person, but I believe that Steve did.
- c. Please explain why you said that if another member of staff did not punch the detained person, that you would.**
  - i. I had no intention of punching the detained person and I never would have done.
  - ii. This was highly inappropriate banter. Effectively, I was joining in with what Steve Webb had said. On reflection, I should not have done so. I can see that my support for his comment might have encouraged further abuse of this detained person, which I regret. There was no malice, as I stated in my interview with G4S. I would not have said this to the detained person; the comment was made to Steve Webb in a one-to-one conversation with him in the circumstances described above.
- d. Please explain why you said if the detained person continued to behave in a certain way, you wouldn't let him have a shower "or anything".**
  - i. This was a method by which I tried to get the detained person to conform, by trying to persuade him that there would be undesirable consequences if he did not modify his behaviour toward staff. This was an entirely empty threat. All detained persons would receive showers, and I would never create a situation

where a detained person went without a shower, or without any basic need. I recognise that this sort of behaviour from me was inappropriate and only would have served to distress the detained person further. On reflection, I regret saying what I said.

**e. At page 7 of CJS004318, you state that you spoke to D728 in the way you did because “we had a shit day”. Please explain why you feel that explains your actions.**

- i. Having had a “shit day” does not explain or excuse my actions. I was working in a highly stressed environment and, as is shown in the video, there were two ‘First Responses’ within 20 minutes, which was an unusual and very stressful situation as generally speaking those calls are a couple of hours apart. I accept that this was a flippant and inappropriate comment.

**f. Please confirm whether you reported this incident.**

- i. I did not report this incident, because there was no physical contact with the detainee.

#### Interview with Dominic Aitken

**15. Please review document INQ000083, which includes notes of interviews you gave to Dominic Aitken on 18 July 2017 and 20 July 2017.**

**a. Please explain why you agreed to be interviewed by Dr Aitken.**

- i. I was interviewed by Dr Aitken following time off work after I had been bitten by a detained person. I think I was required to be interviewed by him as part of the process returning to work.

**b. Please provide any comments you have on the notes of the interviews.**

- i. I would like to say that I stressed during the interview that I saw my role as trying to help the detained people and trying to understand their problems.
- ii. I gave an example of a detained person whose life I saved when he tried to strangle himself with a belt, who hugged me and thanked me afterwards. I

can also say that in the interview I was quite judgmental about detained people who were attempting self-harm as a way of seeking attention or as a way of manipulating the staff. I distinguished between cases where I knew there was a genuine suicide risk and where there was attention seeking. I expressed dissatisfaction at having to treat both of them just the same where one of them was at great risk and needed staff to be very vigilant and to care for him.

iii. However, looking back, I accept that no matter what my impressions had been it was not appropriate for me to treat detained people differently. I now understand that this behaviour is often a result of mental illness or distress. I regret my comments but I hope the interview record shows that I was never malicious towards detainees and that I had allowed the stress of my working situation to affect my judgement. Essentially, I took the view that there were some officers who were empathetic and suited to working on E Wing but there were others who were unsympathetic and should not have been permitted to work with vulnerable detained people. I regarded myself as having been in the first category.

iv. I would like to highlight what I said in my interview with Dr Aitken, that:

*"And down here you've probably noticed it takes a certain officer to work down here and sometimes they put the wrong officers. It's a very sensitive mood, it's a very sensitive area they're in. It could go either way, some of them don't do unintentionally, put some of them just get pushed over the edge by an officer's reaction or what they hear. So you have to be careful what you.... Your actions have gotta be careful when you're dealing with that sort of person, and a lot of them don't understand that. They just assume that they're all doing it just to get out of detention"*

16. At page one of the same document, you say that you "never read the sheet" setting out what the detained person had done.

**a. Please explain why you did not read the sheet, and why others did.**

- i. I was trying to explain that I did not want to make value judgements about a detained person by reading into their background. I was making the point that I treated the detained people as humans and not as animals, and that my conduct toward them did not depend on their history or what they had done.

**b. Please set out the purpose of the sheet.**

- i. The purpose of the sheet is the history of the detained person, and provides information in relation to the nature of the detained person's criminal history if they were criminal deportees.

**17. You say, talking about detained people, "After all, they're a person. That's the way I treat them as they are a human being, they are a person. They're not an animal, you can get people with that kind of attitude. They're not gonna be what's classed as an experienced officer because they've just got that mindset that the way they are." Please identify the staff members that treated or thought of detained people as animals.**

- i. I have already provided an answer to this at 16(a) above.

**18. At page 2 of document INQ0000083, you are recorded as saying "used to have basic, more softly approach, increased bed numbers feel unsafe", "not enough support" and "we seem to take anybody".**

**a. Please confirm whether you informed a manager that increased bed numbers left you feeling unsafe. If so, provide details and the outcome.**

- i. I think that the majority of staff were uneasy about bed space. I did not speak to a manager because the added bed space was being added so quickly. There was talk of three beds in a room, for example, and then it would just happen. We did not have the opportunity to raise the issue.

