

***Confidential***

**Independent Investigation into Brook House**

**Friday, 8 December 2017**

**Interview with  
Jackie Colbran, Chair, Brook House IMB  
and  
Dick Weber, Vice chair, Brook House IMB**

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Investigators: Mr Ed Marsden (Verita)  
Ms Kate Lampard (Verita)

1. **Mr Marsden:** This is a meeting with Jackie Colbran and Dick Weber from the IMB. It is 8 December 2017 and this is part of the independent investigation into Brook House. *[Introductions]*
2. **Ms Lampard:** For the purpose of the tape, we have explained to Jackie and Dick how we work and have told them about the arrangements for transcribing.
3. Can I ask you both, but not at the same time, to tell us your background and experience, your previous life and what your life currently is?
4. **Ms Colbran:** Briefly, I lived in Argentina for ten years. I have worked in Social Services, Medical Social Work, with old people, largely, and with the organisation of residential blocks for them. I ran a riding school, and I have been involved with the IMB 12 years. I was Chair at High Down for three years, and I have been Chair at Brook House for four years.
5. **Q.** Did you come into Brook House as the Chair of the IMB?
6. **A.** I was parachuted in because times were difficult.
7. **Q.** Right, we will ask you about that. Dick, what is your background?
8. **Mr Weber:** I worked in the Home Office for a few years, and then I transferred over and joined the Prison Service as an Assistant Governor, as we were in those days. I worked in the Prison Service for 25 years in the London local prisons and Prison Service headquarters in various policy jobs. I retired about ten years ago and became a Magistrate, and one of my Magistrate colleagues suggested that I might apply, because at the time, this is about seven years ago, Brook House had a shortage of IMB members and no men. That didn't seem appropriate, so I applied and was accepted. I have been on the Board for about seven years now.
9. **Q.** Jackie, what was that you were alluding to, the crisis?
10. **Ms Colbran:** It was a crisis within the IMB, not the centre.
11. **Q.** Right, okay.
12. **Ms Colbran:** I think membership was down to about three and nobody wanted to be Chair, certainly. I had stood down for the Chair at High Down and was looking for a challenge.

13. **Q.** I am sure you have that now. Tell me, how many other IMB members are there?
14. **Ms Colbran:** Nine at the moment, as we speak.
15. **Mr Weber:** In total that is.
16. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, a total Board.
17. **Q.** How many are there usually on the Board?
18. **Ms Colbran:** Each Board is given a figure that they can attain to. Our maximum would be 12, but we don't actually need 12.
19. **Q.** What sorts of backgrounds are there?
20. **Ms Colbran:** All sorts. A teacher, a lawyer, a nurse, high finance.
21. **Mr Weber:** Tech, a finance company. Louise is a lawyer.
22. **Ms Colbran:** No, she is Mental Health.
23. **Mr Weber:** She is a Mental Health specialist, but working in a legal practice.
24. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.
25. **Mr Weber:** She is the Practice Manager I think.
26. **Q.** What is the age range?
27. **Ms Colbran:** Our youngest is in his 30s, and I am not quite sure who is the eldest.
28. **Mr Marsden:** It is very diverse.
29. **Ms Colbran:** It is very diverse, yes. We are relatively lucky, it could be better but we have somebody from Caribbean background and we have somebody from a Far Eastern background. I was born in Iran so I count as Persian.
30. **Ms Lampard:** It sounds to me as though it is quite diverse by the standards of these sorts of things. Good. How often does the Board meet as a Board?
31. **Ms Colbran:** Once a month as a full Board.
32. **Q.** How often are members in the centre?
33. **Ms Colbran:** That varies. We are always in the centre one day a week. Some members come in two or three days. It partly depends what's going on, what meetings we are covering.
34. **Q.** Therefore, each member will be in at least once a week?
35. **Ms Colbran:** No. Each rota member.
36. **Q.** Right.
37. **Ms Colbran:** We work on a rota basis. One person is on rota each week, starting at 8 o'clock on a Monday morning, and running through. In that week they decide on what they do during that week.
38. **Q.** Okay. Is there anything that you particularly request that they do? Are there particular meetings or particular events?
39. **Ms Colbran:** Our statutory things are to visit each wing, Healthcare and the kitchen every week and make a report on those. Internally we have an agreement that we each specialise in one wing, so each wing will be covered over four weeks as more in depth.
40. **Q.** What about the CSU? Does somebody try and attend the Care and Segregation Unit during that time?
41. **Ms Colbran:** That is one of the wings, effectively, from our point of view. We will always go there, very often first. We do not always attend all the reviews.

42. Q. However, you are not necessarily going to if it is one person in one day that week.
43. Ms Colbran: Yes, exactly.
44. Q. Yes, I understand. We know, and we will come back to it that there was an incident about ten days ago of insurrection. Do you try and review what went on? Do you see what I mean? What about information sharing in terms of special events and special incidents?
45. Ms Colbran: From the time the rota member starts they will be called by the Oscar in the event of any use of force or Rule 40, 42, of course. We will always know about those that are on-going, very often they phone and tell us when they are coming off.
46. However, when you are talking about the serious incidents - for example, the one you were talking about, I was called at 7.23, I think, that evening, and having discussed it with Dick and Louis, who was actually the rota member that week. I was the most able to move fast, so I came down, at which time the Command Suite had closed, I stayed on to watch the aftermath and how people were transferred down to the CSU, and so on.
47. Mr Weber: It might just be worth pointing out that if they are up in the Command Suite, which is the Board Room, effectively, then we would automatically come in at that point. We might be asked, or we might decide to come in for something that is short of that, but once the Command Suite is in operation then we come in in a formal position as observers.
48. Q. Okay, thank you. That is helpful.
49. Mr Marsden: On the 28<sup>th</sup>, were you invited to come into the Command Suite, because they had that open, did they?
50. Ms Colbran: I wasn't on the rota, so Louis was called initially. He was actually in church at the time, it must have been a Sunday, so I spoke to him. They came through to me, as the Chair, because the Chair is always involved in these things.
51. Q. Yes.
52. Ms Colbran: Sorry, what was your question?
53. Q. I was just asking you whether they had invited you to -?
54. Ms Colbran: As it happens, as I arrived here, Michelle Brown was coming down from the Command Suite saying, "it has just finished. The episode is over." I arrived here just after 8 o'clock. It had finished. She briefed me, so I didn't need to go to the Command Suite. Had it been on-going, for example, two or three days after that one of the individuals went onto E Wing and sat on the pool table on a chair with weapons, and this, that, and the other. In that case, when Gareth arrived here, again, I was involved, and we decided Gareth would come down and the Command Suite was still open. His first job is to go to the Command Suite to obtain a briefing and decide what to do next.
55. Ms Lampard: Do they ever offer you in those circumstances the opportunity to go and talk to the people in question? Do you sometimes, in a sense, get operationalised in that you might go in and talk, for instance, to the person who was sitting in the CSU on the billiard table on a chair?
56. Ms Colbran: Do you want to answer that?



