

Witness name: Andrew Kemp

Statement no: 1

Dated:

Brook House Inquiry

DRAFT Witness statement of Andrew Kemp

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

1. My role at Brook House was that of Detainee Custody Office. I was employed there from 21 August 2017 to 9 January 2018.
2. I entered the security industry in July 2012 and started working for a company called Richards Events which specialised in the event industry. At the time, I was also working as a door supervisor at a nightclub.
3. I then went on to working for another security company called Wise Security – I spent 4 years with them until I left my role as one of the senior security supervisors.
4. After leaving Wise Security, I became a self-employed enforcement agent on behalf of Marston Holdings. This role ultimately did not work out for me which is when I applied for G4S at Brook House IRC. I joined G4S in August 2017 and left in January 2018.
5. My reason for joining Brook House as a DCO was, I thought it would be a very good steppingstone towards a knowledgeable career. At the time, my partner was also living not too far from Brook House and so I applied, was accepted and my partner and I relocated. My reason for leaving was simply, I just didn't feel safe anymore. Detainees on a certain wing were able to see the staff car park, could watch you pull into the car park, in your car, with your license plate clearly visible. The hourly pay was absolutely shocking compared to the level of requirements and expectation. I guess for me personally, the consequence just vastly outweighed the risk.
6. I then took up a position as a security operations manager for a company called McKenzie Arnold – again, this was a position that did not work out for me due to business ethics. I left McKenzie Arnold and joined a company called Level 1 Group – this time as an Area Manager. Unfortunately, during my employment with Level 1 Group, I became unwell and ultimately ended up being off work from October 2018 – January 2019. Having been off for so long, I thought it was only best to resign and start afresh.
7. In January 2019, I was offered a job by Wilson James working as a Plant Protection Officer at a prestigious German car manufactory plant.
8. In October 2019, I was offered a job role, in a managerial position, working for Securitas which is where I have been employed ever since. October 2019 – present date.
9. As far as professional qualifications go, I am in possession (or have been) of the following qualifications -
 - a. SIA Door Supervisor as well as SIA CCTV license.
 - b. IOSH
 - c. FAAW
 - d. Administration of Oxygen and Entonox
 - e. Obtaining drug and alcohol samples
 - f. Fire Marshal

- g. NVQ Level 2 and 3 in Spectator Safety
- h. Level 3 National Diploma in Security Management
- i. Kiasu Crisis Management training
- j. Home Office Control and Restraint
- k. Enforcement Agent license
- l. Project Griffin
- m. Compartment Firefighter training (CFFT)
- n. Mental Health First Aider (Mental Health England)

Culture at Brook House

10. Personally, I felt as though everybody, more specifically the detainees. "stuck to their own". For example, detainees from Pakistan would group together, detainees from Jamaica would stick together and so on and so forth. Culturally, the divide between the detainees from Pakistan and India was very visible. The management of detainees was absolutely horrendous. Foreign National Offenders should not have been locked up with an elderly "over-stayer". Culturally and utterly immoral. The thought process behind anything was completely non-existent.
11. I do not think that Brook House had its own culture but as individuals, everybody had their own culture. Staff, detainees, visitors, everybody.
12. Personally, I just think the underpaid & understaffed situation at Brook House had an extremely negative impact on the atmosphere. I don't necessarily think that effected the care of detainees, it certainly didn't on my behalf but naturally, there is room for improvement in everything. The set up deemed adequate, I disagree with. For example, there never appeared to be any accountability for staff members that would need to be posted to constant suicide watch. The DCO needs to be pulled from somewhere, more often than not a wing – that wing then becomes vulnerable. By accountability I mean, when a detainee has been placed on suicide watch for an unknown amount of time, I felt as those G4S should have arranged an additional DCO for however many shifts required to compensate for the loss of a on duty DCO more than likely from one of the wings to cover the suicide watch.
13. After the BBC Panorama programme, it became very evident that it was "Detainees and then Detainee Custody Officers" – some people, from both parties definitely drove a wedge between each other.
14. From what I saw, the protection of those detained at Brook House was very hit and miss. I think it solely depended on the individual officer/manager. Processes and policies were put in place by G4S. Personally, I always went above and beyond to ensure protection of detainees at Brook House. When they wake up each morning and go to bed each night, they are still human. Nobody deserves mistreatment. One thing that I can stress is that everybody I ever worked with were very good at maintaining ACDT on time - Assessment Care in Detention and teamwork.
15. The management of staff by G4S I felt was absolutely abysmal. On many occasions I was called into work or told to stay behind to help with removal of detainees, quite often until very late at night. If not into early hours of the morning and then still expected to come into work the following day having only left 4 hours prior.
16. On one occasion, I was verbally and racially abused by a member of staff from the black community, a fellow colleague and the investigation and chain of events was just terrible. No consistency, no care, no obligation to myself.
17. Again, as far as the management of vulnerable individuals goes, I strongly believe that there was a good consistency of regular checks and conversations. I certainly never saw any degrading or derogatory treatment towards any vulnerable individuals.
18. To summarise my opinion of management and leadership in one word, non-existent. With the exception of the daily morning briefing and my exit interview, I never spoke with senior management. During my training, values and priorities were drummed into us...as soon as I stepped foot into Brook House upon training completion and with the release of the Panorama programme, values and priorities just never seemed to be there. Not for the officers as individuals but the company itself. Morale was just completely shot to pieces.

