

Witness name: Adel Hinder

Statement no: 1

Dated:

Brook House Inquiry

DRAFT Witness statement of Adel Hinder

I, **ADEL HINDER**, will say as follows, adopting the headings in the questionnaire provided to me: -

1. My role was that of Detainee Custody Officer. I was employed at Brook House between 2016 – 2020.

Culture at Brook House

2. I did not experience any specific culture at Brook House. There was a regular staff turnover.
3. I never experienced any issues that caused concern relating to general protection of detainees at Brook House with the management of staff or relating to the protection of vulnerable detainees.
4. I felt the senior management at Brook House could have been more present on the floor and could have been more supportive of staff. This is not a criticism of all management, some were very professional and in their roles.

Training

5. I cannot remember the dates of my training but it will have been at the beginning of my recruitment. I felt the training was professionally given and thorough, although I think we should have been made aware of the reality of the job and what the role consisted of much sooner than we were.
6. Having received the training and then started work I felt I would have performed my role better if the training had had more depth so as to provide a good understanding of the role. Trainers needed to take a more personal approach.

Staff Behaviour

7. I did not experience or was made aware of any racist behaviour or any homophobic or misogynistic behaviour or attitudes by staff during my time at Brook House.
8. I was not aware of any staff bringing drugs into Brook House.
9. I did not experience bullying nor was I aware of other staff being bullied.

Disciplinary and Grievance Process

10. I had not involvement with any disciplinary or grievance investigations.

Staffing levels

11. There was constant staff turnover at Brook House. I believe that due to staff turnover there was a lack of consistency and continuity which I felt impacted on both staff and detainees.

Treatment of Detained Individuals

12. During the period 1 April 2017 – 31 August 2017 I do not recall being involved in any incidents which involved the use of force/control and restraint techniques. I was not aware of any incidents that I was not directly involved with which used force/control and restraint techniques that I had concerns about.

13. As an alternative to the use of force/control and restraint techniques, I felt that if you built a rapport with detainees and were an approachable and understanding person you could de-escalate incidents using verbal communication.

14. There was detainee support via Healthcare for management of their wellbeing and mental health.

15. I do not believe it is always good to mix FNOs with immigration detainees as immigration detainees have not been involved or exposed to criminal activity. It is not always a healthy mix.

16. I had no concerns about detainees being abuse (verbally or physically) by staff although I did witness staff being abuse by detainees on a regular basis.

17. As far as abuse of detainees by other detainees goes I would say that I believe that FNOs and immigration detainees was not a health mix.

18. If a detainee had a complaint the concerns would be raised with the Custody Officer. That concern would then be passed to the Detainee Custody Manager. From there the appropriate process would have been followed.

The Panorama Programme

19. I was in the Panorama programme at 18.12. My face was blacked out as I was not part of those investigated. I was standing outside the wing being asked about the age of a detainee. As this was an incident around 4 years ago therefore making it difficult to remember accurately how and when I became aware that there was someone who was potentially under 18, it would have been when the question was posed to me based on that split moment opinion. No training had been received directly. If you was approached directly by a detainee claiming to be under age you was to report it to a manager. I was not aware of a reporting obligation on staff if a detainee was claiming to be under 18. I did not take any steps to notify anyone as the detainee would have been booked in in reception where age relating questions would have been asked. If the detainee was under age whilst going through the questionnaire that question would have been raised. That was a personal opinion at that particular moment. I am not aware of any other individuals claiming to be under 18.

20. Following airing of the programme staff morale was affected in many ways; there was a lack of trust between staff and much more awareness and accountability. Changes were implemented at Brook House and these made a difference to the overall atmosphere.
21. Following the programme being aired a number of individuals at Brook House were either investigated, disciplined, dismissed or left. I would say that over the years I worked with most of those individuals at some stage. I cannot remember the precise dates. I had no concerns or witnessed any untoward behaviour by any of them.
22. I felt the Panorama programme was totally unbalanced. There was no representation of the fact that staff on a daily basis did a fantastic job supporting and assisting detainees in whatever way they could. The programme put every member of staff in the same bracket which I felt was totally unfair.

Other Matters

23. To improve matters at Brook House I think they need to retain quality staff so as to maintain continuity and consistency in the working pattern.

Statement of Truth

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 of its truth.

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[Adel Hinder]

29/08/2021.....

DATED