**b. Please explain what you meant by "not enough support".**

- i. By not enough support, I was referring to my impression that nobody wanted to work on E Wing. Quite often, a colleague and me working on E Wing could not get break cover, and we would have to wait from 7:45 am to after 5 pm until we could have a break because we would not have the staff to cover us during the break. If it were not for some of the DCMs, who would step into a more junior role so that we would be able to have lunch, we would never be able to take a break.

**c. Please explain what you meant by “we seem to take anybody”.**

- i. I do not remember why I said this. I could have been referring to the mixing of criminal deportees and asylum seekers. Alternatively, I could have been referring to the staff employed at Brook House. I have addressed my concerns about both of these issues earlier in this statement.

**19. At page 2 you stated “substance abuse but no training healthcare supposed to check, sometimes do sometimes don't”. Please explain what you meant.**

- i. I meant that when someone was on spice, high, a member of healthcare would bring the individual to the E Wing and place them in a bed in a room. An officer would have to stay with the detained person, and monitor them. We had other things to do, and this was a job for healthcare and not for officers. Yet we were given this extra responsibility to deal with those individuals, and Healthcare would sometimes leave a detained person with us for a long period of time.

**20. At page 3 you stated “Most of them think self-harming will get them out quicker. And as we explain to them, and also as the immigration will tell them, doing self-harm doesn't make their case go any quicker.” Please expand on what you meant.**

- i. I believe what I meant by this comment was that I saw it as part of my role to try and persuade detained people not to self-harm, and that there was nothing to be gained by doing so. It would not help them get out of Brook House.

- ii. To give an example, we had a Polish man who came to E Wing because he was being removed to Poland. He was with us because he was at risk of self-harm. My colleague and me told him not to do anything (harm himself) because his situation could all change at once. It was that night, he cut himself up badly and had to go to the hospital. He received 40 stitches. When he came back from the hospital, he told us that his deportation had been cancelled. We tried to explain that sort of thing to the detained people.

21. At page 3, when asked how often you found self-harm to be connected to a detained person's case, you say "A lot of it is. It is connected. Some of it's not. Some of it is attention seeking. Got a couple down here at the moment, they want something and they feel the only way to get it is to do what they do" Please explain what you mean by this and provide any further details you are able to recall.

- i. I have already answered this question above. I refer to that answer in response to this question.

22. At page 4, you are recorded as saying "But you do, on the other hand, you do get the ones that are faking it, and you know – you just know by the way they act, by the way they talk – that they're not going to do it. There's one at the moment that's been on constant for months and you know he's not actually going to kill himself. He puts the ligatures round, and fakes it, he lays there, y'know, pretending he's...but he doesn't pull it. He actually ties it but he doesn't...you can get your fingers down there quite comfortably, he can breathe quite easily. It's just his motion and the way he (makes inhaling / choking sound) and it's fake. Cos it's attention. He wants attention. Cos he wants us to give him something. Then that makes me cross cos I've got another one on the wing that is intent. Y'know, this guy is intent on harming himself, but I've gotta treat this guy the same. Initially, y'know, you don't differentiate, you don't say, 'Pfft, leave him'. You've gotta talk to him again, then of course the other guy sees this so you get a chain reaction. He's started so I'll do it. Not because he wants something it's just because it's given him the idea to do something." Please provide further and more specific details about what you meant by this.

- i. Again, I have explained how I would form judgements about those who were genuinely at risk of self-harm and those who used self-harm for other reasons. I fully accept that I was wrong to form these judgements. I regret and apologise for

not taking into account that mental health issues can show themselves in a range of ways.

**23. At pages 5 to 6, you stated in relation to attempted suicide and self-harm “There was no debrief. You don’t get any debriefs after. You’ve dealt with it, health care go in, and you just carry on with your day. You don’t get taken off anywhere for a debrief, there’s none of that. No debriefs.” Please explain the impact that you thought a debrief would have.**

- i. There were no debriefs. When someone self-harmed, or attempted it, Healthcare would come down and put a bandage on it. DCOs would then just go back to what they were doing. Management did not debrief us or there was no attempt to do so.
- ii. My view is that a debrief would, depending on the situation, make me feel confident in what I had done if I had done all I could. Alternatively, it would give us the opportunity to review what had been done and to see if there was something which could have been done differently or better. That is the whole point of a debrief, because you learn from what you have done.