57. **Mr Weber:** Certainly, normally that wouldn't be appropriate. I don't think it would happen here, despite it being on the *Panorama* programme, but I can recall times in the Prison Service where there was an incident and someone was refusing to leave a cell or do something. In my day it was the Board Of Visitors, which was the previous title for the Independent Monitoring Board, but someone from the BOV would be there to observe and to walk down with them to the Segregation Unit, so you would go down to the Seg. That, in a sense, happens now, but I don't think that Management here would necessarily say to somebody, "look, it is okay to come out, there is someone from the IMB", but we are there. However, we certainly don't get involved in the operational elements of any incident. That wouldn't be appropriate for us to do so.
58. **Ms Colbran:** In any situation we are supposed to keep out of eyesight of the detainee, of the incident that's happening. For example, the HMIP were monitoring a flight earlier on this year and there was an incident happening on the wing. It wasn't Mr [D275]; it was somebody else, and I didn't even go onto the wing. I stayed outside the door, looking through the glass. In fact, I took the HMIP guy up with me to look, just so he could see what was going on, but I wouldn't go into that situation, definitely not.
59. **Q.** After incidents, use of force, or something, do you sometimes observe the film?
60. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, certainly now we do because there is this Scrutiny Panel on a Friday afternoon, which is cancelled today. They go through the use of force footage and paperwork, and it is our easiest access, and also very useful, because we can hear the experts discussing what's been going on.
61. **Q.** Do you ever do that independently if there is something you think, I didn't like the sound of that?
62. **Ms Colbran:** We certainly can.
63. **Q.** Yes. Have you ever done that?
64. **Ms Colbran:** In my long years, probably once, yes. I have discussed it with Michelle Brown, and they are very happy for us to do it.
65. It is just that we have now, as a Board, decided that this Scrutiny Panel gives us a good way into it, because for one thing, for example, when I was watching the detainee being taken off with considerable use of force last week you can't see because you are behind a load of bodies, and the same goes with the cameras. You can't actually see because the people at the front don't have cameras, or haven't had cameras up to now. I was discussing it with a G4S guy.
66. **Mr Marsden:** They are not wearing body cameras?
67. **Ms Colbran:** They are wearing them, but they are at the back. When I mentioned this to Steve Skitt he said that it would be dangerous to have the body cameras right at the front for the people tackling the detainee, so the cameras are further back. I was actually quite relieved because I could see it was going on for an awfully long time, unusually long time, and I couldn't see at all what was going on, but the nurse, the Head of Healthcare, was actually right at the front in the room next to the detainee, so I was confident that that was going to be alright. She knows what she is doing.

68. **Ms Lampard:** Can I move on a little bit? How would you characterise the relationship between the IMB and the Home Office? The people here are from the Home Office. How does that work?
69. **Ms Colbran:** The relationship is a good one. They come to our Board meetings – Paul Gasson and quite often Michelle Smith also. They feel free to come to our Board meetings, and they then tell us what's going on, and we can ask them, or suggest to them, or criticise, or anything we feel appropriate.
70. **Mr Weber:** A member of the Home Office Team takes the minutes.
71. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, our Clerk is actually a Home Office person.
72. **Mr Weber:** Sets the meetings up.
73. **Ms Colbran:** I have just been up with the Home Office now, talking about incidents and things that I have been curious about. They are very accessible and they listen.
74. **Mr Marsden:** If they are introducing policy changes or they are planning management changes or operational changes in the centre, would they discuss those with you?
75. **Ms Colbran:** Beforehand? Very often we see draft DSOs for our comments, and that's the whole estate, the IRC estate. The Chair is circulated a draft and asked for comments.
76. **Q.** I suppose things like the introduction of the 60 additional beds?
77. **Ms Colbran:** It was discussed with us. We are going back a long way, because as I joined four years ago, they already had a room mocked up. It didn't happen then.
78. **Mr Weber:** It had been on the stocks for a long time.
79. **Ms Colbran:** Yes. We had already discussed it and were aware of what was going on four years ago.
80. **Ms Lampard:** What was your view of it?
81. **Ms Colbran:** Coming from a prison background, it looked quite a generous space for three people. This is an empty mock-up room, remember, with no possessions and no individuals in it, but it did look quite a generous space compared to High Down, where they were putting three people in a two-man cell. Some of the members who had no prison exposure thought it wasn't going to be decent. That was beforehand. Our views were mixed, but in the end we decided it was going to happen and we would observe - I think we registered our protest at the time.
82. **Mr Weber:** I think going back to your original question about the consultation, I would say that certainly at the local level there was no consultation. We were not asked to give our views about whether in principle it was a good or bad thing. We were simply told, "it is happening" or "it is probably going to happen. This is how we are planning to do it. 60 extra places. Essentially, it is 20 rooms on three of the wings will be trebled instead of doubled." We were able to make our views known, both individually and collectively, to the Home Office and to G4S. I think it is true there was some division, certainly initially on our Board.
83. Speaking personally, I felt that the additional occupancy wasn't a significant problem for the wings, as such, and because of the very rapid throughput of most of the detainees here it was manageable. No one would have to stay in a three-man room for probably more than two or three days at the most. My personal concern was and remains the issues around the regime provision,

because no doubt you have noticed that this place was built as a very short-term facility.

84. **Mr Marsden:** Yes.

85. **Mr Weber:** It still is in large part. We are not as short term as was intended –

86. **Q.** Which was three days, wasn't it?

87. **Ms Weber:** Yes, it is interesting to look at the figures, as we do at our Board meetings, and about 75/80 per cent of people at any one time, of each month have been here for, I think, less than two months, and certainly less than three, and so it is relatively few people who have been in detention for up to two years, but, nevertheless, for those who have, then it is a long time to be in a place like this. Therefore, it was the regime issues that concerned me, and still do. I don't think they were able to get enough, maybe because of the physical constraints, to improve the regime on the back of those 60 extra people.

88. **Ms Lampard:** So far as people actually in the three-bed rooms/cells, do they try not to put longer-term people in in those circumstances?

89. **Mr Weber:** That's an interesting question, because it goes to the heart of how long people stay here, and whether they should be staying here for all of that time. I am not sure that they do it quite like that. I think, as I said earlier, if someone doesn't want to stay in a three-bed room they don't have to. They might be there for two or three days, and then they are moved on.

90. I think some people on the Board started from the point of view that no one would want to be in a three-bed room, but, in fact, we know that sometimes you have three men who are friendly and they are very happy to be in a room with just the three of them. They quite enjoy that.

91. **Q.** For whatever purpose.

92. **Mr Weber:** Yes, so it is horses for courses.

93. **Q.** Okay, that is one thing.

94. **Mr Marsden:** One thing that I think is sticking in considering what you have just said is that staff comment about the level of activity and the things that there are to accommodate the needs of an additional 60 people. Whether there are sufficient for people to do –

95. **Ms Colbran:** I think going back to whether the long-term people are given any option about the three-man, it seems to me that it is very much the individual officers on the wing who control where people go, at least initially until there is a problem. There is a feel that they are promoted up to a two-man room when they have been here a long time, as they move up the pecking order.

96. **Q.** They graduate up the hierarchy?

97. **Ms Colbran:** They graduate up, like going to the better table in the restaurant. I think probably the way it would work is that longer-term people would not be in the three-man rooms, except supposing an officer doesn't get on with a detainee, could there be a punitive element? I have nothing to say there is, but it **CW** would work on favour.

98. **Mr Weber:** I can't remember, and, certainly, nothing has come to me, and I don't recall a discussion at Board level, I can't recall a single complaint from anyone that they are in a three-bed room against their will, for what it is worth.

