

BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

First Witness Statement of Lisa Strange

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 8th July 2021.

The below statement is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge and memory of the relevant period. I have had no access to any reports or documentation that relate to the Relevant period to assist me in specific details that may be required in the statement therefore this below statement is based purely from my memory of the time in question.

Introduction**[Background Questions 1-4]**

1. I, Mrs Lisa Strange, D.O.B: [DPA] of [DPA]
[DPA] am currently employed by Serco and was previously employed by G4S at Tinsley House and Brook House Immigration Removal Centre, Perimeter Road South, Gatwick, RH6 0PQ.
2. By March 2015 I completed the Initial Training Course (ITC) and became a Detainee Custody Officer (DCO) and worked in Tinsley House from March 2016 to present time. I was moved to Brook House from September 2016 to May 2017. In February 2019 I became Detainee Custody Manager (DCM). I became Detention Operations Manager (DOM) on May 2020 and currently work as a DOM at Tinsley House.

[Culture – Questions 5-10]

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Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
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3. I worked in Brook House from March 2015 to March 2016. Whilst working at Brook House, I worked on the Clyde (also known as the Charlie) wing, which was notoriously known as the most challenging wing at Brook House. Staff morale at Brook House was low due to staff shortages. We were promised an amazing rota (4 on 4 off) on our Assessment Day but that never happened, and we were very short staffed. Whilst at Brook House I very rarely saw Senior Managers (I only saw my own manager regularly). It was very rare to see Senior Managers on the wings. I am not aware of any specific culture and I am also not aware of any values or priorities promoted by Senior Managers.
4. I did not see anyone being targeted or anything untoward. I do not recall any negative attitude throughout my employment at Brook House or Tinsley House. Although the Clyde wing was challenging, I had a good manager and we worked well as a team. We would treat detainees with no judgment (including foreign national offenders). We treated everyone equally and with respect and carried out our roles to the best of our ability. We would ensure that all detainees were cared for.
5. All wings have certain issues, but apart from having fewer staff, I do not recall having any concerns. For example, detainees with mental health issues would be situated on E wing and they would be on a Supported Living Plan (SLP) which we would follow and comply with to ensure that they are looked after in accordance with the SLP. We would talk to these detainees and find interpreters for them if they had any difficulty communicating.
6. I had not ever seen anything to the extent of what happened on the BBC Panorama programme "*Under-Cover: Britain's Immigration Secrets*" which was aired on 4 September 2017.
7. I was not aware of any occasions where someone raised concerns about the treatment of detained persons (either individuals or collectively) whether informally or as a "whistleblower".

[Policies and Procedures – Question 11]

8. I was informed about the policies when I first started at G4S in 2015. I found the policies and procedures helpful and, in my view and experience, they were

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
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 Exhibits: [INSERT]

applied in the correct way where I worked and within my team. For example, where there was a Assessment Care and Detention Teamwork (ACDT) or SLPs, I would have a look at the policy and see what I needed to do, particularly when the detainees have to see Healthcare or have an interview with Home Office. I still refer to these policies today as I find them very helpful. Whilst in employment with G4S, hard copies of the policies and procedures were available on the wing and electronic copies were accessible on our computers within the wing office.

[Training – Questions 12-13]

9. For the DCO role, I attended an 8-week training course (ITC) from 26 January 2015 to 6 March 2015 which consisted of 6 weeks training and 2 weeks shadowing. I was trained on control and restraint for five days, and also completed first aid training.
10. I do believe that the training prepared me for my role at Brook House. After training I felt comfortable going live and working on the wing. The only thing I wasn't too sure about was using the computers, but I learnt that whilst shadowing and through experience.

