

BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

Witness Statement of Bonnie Spark

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 25.02.2022.

I, **Bonnie Spark**, will say as follows:

Background

1. I can confirm that I worked at Gatwick IRCs from 28th April 2014 to present. I worked for G4S until Serco took over the contract on 21st May 2020.

Drugs

2. At paragraphs 7 and 40 of my first draft statement (**First Statement**), I describe a significant problem with drugs in Brook House. I state that by the Relevant Period, this had worsened. I describe it as an '*increasing drug culture*'.
 - a. I recall that the drug problem worsened due to the increase in medical responses and emergency escorts. At this stage I had worked across Gatwick IRCs for a couple of years and I witnessed a number of residents that I believed were under the influence or showed signs of being intoxicated.
 - b. I do not recall why the drugs problem was worsening.

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- c. I recall various managers giving me information regarding the increase in drug culture. A handover was produced by managers and a daily briefing conducted before each shift and they would explain to us how many people/incidents from the day before.
- 3. At paragraph 64 of my First Statement, I state that I recalled '*most*' of the staff '*trying their best*' to prevent drugs entering Brook House.
 - a. Steps taken by staff would be that staff would conduct on person searches as well as room searches. Residents were all searched when coming into the building as well as their property regardless of their history or where they came in from. Visitors were searched when they entered the building and all residents were searched both in and out of visits (social and legal). Any intelligence or suspicions staff had were submitted via an SIR.
 - b. I did not work with all the staff, so when I referenced 'most staff' in paragraph 64, it was only because I did not work with them so could not speak for everyone. I'd like to think that all staff did take the same steps to reduce the drug concern.
 - c. Prohibited items being found through the searching process would decrease the number of drugs within the centre.
- 4. At paragraph 29 of my First Statement, I stated that during the Relevant Period there were no consequences for residents possessing drugs. Staff no longer used the previous practice of placing residents caught with drugs in CSU and conducting a full search.
 - a. I cannot recall a set date to which this previous practice ended.

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- b. I recall that the practice ended due to the high volumes of residents under the influence and those that had prohibited items on them. Our care and separation unit only has 6 rooms and from what I can recall, at one-point, medical responses were reaching approximately 25 in a day.
 - c. From what I can recall, this practice ending was only communicated verbally when we had no rooms available. A manager would attend a medical response and they would make the decision on where someone who moved to etc. As officers, we did not have a say in this process.
5. At paragraph 10 of my First Statement, I describe management being overstretched during the Relevant Period, because of the increase in '*gang and drug culture*'. From what I can recall, contacting a manager was challenging. If you had an issue on the wing that required a manager, you would have to wait until they had finished dealing with issues on other residential units. When medical or first responses went off, the manager was required to attend which would cause more delays. On a day-to-day basis, we would have 1 or maybe 2 managers to manage 5 wings. The more issues that occurred, the less available the managers would be.
6. I have reviewed CJS0073684. This is an email chain which records that I was on a log regarding security concerns, and that I was being monitored, but there was no evidence that I was behaving inappropriately. There is a suggestion that I was on the 'Corruption Prevention' log. I would say that I cannot recall being aware of any suspicions/allegations made against me and do not recall being placed on or notified of any log of this nature.
- a. I cannot recall being aware of any suspicions or allegations against me and so cannot explain what they were.

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- b. I do not recall any outcomes of any suspicions and/or allegations and monitoring.
- 7. I have referred to CJS005388 and CJS005260, which describe interactions with detained persons thought to be under the influence of drugs during the relevant period. CJS005260 suggests that staff did not refer the detained persons to healthcare on that occasion, and there was no search of the room.
 - a. You have asked the steps that were required to be taken to safeguard the welfare of detained persons suspected of taking spice. From what I can recall, the procedure when discovering a detained person under the influence of spice was to notify the Healthcare staff.
 - b. You have asked the steps that I would usually take to safeguard the welfare of detained persons suspected of taking spice. See answer above regarding this.
 - c. With regard to the steps I took on these occasion I would say that I do not remember these incidents directly. However from the evidence provided it seemed that I attended the rooms, identified that the occupants seemed to be under the influence of an unknown substance, checked their welfare and told them to get some sleep.
 - d. I do not recall why I did not call Healthcare at this time.
 - e. I have nothing further to add relating to the above instances.
- 8. I have referred to CJS001054 page 2 which records that D1275 asked me for spice. I record that I responded saying it was a banned substance.