99. **Ms Lampard:** Okay. We have dealt with your relationship with the Home Office. Is it normal that the Home Office provide the Secretariat, as it were?
100. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, it is part of the SLA.
101. **Q.** Okay, and then your relationship with G4S. Who is your principal point of contact?
102. **Ms Colbran:** Anybody. We really have completely free access right the way up the line. It is good. It is excellent, and it always has been for the four years that I have been here. We have always had an excellent relationship with both the Home Office and G4S. They listen and they hear what we say. They don't always make a big song and dance about it, but it is amazing how many times suggestions of ours have been incorporated quietly in.
103. **Q.** Do you meet them alone, or do you try and meet them with the Home Office? What is the regular pattern?
104. **Ms Colbran:** The Board meeting, which is every third Wednesday in the month, which is the one I think you are going to come to in January, they will come in at 1.30, and they will spend at least an hour, an hour-and-a-half with us. That is the Senior Manager from the Home Office and G4S, so at that point we are all together. However, as Chair, I will see the senior person in G4S who is going to be coming to our Board meeting a day or two days before. For example, next Tuesday week I am going to see Steve because Lee is away all week. I stand down as Chair at the end of this month, and so I am taking the new Chair so that she sees the procedure.
105. **Mr Marsden:** How would you characterise the relationship with G4S? Do you feel that they are open and straightforward with you?
106. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.
107. **Q.** Is it spiky, is it challenging?
108. **Ms Colbran:** No.
109. **Q.** Should it be?
110. **Ms Colbran:** If we needed to challenge we challenge, but I would feel I have permission to do that. Some years back in our Annual Report we raised the issue of the long-term temporary education instructor, and Ben was bridled a little bit at this and said that we were stepping outside our remit.
111. **Ms Lampard:** Why?
112. **Ms Colbran:** We are not supposed to interfere in management terms, management of staff. I have always said to the Board, "it is really how you go about it", so you just have to rephrase it and say, "actually, it affects the detainee. It is our area." Of course, he smiles at that, but nevertheless it was rejected. When it came back the action plan was rejected, but within months he was appointed. They listen, and that is what we really want.
113. **Mr Lampard:** This isn't your responsibility to say this -
114. **Ms Colbran:** I can't even remember another time when they have bridled. They are not bridlers. They listen to us, and we have a very good working relationship, and always have done.
115. **Mr Weber:** The relationship between the Board and Senior Managers on the G4S side undoubtedly improved with the arrival of Ben Saunders. I think that it was more a case that we were tolerated previously. I think Ben was much



more open. He was open to suggestions from the Board about different things, and I think he was more open to us in his responses than the previous regime had been. I have no reason to think that however long he is going to be here for that Lee Hanford will be any different, in fact.

116. **Ms Colbran:** No.

117. **Mr Weber:** I think his approach seems to be very similar to that of Ben, and it strikes me, again, from my time in the Prison Service that that is sensible. It is a good thing that senior management within a prison or a detention centre should have a good relationship with the Board. Provided the Board is reasonable, and I think we are, then, a reasonable management will get on with them. Yes, we say when we think things are not quite right. It might be about staffing numbers. It might be about an attitude on the part of a member of staff. It might be about cleanliness on the wings, or whatever, and my sense is that most of the time they are pleased to hear that because it helps them in terms of their own running of the prison.

118. Sorry, it is a Freudian slip there, but as long as I don't talk about cells we will be alright, but, inevitably, you can't pick everything up and it is quite difficult sometimes to break out of the admin area and do the walkabout, which is really important, and that's where you pick things up. The pressure from G4S even above establishment level and from the Home Office is such that a lot of time is taken up with other things. It is in the bidg process, for example. I think they are quite keen to have an objective eye on things, and feeding that back into their management process.

119. **Mr Marsden:** How do you characterise G4S' relationship with the Home Office?

120. **Ms Colbran:** That is a bit more spiky because they have a different role. We monitor and what do the Home Office do?

121. **Mr Weber:** They have a contract.

122. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, whatever they do. I know, because not only do I go and see G4S before the Board meeting, but I'll make sure I pop in on Paul Gasson and see how things are there. Sometimes I hear from him something that he is chasing up, something that we have picked up. For example, IT hasn't been very good over most of this year, I think. I have gone and talked to him about that, and he has told me what he is doing about it and how he's starting to put significant pressure on G4S, for example. That's an example of what I hear, but, nevertheless, when I say spiky, it is spiky because they are picking up serious things. We will say the IT is not working well, but we will monitor, so we will note it. We will raise it in the Annual Report, we will talk about it, but we don't actually make anything happen, whereas the Home Office can. However, nevertheless, it is a good working relationship, I think.

123. **Q.** They are Commissioner on site, aren't they?

124. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.

125. **Q.** You would expect there to be tension, in a way, wouldn't you, the operational delivery end of their commissioning?

126. **Ms Colbran:** What is the name of Paul's team? It will come to me. There is a correct word for what he does. It begins with a 'c', I think. It will come to me.

127. **Q.** It is **Contract Monitoring**, isn't it?

128. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.

Commented [NS1]: This should be 'Compliance Monitoring'

129. **Ms Lampard:** Can I ask you now about the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group – GDWG? Do you have anything to do with them?
130. **A.** We do. At 5 o'clock today I have a phone call from the lady who has been asked to do a review for their bid. They have to rebid at the moment for funding, and so she wants a half-hour session with me on the phone.
131. We have, I would say, a high esteem for Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group. I went along relatively soon after joining the Board to their offices and met Nik, who was the Leader at that time, and saw their offices, and so on.
132. The relationship has been a little bit rocky. It is certainly rocky between G4S and the Home Office and them, because on the one hand, everybody acknowledges what very good work they do. In practical terms, there is a definite feeling of suspicion of their motives. Whether this is justified or not really isn't our area to see, but they were beginning to contact me with concerns over given individuals, which I thought was becoming a little bit inappropriate. I was beginning to serve their ends, so just before *Panorama* broke, both G4S and the Home Office were getting cross about it and about some of, what they felt, was inappropriate behaviour, because they want them to be a welfare organisation only. Therefore, they can hand out clothes and do visits, social visits, and the Gatwick Detainees Group obviously have a slightly different agenda.
133. **Mr Marsden:** There is a campaigning element to them, isn't there?
134. **Ms Colbran:** They can give themselves the luxury of having an opinion about detention, which we can't do. Maybe we do have, but that can't come into our role here. Last week, two weeks back –
135. **Mr Weber:** I think it was two weeks ago.
136. **Ms Colbran:** We all went down to Crawley and had a good session with them with two of the ones that G4S consider are the most active, militant members, and James, who's their Leader. It was a very fruitful session.
137. **Ms Lampard:** What was discussed? What was the outcome?
138. **A.** It was seeing it from their point of view – suspicion from G4S and the Home Office, but their point is if we come across a concern what do we do with it? You are saying don't use the IMB, which wasn't quite what we were saying. Don't use the IMB because there are other correct avenues, but, then, when we try to go through the other avenues, going through, say, for custody, or whatever, we don't always get a reply. We talked about the confidentiality, because very often they ask us something and we deal with it, but we can't actually give them the detail because it's about a detainee, and security, and this, that, and the other. There are difficulties, and so we discussed that in general terms. We also said, "when you do your referrals to, say, safe custody, etc., why don't you copy in the IMB, so you are not actually asking us or telling us to do something, but we are aware of the issue." That has worked once since then (i.e. copying in the IMB).; We came back from that meeting and discussed it in a board meeting, didn't we, and I think Lee is very interested in following it up himself.
139. **Q.** About the difficulties in this relationship?
140. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.
141. **Q.** Can I also ask you, you said they were approaching you about individuals, and you felt that that was trying to serve their end. Is that necessarily the

case? If they have an individual, why can't you take up something about an individual? You do, don't you?