**24. At page 8, you comment about prescribed drugs being removed from detained people upon admission and it then taking a number of days to get their medication back.**

- a. Please set out any explanation you received as to the reasons for that action.
  - i. Any medication that a detained person came in with got taken out of their property. The medication would be bagged, tagged and handed to healthcare. Detained people were not allowed medication in their room. They had to go to healthcare to get that medication, up to three times a day. I do not know why that approach was taken but that was the way it always was.
- b. Please describe any time you raised any concerns about this with managers and/or healthcare, and the outcome.

- i. Whilst I did not raise this issue with management, we did regularly raise the issue with healthcare as and when detained people complained or raised issues about their medication. Healthcare would answer the question (eg that the doctor has to be seen), or we would be told that Healthcare would look into it. I would come back on shift a few days later, and often the detained people would not have received their medication. In a number of cases, the delay from Healthcare would cause people to become very agitated and distressed. As an officer I saw it as part of my role to help detained people get their medication.

**25. At page 8 you say “Not one of us working down here has received any psychological training or drug abuse training or anything. It was supposed to be, there will be a healthcare member down to deal with that”.**

**a. Please set out your views as to whether such training would have helped.**

- i. My view was that providing training would have helped us to know how to deal with people suffering with mental health or psychological issues. The only information I received was from the Registered Mental Nurse, or from overhearing and listening to the psychologist/psychiatrist when he came onto the Wing. I believe that it would have helped enormously if I had received basic training in psychological issues or drug abuse. It would have made dealing with vulnerable detained people more straightforward, effective. It would have also improved outcomes for the detained people.

**b. Please indicate whether you were ever offered training on drug and alcohol abuse by RAPT/the Forward Trust.**

- i. I did not receive any training, and I do not recall any training being offered to me.

**26. At page 9 you refer to an underage person being placed on E Wing. Please explain whether that occurred during the Relevant Period, and set out what happened to that individual.**



- i. I did speak about my concern that an underage person was on E Wing. However, I cannot remember whether this happened in the April – August relevant period. In relation to the underage detained person I was referring to, when it was established that he was a child he was transferred to another facility.

**Investigation after the Panorama Documentary**

**27. On 24 August 2017, you were sent a letter from the BBC about your actions being featured on Panorama. On 25 August 2017, you were given a precautionary suspension on full pay in advance of the Panorama broadcast [please see document HOM001198].**

**a. Please set out what was said to you at that meeting.**

- i. This meeting took place in Ben Saunders' office. He told me that there was a Panorama documentary taking place and that I was named. I was told that I was going to be suspended.

**b. Please set out your initial reaction to the being told about the forthcoming broadcast.**

- i. I was extremely shocked when I was told.

**c. Please describe your initial reaction upon viewing the Panorama programme.**

- i. I could not believe that it was me on the programme. Because I did not answer the BBC's letter, my face was pixelated and my name was not used. Nevertheless I was still shocked and I could not believe it was me.

**28. Please review document CJS004318 (disciplinary investigation report) and CJS000813 at page 4 (wider G4S report). Please provide any comments you wish to make on the findings made against you.**

- i. I accept the findings of the disciplinary investigation report. In relation to the matters addressed in that report, I rely on the content of my statement above.
- ii. In relation to the wider G4S Report, however, I am not able to accept that I knowingly put any lives at risk; or that I failed to report incidents in the hope that they would never come to light. These are comments and do not appear to be findings. I have fully accepted my failings and I rely on this witness statement and the findings upon which I was dismissed as setting out the true extent of those failings.

**29. You were dismissed for gross misconduct on 2 October 2017 [please see document CJS0072973]. Please provide any comments on the disciplinary process and outcome.**

- i. I accept that I was dismissed. I have no complaint to make in relation to the process by which I was dismissed.

**30. Please review document HOM001170. This document shows that a request was made for the Home Office (Paul Gasson) to decide on “reinstatement or revocation”. Mr Gasson says that on the basis of the disciplinary outcome letter, “revoke based on the proven allegations of not following policy following a use of force incident putting the detainee at substantial risk and inappropriate comments made to the same detainee following the proven, inappropriate, unreported use of force incident”.**

- a. Please explain to what extent this related to your certification as a DCO. Please provide details of any appeal, if any, you made against your dismissal or the revocation of your certification.

- i. I did not appeal against my dismissal or revocation of my certification. I have since moved on and despite that I am not employed, since the Panorama programme was broadcast whenever I have worked it has been in the construction industry.

**31. Please review document CJS001107, which is the PSU’s investigation report into the allegations made by D1527.**

- a. It is noted at page 7 that you were invited to take part in the investigation but did not respond. Please explain why.

- i. I do not remember receiving a letter inviting to respond.
- b. Please provide any comments you wish to make on the findings reached.
  - i. I have no comment to make on the findings of the Home Office Security Professional Standards Unit's investigation. I rely on the contents of this statement for my comments in relation to the allegations which have been made about me.

#### STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe the contents of this statement to be true.

Signed:

**Signature**

CHARLIE FRANCIS

Dated:

22 February 2022