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- a. The interactions described in CJS001054 page 2 are the details received on his movement order, provided by the Home Office. At this time, I was a reception officer, part of the process of booking in was to copy and paste all the information on the movement order onto their DAT observations. The interactions documented were not my interactions.
 - b. I cannot recall whether or not I was asked to bring in drugs.
 - c. CJS001054 pages 2 to 3 also records that D1275 was being disruptive, rude and inappropriate in his interactions with me. I cannot recall what happened or what I meant by 'disruptive, rude and inappropriate when booking in' as I am not aware of who the resident is.
9. I have referred to CJS005051 and CJS004010 page 5. In these documents, I describe my interactions with D149 on 8 June 2017. I suggest that he behaved aggressively, and was attempting to obtain illicit substances. I do not recall this incident and I am not aware of who the resident is. CJS005051 states that DCM Steve Webb attended and came and spoke with the resident. I cannot recall the outcome. I did not document any further observations so I assume that this was effective at this time.

Staff Morale

10. At paragraphs 46 to 50 of my First Statement, I describe the impact of short staffing on morale. I state that it put staff and residents at risk, including on-duty officers suffering avoidable injuries. I cannot recall specific injuries caused by specific situations however I believe the impact of having less staff caused residents to become more frustrated and sometimes violent as there were less resources available to them.

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11. At paragraph 9 of my First Statement, I recall that despite low morale *'attitudes towards individuals who were detained as positive and helpful'*. To further explain this comment I would say that staff had low morale behind closed doors. However I recall we did our best to remain professional towards residents.

Use of Force and other incidents

Incident on 7 March 2017 involving D3548

12. In relation to the Use of Force against D3548 on 7 March 2017, I have considered HOM003719 HOM003722, and HOM003749.

- a. I do not recall this incident however the statement shows that I did not use force in this incident, that is why I did not complete a Use of Force report. As mentioned in report HOM003722, as per the instruction given to me by the DCM, I stayed outside of the room to maintain the dignity of the resident in question as he was naked in his room. I do not remember why DCO Kilbey and DCO Kavanaugh entered the resident's room.
- b. I cannot comment on the force used, as stated in the previous question, I remained outside the room.
- c. I do not recall why there was a delay providing the statement dated 21 March 2017. However it looks like I was asked to provide a witness statement. Due to the fact that I did not use force, I was not required to complete an initial report.
- d. I do not recall having any concerns throughout or after this incident.

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- e. I cannot recall exactly what de-escalation techniques were used in this instance, however, as with other charters, residents are spoken to throughout the day and asked about whether they want to fly and whether they will comply with their move. When a planned removal takes place, the team will be at the door and the manager will liaise with the resident and give them a further opportunity. The resident is made aware throughout of the potential outcomes if they do not comply.
- f. I have no comments to make on the outcome letter.

Incident on 28 March 2017 involving D523

13. HOM005398 records a complaint from D523 in which he alleged that I were bullying him. HOM005397 records that D523's complaint about this incident was not upheld. I have reviewed CJS003549 page 3, which includes my observation notes from 25 March 2017.

- a. I do not recall the allegation or being investigated for this complaint.
- b. I cannot comment on the investigation process as I do not recall this.
- c. I do not recall the outcome.

Incident on 21 May 2017 involving D131

14. I have considered CJS005598 in relation to the Use of Force against D131 on 21 May 2017. In that document, DCO Martin describes needing to push me away from an interaction with D131 that was '*getting heated*'.

- a. I can vaguely remember the incident stated in DCO Martins Use of Force report (CJS005598) when the resident kicked the water bottle. I

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do not recall the resident or anything further with the incident. I cannot comment on why the situation got heated or any of the details of the interaction.

- b. I cannot comment on why DCO Martin felt the need to move me out the way of the situation. However, looking at DCO Martin's report (CJS005598), it states that the resident made a comment to me 'If I go to the block, you are fucked!' As it appears his anger may have been directed at me, I can only assume I was moved to de-escalate the situation/to prevent harm to myself. But unfortunately, I cannot recall this encounter.
- c. I do not recall having any concerns regarding this incident as I cannot recall it.
- d. I cannot recall what de-escalation techniques were used at this time.

Incident on 13 September 2017 involving D668

15. I have viewed HOM002748, particularly pages 3, 7, 10 to 11, 38 to 39, and 44 to 45. This document records the investigation of a number of D668's complaints, including one against me that was upheld. The conclusion was that I spoke rudely to D668 on 13 September 2017 and did not make sufficient efforts to de-escalate the situation. I have also viewed HOM015591.

- a. I do not recall this incident.
- b. I do not recall the incident and I do not recall being told that this was substantiated. I do however remember being interviewed for it, just not exactly what was said. Given everything documented in HOM002748, I'd say the findings that I was rude was not a fair account but I accept

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that maybe I could have allowed the resident to explain himself as it appears that I did not stop to let him.