142. Ms Colbran: ~~We~~You do.

143. Q. People approach you in the centre and say, "here's my issue."

144. Ms Colbran: Yes. In fact, we sent them some application forms because another avenue is when they are visiting if they come across an issue they can now actually write an application or help a detainee to write an application form to the IMB and tell them where to put it. We have been through that process. It was becoming more and more frequent, and I felt very uncomfortable. I find it difficult to put my finger on, but I think it was probably to do with the fact that there are correct ways of going about this thing. Some of the issues were relatively minor. Not minor to the individual, and we would have picked them up had we been in the centre, but it should have gone to G4S. We are monitors, really, rather than the resolvers of problems. It is not quite clear-cut like that, but one of the questions on our IMB form is, 'who have you spoken to about this already?' with the implication being there are avenues. You talk to your wing officer if you don't have a blanket.

145. Q. Are you trying to tell me that it has to become a trend before it is your concern?

146. Ms Colbran: No.

147. Mr Weber: No, we are not. I think we had a concern that there was a danger that they were making bullets. That is perhaps putting it slightly too harshly, but in other words, we were becoming involved or being asked to get involved in situations where it wasn't entirely appropriate, or at least it wasn't appropriate to do it in that way. We were almost becoming a servant of GDWG.

148. Q. There is something about their motives?

149. Mr Weber: Not necessarily. I am not impugning their motives. It is simply that we are independent and we are independent of the Home Office, we are independent of G4S, and, actually, we have to be independent of the Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group.

150. Q. Yes, I see.

151. Mr Weber: I think that there was a concern that we might not be perceived as being independent, if we appear to be, to some extent, at the beck and call. If they had something that they regarded as being intractable, or whatever, that we became their first port of call, and there are ways in which it can be done. Jackie has indicated, one of the ways is that that group says to a detainee, "either see a member of the IMB, or put in an application and they will see you" and I think there is an element that certainly I felt. I am not trying to speak for Jackie or anybody else, that ultimately it is down to the detainee to come forward and do something.

152. I think also, just to widen it out slightly, two things. First of all, going back to motive, I think that, as Jackie has said, we may have a view about detention, whether it is appropriate or not, and I would have thought that if we absolutely thought detention was wrong in any circumstance, it would not be appropriate for us to be on the IMB. We should be in a campaigning group against the detention of people, against the immigration rules.

153. I think that there are people within the Gatwick Group who, if not of the view that detention is wrong full stop, are certainly approaching that, and I think

that there is a potential conflict between, if you like, a campaigning political element and the welfare role. I am not saying it happens often, I am not saying it happens with all of the members of that group, and I think that there are a lot of volunteers that obviously we didn't see who don't turn up often. We saw, I think, the people who are almost the full-time staff, but I think that there is a potential danger at the very least of this conflict between the campaigning and the welfare role.

154. **Mr Marsden:** They are very open about the fact that they do both, aren't they?
155. **Mr Weber:** Yes, absolutely.
156. **Q.** They don't hide that.
157. **Mr Weber:** Yes, it is entirely reasonable, but once we then get involved in that process we may well get sucked into something in which we really shouldn't be involved. Of course, in practical terms we have an advantage because we have a much better idea of what is happening sometimes, or we can find out. They don't get a view on visits when they see people, someone can sit in visits, tell them anything and it may or may not be true. If someone comes to us and says, "x, y and z has happened", we can see if they have raised these issues before. We can see if they have raised them with members of staff on the wings or with managers, or whatever. We can say to a manager, "what's the score about this?" as part of our investigation, so we have a much quicker understanding. For example, one of the complaints that they were involved in and tried to involve us in was an alleged under-age detainee.
158. **Ms Colbran:** It is in the *Panorama* programme. It is mentioned in it.
159. **Mr Weber:** We were aware of that and we knew that, in fact, it was the Home Office who had told G4S, "no, we have very clear records that this individual (I think) came from Pakistan as part of a family group x years ago. He had, what we believe, is a genuine Pakistani passport which gave his name as x, and if you add the intervening numbers of years to x you come up to 18", or, indeed, maybe more than that. The Home Office at that time, at least, was satisfied he was over 18, and in any case, we also knew that, in fact, G4S had referred him onto Healthcare. He was subject to a regular, I think it was monthly review. He was treated as a vulnerable self-declared minor.
160. **Ms Colbran:** He was kept on E Wing, wasn't he?
161. **Mr Weber:** Yes, he was kept on E Wing, and effectively came under the vulnerable detainee approach. Therefore, he was carefully monitored.
162. I think the Home Office may then have changed their minds about his age, despite the passport evidence and he was then, I think, released either voluntarily or by order of a court, I can't remember which now.
163. **Ms Lampard:** He went into the care of the Local Safeguarding Board, didn't he?
164. **Mr Weber:** I think so.
165. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, I think so.
166. **Mr Weber:** However, the Gatwick Group, I think, were largely unaware of what was happening behind the scenes that we were aware of. Therefore, in a sense, that gives perhaps an indication of, if you like, we are on the inside track, so we have at least some idea of responses in that sort of situation. We are able to make more immediate enquiries.
167. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, we were actually involved in that well before Gatwick Detainees referred him to us.
168. **Mr Weber:** Yes.
169. **Mr Colbran:** We had been particularly involved in that.



170. **Q.** Can we move onto the Management here? I would like to know your observations. Having talked to some members of staff, it seems that there is quite an up and down in terms of Senior Management, relationships between the Senior Management Team, there have been quite a lot of issues of grievances being filed and managers have come and gone. There have been a few moments when there have been gaps in the Management Team. I know that from the end of last year until June this year there has been nobody. There was nobody running the Security, there was no Head of Security, and since June there has been no Head of the Safeguarding in the Residential Directory. Are those the sort of issues that you have been aware of? We are interested in whether or not that's had an effect on the morale in the centre, and whether it seems to have affected the way the people have behaved.
171. **Ms Colbran:** We are not, again, supposed to be involved in the management of staff, so we are not party unless we hear on the grapevine.
172. **Q.** That is really what I am asking you.
173. **Ms Colbran:** It is what we hear on the grapevine that really comes down to it, unless there is some official announcement of somebody taking on a role. We never did find out why the Head of Security suddenly departed.
174. **Mr Weber:** Neil Davis.
175. **Ms Colbran:** Yes. Usually, you think if you wait long enough you find out, but we never have found out.
176. **Mr Weber:** It was very sudden.
177. **Ms Colbran:** It was very sudden, yes, and I suspect that there were probably personalities there, but maybe not.
178. **Mr Weber:** That came about, didn't it, not long after the escape. I should say that I knew Neil Davis in a previous life.
179. **Ms Colbran:** Oh, right.
180. **Mr Weber:** He was one of my senior officers when I was at High Down, and I liked Neil. He was a good guy. I couldn't comment on how he was doing the job here, but there didn't seem to be any issues. However, I think he arrived not that long before the escape.
181. **Ms Colbran:** He arrived before Steve Skitt.
182. **Mr Weber:** Yes.
183. **Ms Colbran:** There was a possibility, I thought, of a clash there.
184. **Mr Weber:** He was then responsible, I think, for setting out the response to the security issues that were thrown up by the escape. Whether there were disagreements about what he was doing, or whatever, I don't know.
185. **Ms Colbran:** I haven't had the impression, certainly at the senior level of instability. Yes, Neil went.
186. **Mr Weber:** I forget Steve Skitt's predecessor.
187. **Mr Marsden:** Duncan.
188. **Mr Weber:** Duncan, yes. He also went.
189. **Ms Colbran:** I did find out that one.
190. **Ms Lampard:** What did you find out?
191. **Ms Colbran:** Am I allowed to tell you?
192. **Q.** Yes, you are allowed to tell me.
193. **Ms Colbran:** Duncan was having a relationship with somebody in Healthcare. He ended up going to the Harmondsworth.