[The role of DCO – Questions 14-20]

11. I do not have a copy of the DCO job description and therefore unable to comment.
12. Except for ACDT reviews, we were able to use colleagues (who spoke the language) or interpreters to help communicate with detainees. DCOs are given a card with information on interpreters for several languages with contact details. If a detainee required an interpreter, we would contact one. I would introduce myself and the detainee and then arrange for the detainee to speak to the interpreter. The interpreters were readily available, and it would take around 5-10 minutes to find an interpreter. I have never had any difficulty in obtaining an interpreter or had a bad experience with interpreters.
13. As far as I am aware, during my employment with G4S there were never any incentives to encourage positive behaviour by detainees. Before I started working at Brook House with G4S, I understand that on the B wing there were

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
 Statement No: [INSERT]
 Exhibits: [INSERT]

enhancements to use the gym for good behaviour but when I started at G4S everyone was treated equally and able to use all the facilities.

14. In the morning we would attend morning briefings where Senior Managers would inform us of how many ACDTs were in place and what the review requirements are. For example, detainee in Room 10 requires hourly observations. I would record the observations carried out in the ACDT booklet. In my opinion the process was adequate, and I didn't encounter any problems with this.

15. I believe there was a sufficient mechanism in place to prevent drugs from entering Brook House. Visitors were directed to the visits centre and would be asked to remove anything that was prohibited (mobile phone and keys) these would be placed into a locker they would then attend the Sat gate where they were allowed to take £5 with them to visit a detainee. and would then be taken to the visits where they could purchase food and drink from the vending machines then they would be taken to the visits hall to wait there until the detainee comes to the visit's hall. CCTV are in place in the visits hall so we could see and assess whether any drugs had passed. Despite the security mechanisms in place, drugs did still enter in to Brook House. I have never caught anyone bring drugs into Tinsley or Brook House, but if I did, I would alert it as a response, tell my manager and call the Police. When we discovered that drugs had entered into Brook House we would conduct room searches, arrange for the detainee to go to healthcare to ensure they are looked after medically. We would then increase observations if required by healthcare.

16. I have never worked as part of a Welfare or Security Team.

[Relationship with staff – Questions 21-24]

17. I have never experienced or witnessed any of the following during my employment at Tinsley or Brook House: racism amongst staff or individuals, bullying, homophobic and/or misogynistic attitudes or behaviours.

[Relationship with the Home Office – Question 25]

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Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
Statement No: [INSERT]
Exhibits: [INSERT]

18. I had good relations with the Home Office. If staff from the Home Office ever wanted anything, they would usually ask me, I would always provide them with whatever they needed within an hour or so. I have no concerns regarding the Home Office. I had daily contact with them and never encountered any issues. On balancing individual welfare with immigration removal procedures my opinion is that the Home Office did balance it well. For example, if an individual was not happy about being removed, the Home Office would ensure that there was an officer with them to provide reassurance and/or give them what they needed to help.

[Relationship with Senior Managers – Questions 26-27]

19. As explained above, Senior Managers were very rarely visible. I did not have much of a relationship with them. However, Senior Managers did attend urgent situations for example a fresh response or incidents (i.e. when a detainee went on netting which is strictly prohibited). I am not aware of the quality of the leadership by Senior Managers and therefore cannot comment.

[Relationship with DCMs – Questions 28-29]

20. James Begg was my manager during my time at Brook House. I had a really good relationship with James. As a manager, he would always give good and constructive feedback. He was approachable. All my appraisals went well. I did not encounter any issues. I also had a good relationship with other DCMs, I found them to be all approachable and did not encounter any issues.

[Relationship with your DCOs – Question 30]

21. I had no concerns with any of the DCOs. We all worked well together, we were similar and had the same work ethics.

[Relationship with Healthcare Staff – Question 31]

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Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
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22. I had no concerns with healthcare staff. If an individual was unwell an Officer would wait with the detainee until healthcare available. In my opinion Healthcare Staff are overworked and underpaid. Their job is very difficult especially when detainees want or require attention very quickly. I never encountered an issue with Healthcare they would put the detainees care first and do their utmost best.