- c. I do not recall any outcomes/recommendations from this investigation however it does not mean that this did not happen.
- d. I do not recall any disciplinary actions from this investigation.
- e. I cannot comment on the residents account as I do not recall the situation.

Detained person behaviour

16. I have viewed CJS000950 page 11. This document records that I carried out a First 24-hours Interview with D728, and recorded "yes" regarding a historic suicide attempt, self-harm and depression.

- a. From what I can recall, these interviews were conducted with every resident that arrived during the booking in process.
- b. I recall that these interviews were effective as it allowed us to safeguard vulnerable residents.
- c. Information during this process would be readily available for residential staff in their wing files. I do not know how this could be improved.

17. I do not know the resident involved in CJS001105 and I do not recall this incident however I did make the DAT entry on the system. I cannot comment on who he was referring to, as previously stated, I do not recall.

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18. I have considered the following documents that record my observations of detained person behaviour, including instances of aggression (CJS002730 page 6), sometimes coupled with racism (CJS002877 page 4), and sexism (CJS001464 page 17).

- a. Going by the observations recorded in CJS002730 and CJS001464, I believe I was the reception officer. Going by the observations in CJS002877, I was the induction officer on Alpha wing receiving this resident from the reception staff. I do not recall these or know which residents these are made about but all 3 instances would have been referred to a manager, either residential manager, Oscar 2 (reception manager) or Oscar 1 (if the residential DOM was not available).
- b. When working for G4S there were policies for dealing with threatening and/or aggressive behaviour. I do not recall what these were.
- c. I do not recall if these were followed at the time.

19. I have viewed CJS005025. This document describes an incident in which D911 offered me a picture that he had painted, and that he had commented to other detainees that he wished to make me *'his girlfriend'*. A subsequent intelligence assessment suggests that there was a concern that D911 fixated on female officers, and a request was made for another officer to speak to him (the outcome is set out in CJS005025 pages 5 to 8).

- a. After reviewing the document CJS005025, I believe that the resident was spoken to by a manager for his behaviour on request by security. I do not recall knowing anything was done at the time.
- b. I do not recall whether I continued to work with D911, I do not recall who the resident was.

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- c. As stated above, I do not recall who the resident was or recall the extent of this situation. I vaguely remember something about being offered a picture but do not remember what was done, who it was or if I had any further interactions with him.
- d. From what I can recall, there were no processes in place to support staff who remained working with residents who displayed inappropriate behaviour. I cannot comment specifically to this incident. We were still expected to continue our jobs as normal and just be cautious around the specific resident.
- e. I do not recall what support I received after this situation occurred. As stated above, unfortunately, I do not recall much about this situation so I cannot say whether there was or wasn't support.
- f. See answer above, I do not recall what support or whether I received any support.

Disciplinaries, Grievances and other complaints

Grievance/Disciplinary relating to Shayne Munroe

20. At paragraph 44 of my First Statement, I state, "*I do not recall having any involvement in disciplinaries.*" At paragraph 45, I state, "*I do not recall having any involvement in grievances.*" I have reviewed documents INN000001 (grievance from Shayne Munroe in June 2016), INN000002 (grievance from Shayne Munroe August 2016), CJS0073512 (letter of suspension August 2016), INN000003 (grievance from Shayne Munroe November 2016), CJS0073209 (DCO Munroe's grievance outcome letter), CJS0073060 (my disciplinary meeting notes), CJS0073188 (disciplinary hearing outcome). These documents relate to an allegation that I used racist language towards Shayne Munroe. I commented that I did not recall any disciplinaries or grievances as I thought this question was in relation to the relevant period. Some of the questions asked below were not in the relevant period nor do I recall all of them.

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- a. I did not use racist language towards DCO Munroe and she agreed with this during the investigation. I did however, make an inappropriate comment to her during our confrontation and knew immediately that I should not have. I reported myself for my behaviour.
- b. I did not threaten to slap DCO Munroe and she did not accuse me of this.
- c. I can confirm I attended mediation with DCO Munroe and from what I can recall, I did not have further issues. However, given the documentation provided to me during this process, it has become apparent that DCO Munroe felt that there was still an issue.
- d. I did not say that DCO Munroe was using the race card to get away with everything or anything of this nature. Myself and DCO Munroe took responsibility for the issue that occurred and both accepted wrong doing.
- e. I believe that Steve Skitt's outcome was fair and true.
- f. I believe that the warning issued to me was fair, I acted in a way that was not appropriate in or out of the centre and accepted responsibility for this throughout.
- g. I believe I attended further training as an outcome of this investigation but do not recall what course/s I attended.
- h. I do not have any comments to make regarding the grievances or disciplinary process.

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21. I have viewed INQ000009. This document records an anonymous complaint, which also alleges that I was responsible for the racist bullying of another member of staff, and that 'managers' lied to protect me. It appears likely that this relates to the allegations made by Shayne Munroe.