194. **Mr Marsden:** It sounds like Duncan and Ben had quite a difficult relationship?
195. **Ms Colbran:** That was my very early days, and I wasn't aware of it.
196. **Q.** Okay, so it didn't manifest itself?
197. **Ms Colbran:** Certainly not. I thought they worked well together.
198. **Mr Weber:** Yes, so did I. That is interesting.
199. **Q.** That is interesting. Have you picked up this sense of people using grievances as a way of resolving?
200. **Ms Colbran:** No, because we wouldn't be told about grievances. We hear the DCO level complaining about Management because they feel quite free to express that sort of thing. I think they have confidence that we are not there to catch them out if they want to have a bit of a moan.
201. **Q.** What are the moans?
202. **Ms Colbran:** One is that they never see Management. We have actually raised that at a Board meeting with the Senior Management, and they have said, "it is not true, because Managers do go around", but that doesn't necessarily mean they are visible enough. I bumped into Ben him one Sunday when I was in for something, and he was saying how good it was to actually do the Duty Director role now and again to have a good feel. I rarely saw him round the centre. I think it would have been nicer, I think this business of Steve and Debbie Weston going round talking on different wings and being face-to-face, I think that's excellent, because that is where you really find out.
203. **Ms Lampard:** Remind me of Debbie's role.
204. **A.** She and Simon are Home Office, Head of the Pre-Departure Team.
205. **Q.** Do they go around together?
206. **Ms Colbran:** She is at Tinsley, so she is doing the Pre-Departure Team at Tinsley, but there was a long period when she was running the pilot here. It overlapped so that she was around and worked with Steve post-*Panorama*.
207. **Q.** I am interested that you raised the issue of visibility of Management with Ben, because, in a sense, that is a Management issue, isn't it? However, presumably, what you were saying was that it was affecting staff?
208. **Ms Colbran:** They were complaining about it. Staff do complain. Staff don't always understand the issues. Conway is a mine of information on staff. Conway, who's the Diversity Manager.
209. **Mr Weber:** Conway Edwards.
210. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, and he is very much involved in staff relations, and he's a great one to talk to about how staff are feeling. Over the four years it is cycles, isn't it?
211. **Q.** I am just trying to bottom out what you told us before about being quite nervous about telling the Management things. At the same time saying that, "frankly, you lot need to be out on the floor a bit more."
212. **Ms Colbran:** I didn't say we were nervous about telling Management.
213. **Q.** Right, okay.
214. **Ms Colbran:** That is definitely putting words into my mouth.
215. **Q.** Sorry, that is the way I heard it.

216. **Ms Colbran:** No, no, no. We have no fear about telling Management anything, and have never had cause to. We have raised with them this issue at a couple of Board meetings.
217. **Mr Weber:** I think we were reflecting back to Management what had been said to us. I think it is quite important not necessarily to take at face value what a detainee says to you, so it is equally important not to, again, allow staff to make bullets for us to fire in terms of their relationship with Management. Therefore, it is a case of saying, "this is what we were told. We are not making anything of it."
218. If I could expand slightly on what Jackie said, and, again, I come at this with a Prison Service background, I think the world has moved on since I retired ten years ago, so I know staffing levels in the Public Prison Service have been cut and the rank structure has changed since I have left. They have compressed the Management grades I think probably in a detrimental way. I think you see the same here, and I would say that probably from what I hear many prisons now, partly as a result of the grading cuts, funding cuts, do not have sufficient staff to do the job that they are expected to do, and their Management levels have been denuded.
219. I think probably it is the case that when this place is full and it can have at times a pretty difficult population, because a proportion of that population, both in terms of either mental health issues or serious behavioural issues, the mad and the bad, that they don't have enough staff to do the job. I think it is interesting that suddenly, as we understand it, not only are each of the wings going to have an extra member of staff to bring them up to three officers, DCOs, but they are also to have their own individual manager, as opposed to one manager between two, and they would often be called off to meetings, and what have you. Therefore, that is quite a significant uprating of staff numbers, including the managers being on the wings.
220. Certainly, one of the things that I have noticed and said is that when I do a rota visit, certainly, the wing on which I am focusing I try and go in there roundabout lunchtime because all the detainees are out. I sometimes sit and each lunch with them. I invariably choose someone who can't speak English, which is brilliant! Then, when lunch is finished I go right up to the top of the wing, I will walk all the way around the top floor, drop down and walk all the way around the next one, and then I will drop down again. Unless I happen to be there when they are locking up immediately prior to lunch, because they lock up at 12 o'clock and do a roll check, or at some other time, I can't recall seeing a member of staff up on the upper landings. It was exactly the same when I was in the Prison Service. It was very difficult to make officers regularly patrol the higher landings, because they felt safer if there were two of them or more, and they felt safer being on, in Prison Service terms, the ground floor is the ones in the Prison Services. It is the ground floor here.
221. I think that there is an issue, not just about Management being more visible in this place, but also staff being more visible on the upper landings. I intend no disrespect or criticism of G4S, because I think if you went into a Public Service prison, or immigration detention centre you would probably find exactly the same.
222. **Q.** Jackie, I owe you an apology. I am sorry, I misinterpreted what you were saying about you having been knocked back when you talked about the

education officer. You were very quick to say to me, "because we are not supposed to talk about management issues", and I thought, so why are you now coming in and saying -?

**Ms Colbran:** Yes. It is rephrasing. All you need to do is rephrase the issue.

**223. Q.** I mistook that as a reticence to raise these issues with them, but I am grateful to you for clearing that up.

**224. Ms Colbran:** I have a report here. It is a redacted one. It happens to be redacted because we prepared it for somebody else. At our Board meeting we make our minutes and I can't even remember what this specific one says, but it gives a bit of a flavour of how we raise any issue with G4S and with Home Office. It reminded me of the time last year the courtyards were shut for a long time, it was basically a fight going on between the Home Office and G4S as to who paid for the extra security after the escape.

**225. Mr Marsden:** After the escape?

**226. Ms Colbran:** Yes.

**227. Q.** When it had to be manned?

**228. Ms Colbran:** Yes. It had to be manned, not enough staff, so they couldn't open all the yards, and so on, and so forth. We listened to both sides. We raised it month, after month, after month. In the end, because every three months we meet with the Home Office Enforcement Director as all the Chairs of the estate, we raised it there. I don't know how it happened, but it was resolved.

**229.** Do you want this?

**230. Ms Lampard:** That would be very helpful, thank you.

**231.** Can I go back to this issue of staffing, because it is so pertinent, I think, isn't it? Can I ask you to tell me whether I am right or wrong in what I think we have been hearing, which is that the contract is for two DCOs on each wing plus a shared DCM with another wing. That there had been a recognition some time ago that this was perhaps not adequate. That at the time that 60 extra staff came on -

**232. Mr Weber:** 60 extra detainees.

**233. Q.** Sorry, 60 extra detainees, a concerted effort was going to be made. The agreement was to up it to three DCOs, but, actually, that hasn't necessarily happened. It never happened in your view -

**234. Ms Colbran:** It started. It is very cyclical, and I remember every year there is a low point, not necessarily at the same time of year, and then it is resolved and it goes up again. We were in a low point before *Panorama*. The low point had been reached, off the top of my head, I would say June, and things were difficult. Then, okay, all the ITCs grind into operation and throw out more people. There is a level of dissatisfaction among staff. It might be the shifts, it might be involvement, that they don't feel involved enough in what's going on. It is the them and us maybe, but a lot of staff leave and even with successful recruitment campaigns it leaves you with a very low level of experience. *Panorama* happened, it knocked everything for six, so what would have been a normal cycle of swinging up then was mixed up in the fall-out from *Panorama*, and so it is taking a bit longer to recover this time.