[Disciplinary and Grievance Process – Question 32]

23. I have never been involved or been part of an investigation, disciplinary or grievance process.

[Staffing Levels – Questions 33-36]

24. There were two DCOs on a wing but in my view, we needed more DCOs in the event of an incident or if a detainee needed to go to Home Office or Healthcare. In such circumstances, it would mean only one DCO is left on the wing to look after more than 100 detainees. Having two DCOs did compromise the safety of individuals and staff as we put ourselves at risk in the event of an incident. For example, a detainee was throwing plates at myself and another DCO we were trying to calm him whilst also pressing the alarm buttons waiting for assistance. As I explained above, staff morale was low due to staff shortages.

25. With Activities, detainees were allowed to play football in the courtyard, a pool table was available for use and the gym despite staff shortages, and so there was no great impact in that regard.

[Tinsley House Staff – Question 37]

26. The job description and training for Brook House and Tinsley House is the same, but both places have different requirements. At Brook House 90% of the time DCOs are at the doors of the wing to let detainees in an out in order to move around the centre whereas at Tinsley House detainees could move around more freely without the need of DCOs at every wing door.

[Treatment of detained persons – Rule 35 – Questions 38-39]

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
Statement No: [INSERT]
Exhibits: [INSERT]

27. The Immigration Rule 35 process involved filling in a form to see healthcare, they would make arrangements to see the Doctor, they would then go and see a mental health nurse if required.
28. I cannot comment on how individuals came to be reviewed. I would just deliver the completed form to the Healthcare team. We are not informed of any refusals or reasons for refusals due to confidentiality.

[Treatment of detained persons – Use of force – Questions 40-43]

29. During the Relevant Period, I did not encounter any use of force or restraint. In my view the techniques used for control and restraint are effective and I do not think they are over-used. Force is used when required and as is necessary. When an incident arises, I would try and deescalate the situation. I would always talk to the individual first, provide them with reassurance and remind them that we would use force if they were not cooperating. But control and restraint is our last resort. I was not involved in any incidents requiring force or had any concerns regarding the use of force.

[Treatment of detained persons – Detained persons welfare – Questions 44-47]

30. I attended a one-day Mental Health training (I cannot recall when that was). I have also completed the ACDT training.
31. We managed mental health and wellbeing of individuals through general observations and conversations with individuals. For example, if I noticed someone talking to themselves a lot then I knew something wasn't right and would refer them to the Mental Health team.
32. From my experience, when I made a referral to Mental Health or Healthcare team for support the detainee got the help they needed and often the detainee would thank me for helping them. It was in our best interest to ensure that the detainees received the required support as we could put our lives in jeopardy if we could not help.
33. If someone was self-harming I would try and stop them and use control and restraint if necessary, I would contact the Health Care team who would usually recommend that the individual is placed on constant watch. A regular review is carried out in line with the ACDT and guidance from the Mental Health or

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
 Statement No: [INSERT]
 Exhibits: [INSERT]

Healthcare team. We try our best to support and look after the detainees. We keep an eye on individuals and ear out. If we hear anyone become distressed, we would document it and ensure that they are supported. For example, I would document that room 25 had a bad day today and advise the DCO/DCM to check in on them so that on handover the staff know what needs to be done. I did not have any concerns with the policy and process. In my view it was effective.

[Treatment of detained persons – TSFNO – Questions 48-50]

34. I did not work on reception or TSFNO individuals at Brook House. I have no opinion on the co-location of TSFNOS with other detained individuals.

[Treatment of detained persons – Abuse of individuals detained at Brook House – Questions 51-52]

35. I have never witnessed any kind of abuse (verbal or physical) by staff or detainees whilst working at Brook House and do not have any concerns.

[Treatment of detained persons – Complaints – Questions 53-56]

36. The complaint process for detainees at Brook House is that there are forms in every wing in different languages. If a detainee has a complaint we ask them to complete the form which then goes to the Home Office. The Home Office would then pass the complaint to a DCM. The DCM would review the complaint and investigate, carry out interviews, look at CCTV footage and relay the outcome to the detainee in writing. This same process is applied to complaints about the Healthcare Team. The process can be very time consuming. For example, I had to get security to burn CCTV for a lost property investigation and speak to the cleaners and security team, but I do not think there is a way of improving the process.