Training

19. The start of my course was 21/08/2017. It lasted for a period of 12-13 weeks due to the knock-on effect of the release of the Panorama programme. There were a number of weeks of cancelled training due to staff shortages and trainers being unavailable. We were given a few weeks off with full pay. Without blaming the programme, the training course was heavily affected.
20. I believe the training that I received was substantial and credible enough to allow me to perform my duties. No amount of training can prepare you for the sights, sounds and smell of the building but as far as knowledge and preparation, I was comfortable and confident with the training.
21. The only negative I can come up with is the saying the “blind leading the blind” springs to mind. The staff turnover was so incredibly high, I was already mentoring somebody else 5 weeks into my job.
22. Each morning whilst collecting our keys and radio, there would be a scheduling list on the wall stating who is posted to where for the day. On a number of occasions, I was asked to mentor a new DCO due to having recently completed training myself – information and the way of doing things would still be fairly solid in my head. Experience didn't lead from the forefront.
23. There was never a formal agreement for mentoring a new member of staff in place. My nature is that of success. I like to succeed in everything that I do, and I equally like to see others succeed. Should I have maybe questioned mentoring another DCO so soon into recently completing training myself? Yeah, in hindsight maybe I should have but the appearance of G4S and how they operated was, they couldn't care less regardless of whether you questioned that set up or not. A DCO is only a number after all.
24. I had never received any formal training on mentoring others.
25. There was never any set period of mentorship. One day, a new DCO could be on the wing with me, the next, they could be on a completely separate wing. “Getting a feel for the place” I imagine.

Staff Behaviour

26. In my time at Brook House IRC, I personally and categorically cannot express enough, I did not hear or was witness to any racist attitudes or behaviours towards any detainees.
27. As previously stated, the only racist remark I ever heard was directed to myself from another member of staff.
28. I was never witness to or was aware of any homophobic or misogynistic behaviour or attitudes by staff.
29. I was 100% definitely not aware of anything relating to bringing drugs into Brook House. I would imagine if the security team were aware of this or had knowledge of that, it would have been kept relatively secret from staff outside of the immediate issue.
30. The only subject of bullying I experienced was from a fellow colleague. To the best of my knowledge and memory, I cannot recall any complaints or concerns regarding bullying of other members of staff.

Disciplinary and Grievance Process

31. There were instances of being involved in disciplinary/grievance investigation but I cannot recall the dates. I remember being on duty once and at the time I was posted to B wing with a fellow colleague – I cannot remember her name but can describe her. I was instructed to attend a situation on E wing. Once the situation on E wing had been dealt with, a friend/colleague of the colleague I was working on B wing with approached me in front of all detainees and colleagues and had said something along the lines of “You've left my friend on her own on B wing you fat white fuck”. The lady saying this was of black ethnicity. I, along with a couple of witnesses including staff AND detainees, raised this issue with the detainee custody manager on duty at the time. Reports were raised. The name of the DCO is Anaysha however, I cannot remember her surname and I am no longer in contact with anybody from Brook House so am unable to find out her surname.