235. **Mr Marsden:** There have been, I think, 25 people who have left in the last three months.
236. **Ms Colbran:** Plus the ten who have been kicked out.
237. **Q.** No, I think that includes the people who were dismissed.
238. **Mr Weber:** There are more going.
239. **Ms Lampard:** However, Lee has told us that his plan is for three.
240. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.
241. **Q.** Plus a DCM.
242. **Ms Colbran:** His plan is to have one on each landing, he has told us, to push them up.
243. **Q.** However, we were in the centre on Friday, and with the best will in the world you weren't going to have everybody on a landing because there were just two DCOs. There was one who had to man that door the whole time, and the other one was being berated in the office.
244. **Ms Colbran:** He said by April he is hoping that the recruitment programmes will have thrown up enough people. It just can't happen overnight because of the whole thing of recruitment. It is bad enough for us trying to recruit. It takes such a long time with the clearances, and everything. I am doing an ITC on 2 January. They are doing a back-to-back, so there is going to be another one straight after. It is work in progress.
245. **Mr Marsden:** Do you think that the management of staffing in terms of there is quite a high attrition level, 72 a year, or so.
246. **A.** Yes.
247. **Q.** That is what, I think, Lee told us. Are they planning for that as effectively as they -?
248. **Ms Colbran:** I don't know.
249. **Mr Weber:** I think it is difficult, isn't it? Sorry, I shouldn't keep going back to the Prison Service, but I can remember when I was at High Down, which was in the early 2000s, and we absolutely struggled to keep our staffing up to its approved level. We were constantly having staff leave to go work for British Rail, or whatever, in Croydon, in Central London. In the South East the Public Service pay rates are often lagging behind the private sector, or, indeed, other parts of the wider public service, and I think that's probably happening now. I think it is exacerbated because they have to recruit people without the recruits having an opportunity to see what this place is like until they walk through the door on their first day of service, and it is partly to do with security clearance and the need for a high level of clearance, but for the life of me, I cannot see why the Home Office cannot find a means of at least allowing people to come in for a couple of days –
250. **Q.** Rather than it all being left to the end?
251. **Mr Weber:** Once they have made their application to see what it is like, and there will be some people, at least, who would look around and think, blimey, and that's it, they are not going to proceed with their application. As it is, I think, let's say you have a cohort of 20-odd people coming through off an ITC. If you immediately lose even three or four of those, and maybe then down the line another two or three, that's a lot. It is a huge waste of investment in the Prison Service.

252. Q. Do they do things like open days?
253. Ms Colbran: No, because it is not an open centre. You need counter-terrorism clearance to come into the centre.
254. Q. In Yarl's Wood they did open days ~~and via the visits hall~~.
255. Ms Colbran: Visits, yes.
256. Q. There was a much more proactive effort to try and say to people, "this is what the job involves", so it was giving people a feel for is this the kind of work that you might do? It is answering Dick's point. I don't know how well it worked, but they had encountered exactly the same problem that they would recruit people through the ITC, they would step into the centre, and two or three weeks later they would decide they didn't want to do it. The other thing that was driving people leaving there was they thought they were joining a team and then were finding often that they worked in isolation, or relative isolation, and so thought, it isn't the job that I thought.
257. Ms Colbran: I think that ~~Team think there is a team~~ there is a good team at Brook House. The incident that I watched last week I was down in the kitting-up room, and there was a really good level of rapport between all the people. It was late at night. They had had a hugely long day, very tiring, very draining, but it was great. The feeling in the room was great.
258. Q. If there are two of you on a wing and one is on the door, and one is being barracked in the office, it is that kind of circumstance that led people -
259. Ms Colbran: To think that, yes.
260. Q. This isn't actually quite what I thought it was.
261. Ms Colbran: Yet the two, or let's say three at the best, I see them interacting well, and being very supportive of each other. "Have you been to lunch yet?", and so on.
262. Q. That sort of loyalty to one another, and that sort of support to one another, I think, is often very strong in a staffing group, isn't it?
263. Ms Colbran: You could argue that that's what led to some of the *Panorama* stuff
264. Ms Lampard: Can we come back to that in a minute? I just want to ask you, given what we have just talked about, the levels of staffing, what is your impression of how secure the place is at the moment, and the threat level to staff, and the threat level, the risks to the order of the place? How safe does it feel at the moment?
265. Mr Weber: You have possibly done a rota visit more recently than me. I went around about a month ago and you will read the report from Mary, which I think was a week or two before mine, and there had been two or three weeks where the reports were coming in and it all felt a bit rocky, a lot of incidents. I started my rota week thinking, what's going to happen this week? I had very few calls from Oscar. These are the calls if someone goes down to the CSU with the use of force, or whatever. I had very few calls, and, of course, you have calls also when people come off. If you have ten calls in a week it is only probably involving potentially five detainees, somebody going down to the CSU, and then somebody going back to their normal location. It was a very quiet week and I went around the establishment on two separate days and it was pretty quiet I would say. I think I had only two formal applications in our boxes, both of which were largely or wholly about Home Office issues in which we can't

get involved. I picked up another couple on the hoof going around, but I thought the atmosphere was pretty reasonable, and quiet, and not too bad at all.

266. I think just as staff can be up and down, also detainees are up and down, and sometimes you just simply have three or four really difficult detainees who have an influence way beyond their numbers. If they are released, or they are sent back, or whatever, that can change the entire feeling within the establishment very, very quickly.
267. **Ms Colbran:** We were looking at the Detainee of Interest paperwork before we came up here, and there have been, partly associated with the incident last week. I think Brian-Lorraine said that there are five officers off sick through injury in use of force, or being attacked or assaulted by detainees.
268. **Mr Marsden:** The number of assaults this month was 47, I think, which is up from November.
269. **Ms Colbran:** Yes, that sounds up.
270. **Q.** However, not significantly.
271. **Ms Colbran:** Yes. We receive all these figures at our monthly meeting, and we raise them with the Management as to what has gone up, what has gone down. Dick, in particular, does it for the Annual Report, does the analysis for the Annual Report.
272. It is a week by week, or month by month. With the removal of Mr B today it possibly means that this is going to be a little bit more even for a short time until the next big incident. Sometimes it is not violent. Sometimes it is somebody with major mental health issues in E Wing or –
273. **Mr Weber:** Spice, in particular, I think is an increasing concern, not just here, but across the wider prison and detention estates.
274. **Ms Lampard:** What do you attribute the *Panorama* stuff to? We don't know the full story because *Panorama* won't give us the film, so there is quite a lot of sense of what did this amount to? Was this banter? It is very hard to tell if it is all thrown at you in the way that it was, and we all know that in work places people let off steam in particular ways. It may not actually be terribly threatening to the good order of the place, and all of those sorts of things. I suppose I am asking you a double question. Do you think that it really is a reflection of the place? What do you attribute whatever behaviours that were inappropriate to?
275. **Ms Colbran:** It is a difficult one. Seeing the programme, watching the programme, I was busy filtering out material that I didn't feel was significant to the issue. Therefore, out would come all the stuff relating to drugs in so far as that's right across the estate, as Dick has just said. Therefore, that is not an issue that Brook House in particular is subject to. If you take out all the Home Office stuff about length of detention, and you take out the bits of film that were just noise and blurred, Calum running around blowing his whistle. I only watched it the once, one incident of real physical abuse.
276. **Ms Colbran:** And possibly two incidents where really, really inappropriate language about bashing somebody's head against the wall, and about using the edge of the shield, and then a number of other things which were inappropriate.
277. **Mr Marsden:** Bar talk.