- a. I believe that this allegation was made due to the investigation with myself and DCO Munroe, I do not agree with the allegation as I did not use racist language and it was not bullying. There was a disagreement between myself and DCO Munroe and we were both responsible for this escalating. It was not, in anyway, a personal attack towards DCO Munroe as I did not have a personal issue with her, only one with the way I felt she was working at that particular moment. To the best of my recollection, no managers lied for me.
- b. See answer above as to why the allegation was made.

22. I have reviewed CJS0073511 (complaint by Nicola Kaminski) and CJS0073079 (grievance hearing meeting with Nicola Kaminski on 27 February 2017).

- a. I do not recall swearing at or calling Nicola Kaminski a snitch. I do not recall the outcome of this complaint. After reviewing the evidence, I still do not recall the outcome to this complaint.
- b. See answer above regarding the outcome of this complaint.

D447's complaint in January 2017

23. I have reviewed CJS000651 (row 5). This records a complaint in January 2017 alleging that I lied about D447 pushing an officer.

- a. I do not recall this allegation or any outcomes.

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- b. See answer above regarding outcomes.

D3547's complaint in March 2017

24. I have reviewed CJS000651 (row 21). This records a complaint in March 2017 that I staged false accusations against D3547 and tried to incite other detainees to attack or approach him.

- a. I do not ever recall being informed of this allegation.
- b. I do not recall any outcomes.

Disciplinary regarding a key breach in August 2017

25. At paragraph 44 of my First Statement, I state, "*I do not recall having any involvement in disciplinaries.*" I have considered CJS0072937. This document records that I was subject to a disciplinary investigation for leaving a gate unsecured, but that the decision was to take no further action. I vaguely remember this allegation. I was never interviewed officially I was just spoken to in detainee reception along with another officer. I recall that we went through the gate in question but thought we had locked it correctly. At the time, there was no training for the external gates. From what I can recall, there was no further action taken at this time.

26. I have seen INQ000041, a questionnaire completed by DCO Lauren Wren. At page 3 (Q2) and pages 8 to 9 (Q13) she describes an occasion when the gate was not locked, and that Chris Donnolly suggested that you had nothing to worry about. DCO Wren suggests that management wanted to throw you

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“under the bus”, and were trying to influence her to say something different to what actually happened.

- a. I cannot comment on someone else's remarks regarding an investigation. It was myself and DCO Wren that were involved in the accusation that the gate was left unsecured.
- b. From reading the evidence provided in INQ000041 I think it is in relation to CJS0072937.

D612's complaint regarding missing property in July 2017

27. I have seen CJS001511. This document records D612's complaint against me in relation to missing property. It appears that the complaint was found to be unsubstantiated.

- a. I have seen the record of my interview at CJS001511 pages 19 to 20. I recall an accusation of missing property being made and being asked about it but I cannot recall specific details. I am unsure of the resident and/or what went missing to confirm which one I recall.
- b. From the documentation provided in CJS001511, it appears that the complaint was unsubstantiated.
- c. I do not recall any outcomes/disciplinary action taken.

D647's complaint regarding missing property in August 2017

28. I have seen CJS001559. This document records D647's complaint that money due to be returned or transferred to him had not reached him after I lost or

mishandled it. While the outcome of the investigation is not clear, the handwritten notes at CJS001559 page 1 suggest it was upheld.

- a. As stated in question 27, I recall an accusation of missing property being made and being asked about it but I cannot recall specific details. I am unsure of the resident and/or what went missing to confirm which one I recall.
- b. Documentation provided in CJS001559, suggest this complaint was upheld. I do not recall the findings or being made aware that the findings were against me.
- c. I do not recall any disciplinary action taken.

29. I do not recall anything processes in place about a staff member working with a resident after a complaint was submitted.

D3565's complaint regarding missing property in January 2018

30. I have seen CJS000651 (row 129). This document records D3565's complaint against me in relation to a missing phone, which he alleges I said I had and was keeping.

- a. I do not recall this allegation.
- b. I do not recall being made aware of this allegation.
- c. I do not recall any outcomes to this allegation.

Other complaints/allegations

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31. I have seen INQ000009. This document records an anonymous complaint alleging that in 2017 I was known to be in a relationship with a detained person, and that Instagram posts exist showing the same.

- a. I do not recall being aware of such allegation, I do not recall ever being investigated nor spoken to regarding this allegation.
- b. This allegation was not true. I was not in a relationship with any detained person.
- c. With regard to whether I was aware of this allegation, see answer above.

<u>Statement of Truth</u>	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
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Signature	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Signature</div>
Date	25.02.2022

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