32. As far as the investigation goes, I briefly remember it being discussed with me but bizarrely me and the lady were continuously posted to the same wing together. I kept raising this and refusing to work on the same wing as her.
33. To the best of my knowledge, I do not recall any disciplinary action being taken against the female, but I think she may have left her role.
34. The incident involving abuse from another member of staff took place in the month of November 2017.
35. I complained to the on-duty detainee custody manager. At this time, if I remember correctly, I think his name was Dave Roffey.
36. Besides submitting an account of what had happened along with corresponding witness accounts from persons witnessing the situation, I was never taken aside by any chain of command to speak about my account of the situation or to ask if I was okay. No further statements were taken, no updates on the investigation. I can only recall Dave Roffey being the ONLY person that spoke to me about the situation as he was the first person I went to.
37. In the first instance, the very first thing that Brook House staff could have done was separate me and the aggressor whilst an investigation was taking place. We were both continuously posted to the same wing together and this became an issue that I was raising every morning. The aggressor and I were in the same band of staff so every day that I was on duty, she would be too (minus overtime). It got to the point that enough was enough and on one occasion, I refused to step onto the same wing unless we were separated, and consideration was considered for this.
38. G4S could have at least tried to reassure me that the incident would be taken seriously and treated with the upmost respect and dignity. Instead, I was just left feeling undermined, abused, upset, and extremely let down. All but one person, the member of staff I reported the incident to failed me. When the aggressor in the incident had left Brook House, the rumour was she had "jumped before she was pushed". I don't believe there was any investigation conducted because I never received an outcome, let alone an update.

Staffing levels

39. There were always staff shortages. I lost count of how many times I was left vulnerable and on my own on a wing. Sadly, this was a regular occurrence.
40. It can be very intimidating being on a wing on your own. You're greatly outnumbered. Some detainees can easily notice that you're on your own, some detainees even exploited that I imagine. There is a lot going on. Everybody wants something – a paracetamol, a pencil, a new plate, the pool cue and pools, toothpaste. Majority of detainees I felt were competition with each other and if they didn't get their request quick enough, matters could get heated reasonably quickly.
41. I was left on my own on the wing during a varied timescale. It could have been a matter of minutes all the way to approximately half an hour. I was never left on my own on the wing for an entire shift, well certainly not during daily operations. Night-time was different for obvious reasons as we were on our own for the entire shift.
42. Being left on my own was a regular daily occurrence. I imagine it was for a lot of the other DCOs too.
43. With regards to calling for assistance. We had a choice of our panic alarm in the event of a situation. The landline in the wing office or we had to press a button on our handheld radios and wait for the control room to contact us. We couldn't contact them via radio.
44. Staff shortages appeared to have the biggest impact on the DCOs themselves. They were unable to perform their duties efficiently and professionally. Hands were tied and things took longer than necessary. Detainees became agitated when there was a delay on a request or a conversation they wanted. Staff shortages caused no end of issues.
45. As my own person, I knew that when I was solo on a wing I could only do what was physically possible within my capabilities. I got abuse for it and I raised it with my direct line managers but nothing was ever done about it.
46. The morale of a solo individual on a wing on their own is completely and utterly momentarily destroyed. It is unfair, it is unnerving and it is not safe.