278. **Ms Colbran:** However, not gross. Or at least, they weren't gross until they actually resulted in action. I have said it to Stephen Shaw, and all sorts of people, but Mr [D275] the man who was on the wires where John Connolly was heard in the stairwell saying what he would do, we were actually in a Board meeting that day, and it was on the monitors in our room. Michelle Brown was acting as Silver and talking to us about something. We had invited her to come and talk to the meeting, so she was actually playing a dual role. Therefore, we were partly involved in the incident right the way through that afternoon, from about 12 o'clock.
279. Gilly, who was on the rota had been on the wing watching Mr [D275] and everything that had been going on before the meeting. She went straight back afterwards and I stayed in the Control Room, which was where they were running the incident from, and we monitored that whole thing. Of course, what was going on in the stairwell was not part of that because they were being kept waiting in case they were needed in the incident, because he said he had blades, and had he suddenly produced the blades and done something with them, they needed the teams ready. They were just on duty with nothing much to do, and if it had resolved itself at that point Gilly was there and would have followed Mr [D275] all the way down to the CSU and checked, as we do, that he was alright before he was locked up. As it happened, she was asked to leave because they were going to use the pepper spray. I watched that bit on the monitors, and then I went straight down to talk to Mr [D275] as soon as he was in the CSU and the fumes had cleared a little. I saw him again the following morning, and he was absolutely fine and he understood exactly what had happened, and why it had happened. He had chosen to make the protest in that way - I don't think pepper spray was a novelty to him.
280. What can you say? With John Connolly nothing would have happened as a result in that particular situation, and, of course, we are all absolutely shocked because we had had a lot of dealings with John. He did our personal protection training. If we wanted to see CCTV we could go to him and he would actually show us where an incident was going wrong.
281. **Ms Lampard:** You are telling me that it surprised you to see him?
282. **Ms Colbran:** Very much.
283. **Q.** Was that across the Board?
284. **Mr Weber:** I think it probably was. I think it was a surprise to Management here, I would have thought, because I don't think they would have had him in that role if they had thought that he would behave like that, because, again, the C&R trainers in any establishment are really important people in the use of force. Clearly, on any given day you may have an unplanned incident, and simply whoever is there, first deals with it. Then if it is on-going more senior and experienced staff come in to make sure that things are done properly.
285. However, if you have a planned intervention which might be to hand somebody over to ~~task-orTascor~~ it might be to move somebody within the establishment, then you would normally involve at least one of your senior trainers to be in charge to make sure that they choose the best staff. It is the case that some staff are better at C&R than others, and that they are then supervising to make sure that the holds are done properly It is all done as professionally as possible.



286. Therefore, to have John Connolly in there, behaving as he did, was utterly undermining of what I think is a very good system. I can remember the days in the Prison Service when it was a complete bundle, frankly. MUFTI teams, as they used to be called, and the advent of C&R was a massive improvement in terms of seeking to ensure the safety of both prisoners or detainees here and staff.
287. I think that it has been copied elsewhere, it has been refined over the years, and I think that used appropriately it is actually beneficial to the wider system. Therefore, I was particularly disappointed to see that, because it seemed to me that John Connolly's behaviour was undermining the system, actually encouraging junior staff to behave absolutely against the rules and against the best interests of detainees and their colleagues.
288. Just expanding from what Jackie was saying, I was actually quite surprised by the programme. I am going to have to be cynical, it was nowhere near as bad as I thought it would be in advance. I thought there was little by way of substance beyond what Jackie has described. I am not in any way diminishing that, but I expected an hour of violence and abuse, and, actually, there was considerable padding. Some things were shown more than once. We had lots of shots of Calum, whatever his name is, running up and down the football field blowing his whistle.
289. I was also very angry with the BBC, which I felt had not acted in the best interests of detainees in this establishment, but it had acted in the interest of trying to make a sexy programme. Some of that material dated from April, including, I think, the assault by the guy who by that time was then working for the Home Office, interestingly, and they sat on that material until the programme came out at the end of August. If they had the best interests of detainees at heart, as they had claimed, then they should have done something, even if it undermined their programme. They were more concerned, it seemed to me, with making a good TV programme, filling an hour on *Panorama* than with the best interests of the detainees. That was how I saw it, and I echo Jackie in saying that I was surprised, certainly by the use of force that we saw, in a sense, because we had not had referred back to us any complaints from detainees about staff behaving in that way. We would have complaints sometimes about staff allegedly saying something that was inappropriate, that was wrong, and these things were investigated by the establishment, that is. I think it is very difficult in these situations because it is often done when there is no one else around, so it's one person's word against another.
290. If I were the manager here, what I would be looking for is whether there was a series of complaints against one particular member of staff who was always the one who was doing it, because such is the turnover I think it will be quite difficult for detainees to get together to collude in making these allegations. I think from time to time they did pull individual members of staff and say, "look, we are hearing a little too much about you from detainees. Wind your neck in or you are going to find yourself in serious trouble." I don't know if it was taken further than that, but I am pretty sure that would have happened.
291. I wasn't surprised that staff who observed, say, John Connolly behaving as he did, or others, did not go to Management. I am disappointed but not surprised.

292. **Q.** Why?
293. **Mr Weber:** Again, when I worked at various prisons in the Prison Service the behaviour and professionalism of staff undoubtedly improved, I think, significantly during my 25 years in the job, but even at the end we had issues with some staff at High Down who were always the ones who were digging prisoners out. We knew it was going on. It was very hard to pull that, to stop it.
294. **Q.** What do you mean, digging prisoners out?
295. **Mr Weber:** They were deliberately provoking situations, for example, where they might have to use force on them.
296. **Q.** I see.
297. **Mr Weber:** Or just behaving inappropriately, but it was very difficult to prove without the support of other staff saying, "this is happening." I think part of the problem is that some of the staff we saw doing that were the more experienced staff, and even where they weren't it may be that an officer doing that two days before had your back when there was an incident with a detainee or detainees, you felt relieved that they had been there and were supporting you. I think where you have teams of officers working in this way it could be quite hard to break that culture - if today I hear John Connolly saying x, y and z, but two days ago he intervened to help me when I was being abused, or whatever, by a detainee. I understand why staff act together and are reluctant to call one another out, even though I think that it is wrong that they don't do so. I absolutely understand why it can be difficult to make that happen, because they might well think if I do that, then that person might get the sack and they really helped me a couple of days ago. Therefore, just as there is a detainee or a prisoner subculture, which is very hard to get through, there is also a staff subculture, which is very hard for Management to break into and to properly appreciate.
298. **Q.** Can I ask you what you now think are the real issues for this place? What are the things that are concerning you, as a Board, principally?
299. **Ms Colbran:** Staffing.
300. **Mr Marsden:** As in numbers, quality?
301. **Ms Colbran:** Numbers.
302. **Mr Weber:** Experience.
303. **Ms Colbran:** Working them up to be able to feel confidence in their role.
304. **Mr Weber:** I think there is a danger that you will have a situation in which you will have a large number of very junior staff. You don't have 400 people who have been here for a long time, or lots of previous experience of prison, nevertheless, there will be at least perhaps 10 per cent or more of the detainee population who will either have been in prison for some time, or they will have been here for some time. What you don't want is a situation where they know more than the officers who supervise them.
305. **Ms Colbran:** I think it is a time of change, and I don't know how the officers on the ground are feeling about it, even if they are aware that you have a new escort contract coming in. Aramark have just had their contract done. There is a question about what is going to happen to G4S, are they going to win the contract, or are they not.