37. I have never received a complaint from detainees about verbal or physical assaults, but if I received any such complaint, we would deal with it in a very similar way. I am not aware of any investigations conducted by G4S or the Professional Standards Unit.

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
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38. I have never had to refer a complaint for an investigation, and I have never received a complaint about myself.

[The Panorama Programme – Questions 57-62]

39. I met Callum Tulley whilst on the ITC training from January to March 2015.

Callum used to work on Activities and he moved from wing to wing to carry out his role. I had a good relation with him. He was very young and like a “rabbit in headlights” so I used to look out for him. If he came on my wing to carry out Activities, we would have a chat.

40. I do not appear on the Panorama programme and do not wish to provide a photograph or description.

41. The Panorama programme created a huge impact. Staff battled with trust issues amongst their team members. Staff lost jobs, some lost family members and their home. Staff morale was at an all-time low. There was also a high level of sickness. People were panicking not knowing whether whilst carrying out their roles they had done something that could be perceived incorrectly even though they are trying to do a good job and their best to look after the detainees. Members of the public who knew I worked at Brook House (identified via uniform) would stare or give me odd looks whilst travelling to and from work which made me uncomfortable.

42. I did not receive any direct feedback from detainees about the Panorama programme and I did not notice a difference in detainee’s behaviour. I did get asked whether I was on the programme by a detainee but nothing more.

43. I was not involved in the underage issue shown on the Panorama programme and have not been involved in any underage issues during my employment for G4S. There is a process and flowchart in every wing, hard copy and an electronic copy on the staff computers to deal with underage issues. The process is that if we suspect someone is underage or declares they are underage, we declare it as IS97M, inform the Home Office, contact a Social Worker on site to deal with the minor. We as DCMs then give the individual the choice to go to a room on their own whilst waiting for the Social Services to make appropriate arrangements.

44. Following the Panorama programme, staff were put on more training courses for dealing with mental health issues, drugs, refresher training, ensuring ACDTs are dealt with properly. More detail was provided on observation recordings, explanation on how to conduct constant watches, i.e. how frequent and for how long. There were more SIRs and IRs.

Specific individuals – Question 63

45. Please see my comments below in relation to specific individuals. I confirm that I have never witnessed derogatory, offensive and insensitive remarks about detained person by any of the persons listed below:

- Nathan Ring: Worked with no concerns
- Steve Webb: Worked with no concerns
- Chris Donnelly: Worked with no concerns
- Calvin Sanders: Worked with no concerns
- Derek Murphy: Worked with no concerns
- John Connolly: Worked with no concerns
- Dave Webb: Worked with no concerns
- Clayton Fraser: Worked with no concerns
- Charles Frances: Worked with no concerns
- Aaron Stokes: Worked with no concerns
- Mark Earl: Worked with no concerns
- Slim Bassoud: Worked with no concerns
- Sean Sayers: Worked with no concerns
- Ryan Bromley: Worked with no concerns
- Daniel Small: Worked with no concerns
- Yan Paschali: Did not work with, no comment
- Daniel Lake: Worked with no concerns
- Babatunde Fagbo: Worked with no concerns
- Shane Munro/Monroe: Worked with no concerns
- Nurse Jo Buss: Worked with no concerns

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
 Statement No: [INSERT]
 Exhibits: [INSERT]

Suggestions for improvement Question 64]

46. Other than increasing staffing levels, I have no suggestions for improvement. I had no major concerns and there were no issues from my perspective.

Any other concerns – Questions 65-67]

47. I have no further matters to add which relate to the culture of G4S at Brook House or the treatment of individuals detained at Brook House.

48. I know of no other person/ persons who have worked or are working at Brook House that I believe are knowledgeable about the matters I have mentioned in my statement that have not been asked to provide a statement of their own.

49. I do not know of any further matters which I consider relevant to the inquiry.

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
Statement No: [INSERT]
Exhibits: [INSERT]

<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>	
Name	Lisa Strange
Signature	Signature
Date	19/10/2021

Witness Name: [Witnesses full name]
 Statement No: [INSERT]
 Exhibits: [INSERT]