Treatment of Detained Individuals

47. E-wing is the equivalent to a HMP care & segregation unit. It was used to hold detainees that were either removed from their "cell" or from another area via control & restraint. Sometimes E-wing was also used to remove detainees from their designated wings and placed into E-wing if they were a regular refuser to transfer to airport. Equally, it was also used to detain detainees that were considered to be at high-risk of self-harm or suicide. From memory, this stemmed from rule 9 and rule 35.
48. E-wing I think only had 13 "cells". One bed in each, a toilet/sink, a table, a tv too (I think). Showers were separate. There was a pool table in the middle of the wing and the wing office. At breakfast, lunch & dinner, detainees were let out at the same time to go to the wing kitchen. They could socialise together on the wing as well.
49. E-wing was different to the other wings as it was considerably smaller. Only contained one bed in each "cell". There were 2 self-harm/suicide watch "cells" as well with full frontal view rather than the spy hatch.
50. I started working at Brook House on 21 August 2017 so am unable to answer questions relating to the use of force/control and restraint during 1 April 2017 – 31 August 2017. I was based in the training room adjacent to the IRC so I was not involved in use of force/control and restraint during that time period.
51. I had no concerns regarding incidents that I was not directly involved with involving the use of force/control and restraint. Generally, from what I had witnessed or were present to, a lot of things were not actually discussed between colleagues. Granted, it may have been completely different before my time at Brook House but certainly upon completion of my training and then entering Brook House, use of force/control and restraint was not spoken about, maybe due to the knock-on effect of the Panorama documentary.
52. I was not aware of alternatives to force/control and restraint techniques. I cannot remember the exact name of control and restraint techniques, but I strongly believe that the techniques we were taught were effective enough.
53. I thought the managing of the mental health and wellbeing of detainees was taken serious at Brook House. On many occasions, an ACDT was raised for many detainees right across Brook House. I know I personally raised a couple. From my own experience and what I witnessed I do strongly believe that mental health was taken incredibly seriously. I know the BBC Panorama programme displayed different attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing but during my time there, it honestly looked as though it was taken seriously.
54. There is definitely, without doubt a clear difference between TSFNOs and non-TSFNOs. My approach to both was different. My approach to TSFNOs was that what I would describe as firm but fair. Some, not all, TSFNOs were purely out to manipulate, to bully, to almost control people. That "prisoner" mindset was embedded into them.
55. The co-location of TSFNOs with non-TSFNOs was absolutely horrendous. I remember hearing in the Panorama programme that the Home Office would not segregate the two which I could not understand. There were issues upon issues. Coming from somebody that has worked on the wings, a violent TSFNO should not be sharing the same cell as somebody that has over-stayed and is of elderly age. I witnessed that on many occasions.
56. My attitude towards detainees always remained open, non-judgemental, and as calm and composed as possible. I was met by language barriers on a number of occasions. I can recall one account when a detainee from Latvia came to the wing office but couldn't speak or understand English. Equally, I didn't speak or understand Latvian. We both frantically tried to communicate via hand signals but that didn't work. The idea of using the computer in the wing office came to me and so I searched for google translate. I got my piece of paper and translated English to Latvian – "what can I help with?". The expression on the face of the detainee was sheer joy because I made the effort to try and help him. Identified the barrier and searched for a means around that obstacle.

- Apart from google translate which isn't sustainable, I don't recall having any readily available translator. A fellow detainee of the same nationality that could speak English also came in handy.
57. I don't recall there ever being any incentive to encourage good behaviour. During my time at Brook House, there could have been incentives introduced, bonus £5 credit added to their mobile, a football tournament, gym competition etc. I recall watching the detainees set up their own football tournament and it was an absolute blast. It was visible that they were having fun, but they organised that. I don't recall G4S activities staff for example ever organising anything like that.
 58. The ACDT is used to identify detainees at risk of self-harm and/or suicide; and providing them with the subsequent care and support. The role of the DCO during an active ACDT is to ensure regular physical checks are completed on the detainee. Regularity of checks is to be agreed between the detainee and also the duty Oscar manager and the mental health/nursing team. The DCO when checking on the detainee should engage in verbal communication, asking the detainee how they are, what are they doing, have they had any thoughts of self-harm or suicide. The DCO is also to record date and time they engaged with the detainee, what the detainee is doing, how the detainee is feeling and a record of what was discussed each time. Their appearance should also be recorded – are they happy? Are they sad? I feel as though the ACDT was a productive procedure and was definitely adequate.
 59. Staff shortages always created a knock-on effect. Unless an absent staff member could be covered by somebody, somewhere or something within Brook House was inevitably going to either be delayed or cancelled. I can recall an occasion when 2 members of the activities staff had to provide cover on wings – naturally, this postponed all activities. From my experiences and my time at Brook House, I never witnessed staff shortages effect the care or treatment of detainees. Granted, cancelled activities could have a detrimental effect but I never witnessed Brook House staff use staff shortages as an excuse. I never witnessed staff shortages being an excuse to not complete things such as ACDT reviews/checks. I never witnessed staff shortages delay a detainee in getting to their meeting with a Home Office representative.
 60. I can confirm that I had a role in rule 35 but this only extended to being posted on suicide watch as well as a one-day escort to East Grinstead hospital so a detainee could have day surgery on wounds that were self-inflicted.
 61. I cannot recall a time that I was ever witness to or made aware of a detainee being refused an appointment after pre-screening health checks. I believe it was relatively easy for the detainees to be seen under rule 35. Each morning, a DCO, a detainee custody manager, an Oscar manager and a health care representative would visit each detainee under rule 35 on their respective wing and complete their morning checks/conversations. As previously stated, if a detainee was under rule 35 and regular checks had been agreed, it was more or less left to a/the DCO(s) on the wing to complete those checks. A full record of any engagement or even non-engagement should be detailed on the ACDT notes.
 62. I was never witness to verbal or physical abuse of a detained person by staff.
 63. Verbal and or physical abuse of detainees caused by another detainee was everyday life in Brook House. There were cultural gang issues, cultural political issues and personal issues. It was inevitable that a detainee would tell another detainee to “fuck off” or something similar. I cannot recall ever directly raising an issue about verbal or physical abuse against a specific person(s). The general culture of the detainees is that they would not talk about anything relating to other detainees. I lost count how many times I heard the saying “snitches get stitches” in Brook House.
 64. As previously stated, nationalities would more often than not, stick together. Some detainees would address themselves as a nickname or a “gang name”. Walking across the wings, casting an eye over the seating areas, nationalities would group together, walk into “cells” and you'll find another nationality in a room. Could be 3,4, 5 of them in one room. Without casting accusations, people from Jamaica would group together, be very loud and boisterous. Detainees from Nigeria would physically carry themselves what I perceived to have been very territorially. Detainees from Algeria and Albania were also always found to be in big groups.
 65. With regards to political views – it's common knowledge that not everybody does share the same views. Not everybody does agree with regimes or a governments way of doing things. Opinions in