306. Then there will be the question of Lee, who replaces Lee, because he is only temporary.
307. There are so many things, so many things all bubbling up at once that I feel, my goodness, I am very happy I am shutting the door at the end of December and letting somebody else with fresh eyes look at this. There is a lot bubbling around, and I feel change –
308. Q. I know this is a slightly loaded question, but does it feel unsafe?
309. Ms Colbran: No. I think I speak for the IMB, we do not feel unsafe in the centre.
310. Q. No, I meant does the centre feel unsafe?
311. Ms Colbran: No. It is not the unsafeness - it's the change. As I say, I am not sure that the officers are aware of all these changes. They have a different view on their day-to-day thing. They might not have thought how long Lee will be staying for. They might not have thought about whether G4S gets the job, and it doesn't even matter from their point of view.
312. Q. Would you be surprised to hear that some of them think it is unsafe?
313. Ms Colbran: No, I don't.
314. Q. You wouldn't be surprised?
315. Ms Colbran: Bearing in mind there are five officers off sick through injury, I would be concerned about my safety. Our view of what is happening in the centre is only related to one, relatively safe time. We breeze in and we smile at everybody and everybody smiles back at us, and they will come up and talk to us. However, we are not around necessarily at lock-up time or the points where there might be problems.
316. Mr Weber: We are not here to say no to detainees.
317. Ms Colbran: Yes.
318. Mr Weber: We might say no in terms of, "I am sorry, but that's an immigration matter, we can't get involved in that", but we are not here to say, "get behind your door".
319. Ms Colbran: "Do this and do that."
320. Mr Weber: "No, you can't do that" or on your application to work in the kitchen, "no, because of your behaviour".
321. Ms Colbran: In fact, we are not likely to even see the officers being very firm with detainees because, probably they do soft pedal them when we are in the office and a detainee comes in and asks for a toilet roll. I have never seen an officer saying, "no, you can't have a toilet roll now", but is that because I am there?
322. Mr Weber: Having said that, I would say both before and after the *Panorama* programme we have seen staff behaving exceptionally well.
323. Ms Colbran: Absolutely, yes.
324. Mr Weber: With very difficult and demanding detainees and not telling them to 'f off', or whatever, but actually treating them properly, as human beings, these are often very young and potentially quite inexperienced and junior staff. I think it is a very demanding role that they have to undertake. I think that the vast majority of them do it very well.
325. Ms Lampard: We have had a discussion with the man who's acting up as the Safeguarding Manager, James Begg, and he is really working on a skeleton staff of his own. He told us a number of things which slightly concern me about first night inductions not being done properly, some people not having

- proper inductions, that he doesn't have enough staff to investigate incidents properly at the Incident Report, or to do trend analysis, and that sort of thing. Is that something that the IMB has been aware of, that terrific stretch in his department?
326. **Ms Colbran:** Mainly in so far as everything is stretched, everything has been stretched, and so I am not at all surprised.
327. **Mr Weber:** I think we are aware that some detainees don't have proper inductions.
328. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.
329. **Mr Weber:** We have only recently, I think, become aware that they can refuse to be inducted, which I certainly wasn't aware of. I simply assumed that it would happen, and that there were occasions when it didn't due to shortage of staff, or sometimes because the detainee arrived and transferred quickly, of course, which is a separate matter.
330. I think also a problem for the establishment is that they can both receive and send detainees out any time within the 24 hours, so unlike a prison where at least at 9 o'clock, or at 10 o'clock at night in a local prison that is it. The door shuts and you are not taking anyone other than ~~the~~ in absolute extremists, here the doors are always open.
331. **Mr Weber:** They can be open to admit new people in, and I think that can be a problem for working out how the induction system is going to take place.
332. **Ms Colbran:** It is the disruption that *Panorama* caused which is so sad, because, certainly, I think a lot of good things were happening very, very slowly, but there was good stuff happening. Then you have *Panorama*, and then you have post-*Panorama* and it was so difficult to pull things back together again.
333. They were looking at induction if I go back in my notes. I went back through the year's minutes to see what we had been discussing and with regards induction they were aware, G4S were aware that it wasn't quite right, that they centred it on B Wing, and it was more or less ticking over, and I think Michelle Brown was actually writing some new guidelines on induction at that point. Then you go into this mess.
334. At the moment B Wing has been painted, but they are using it to sort other people out, so induction is much, much looser – is it the 15<sup>th</sup> when painting finishes? Then they will gradually be able to get everything back down again, hopefully produce the old induction and then improve upon it. However, at the moment it is dodgy.
335. **Mr Weber:** I think just as the *Panorama* programme clearly put huge additional pressure on staff and Management, but mainly Management, I think, in terms of trying to come to terms with it and deal with it, both the immediate aftermath and now, for example, accommodating your inquiry, a Home Office inquiry – there is a lot going on. I think it is possibly interesting to speculate the extent to which the contract renewal process also places a strain on local Management, and, again, it is interesting that that was going on before the *Panorama* programme, as well as going on during the incidents that the *Panorama* programme focused on. I do wonder whether we have talked about staff generally on the landings, but in terms of Management's ability to manage the contract renegotiation for G4S is enormous. There are millions of pounds at stake for the company and they want to win the contract. I suspect there is significant pressure, particularly on the Director at the time. They may well bring one or two people in from outside to assist that process, but my suspicion is that it is driven by the Director and also probably the Deputy Director, who may well find that they are removed from their normal

day-to-day managerial supervisory roles in order to focus on contracts, for what it is worth. I don't know. It is a question I am asking you, in a sense. I am asking if that is the case.

336. **Ms Lampard:** I am making a note of it because it is something we probably ought to think about with people.
337. We have now talked to you for a very long time. I think we will call it a day there for the moment, because I think it is not right to go on for too long.
338. **Mr Weber:** We have bored them into submission!
339. **Q.** No, it is over the hour-and-a-half, which we have set as our limit, because we think it is not good for anybody and we get to the point of not being able to focus, and let alone you concentrate on the answers. Thank you very much indeed. I suspect we will see you around. We are going to come and see you in one of your meetings, which will be fascinating, and thank you so much for having helped us so very much today.
340. **Mr Marsden:** This will be transcribed by the transcribing service, and Nicola will then email it to you password protected.
341. **Ms Colbran:** Yes.
342. **Q.** If you ring the office we will give you the password.
343. **Ms Colbran:** I will forward it to Dick.
344. **Q.** Yes, do, and if you want to make amendments to it, please do - that's absolutely fine.
345. **Ms Colbran:** Great, thank you very much indeed.
346. **Ms Lampard:** Thank you.
347. **Mr Marsden:** Thank you very much.

*[Interview concluded]*