Brook House I felt had to be voiced very carefully. You had to be very careful who you spoke to and what was said. A detainee with strong right-wing political stance wouldn't share the same ideology as somebody from left-wing.

66. From memory, I was always informed that if I received a complaint. I should make either my detainee custody manager aware of this or the Oscar on duty for the day and they would escalate up the chain of command along with an investigation. I do not recall ever directly having to raise a complaint or discuss a complaint with any senior member of staff relating to a detainee. I was never directly investigated but I did make a complaint against another member of staff who had abused me (as set out above).

The Panorama Programme

67. I was not in the Panorama programme. I started at Brook House on the 21/07/2017 and had not entered Brook House until at least October 2017 (maybe later than that).
68. The Panorama programme completely destroyed staff morale. From a personal experience, my training course was terribly interrupted. When I eventually entered Brook House the shortage of staff was apparent. Detainees threw the programme in the faces of the DCOs any chance they could get. New DCOs such as me were instantly branded as the same as the DCOs featured in the programme.
69. The programme itself needed to be released to highlight what was going on. However, it was frustrating that there was no safeguarding or protection for the remaining DCOs or any new DCOs.
70. I do not know what changes were made as a result of the Panorama programme as I did not start working in Brook House until after the programme had been aired. I do not think any changes would have been effective. A culture, an atmosphere, a way of life was distilled into Brook House after the release of the programme.
71. Following the airing of the Panorama programme a number of individuals who worked at Brook House were either investigated, disciplined, dismissed or left. Of those the only name (& face) that I can remember is Chris Donnelly. My experience of Chris was always a good one. He was a very comical person, in a good way. Extremely knowledgeable. A great mentor. Chris and I worked together during October 2017 – January 2018. I never witnessed Chris using derogatory and/or abusive comments towards detainees nor did I see Chris being physically abusive towards detainees.

Other Matters

72. Any changes that could improve Brook House, from my own perspective, would be that in relation to TSFNO I would simply shut the place down. I fully appreciate that is completely unrealistic, but I would deport straight from prison. All travel documents etc ready to go. Also, higher paid, increased number of staffing. From my time at Brook House, that is all I could think of. 4 years later, it may be different, I don't know but I can only speak of my time there.
73. With regards to non-TSFNOs I would say that Brook House would operate much more smoothly and efficiently if it only detained over-stayers, illegal entry etc.
74. In the programme, Brook House is described as not being a prison. As somebody that has experienced the building, the sights, sounds and smells, the atmosphere, the TSFNO make that place a prison. DCOs are incredibly underpaid and they are not safeguarded. They are completely outnumbered.

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.

Signature

ANDREW KEMP

13/09/2021

DATED