

Confidential

Independent Investigation into Brook House

Monday, 22 January 2018

**Interview with
Paul Gasson
Portfolio Management
Escorting and Training Programme**

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Interview with Paul Gasson Portfolio Management Escorting and Training Programme

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

1. **Mr Marsden:** This is an interview with Paul Gasson. It is part of the independent investigation into matters concerning Brook House. It is 22 January 2018.
[Introductions]
2. **Ms Lampard:** Paul, can you please tell us what your role is, what your title is, and what the responsibilities you have are?
3. **Mr Gasson:** Up until I left Brook House my role was as Home Office Engagement Enforcement Immigration Manager/Contract Monitor for that IRC.
4. **Q.** Contract Monitor, and what did you say before that?
5. **A.** Contract Monitor and Immigration Manager. There were two sides to the role. The Immigration Manager side was overseeing the Immigration Team onsite, which was a team of seven and their primary role was face-to-face contact with detainees, updating them and liaising on behalf of the caseworkers who are spread around the country. Paperwork would come in. They would go down, serve the paperwork and update on their case progress, let them know if there were any upcoming events. For example, move-removal directions, any appeals that were being considered, any outcomes of appeals and any sort of communication between them and the caseworker. They were the face of the Home Office, I guess. They were represented representing the Hoomie Office. It was overseeing that function, making sure that that was delivered against the KPI. For example, if a room-removal direction came in to be serviced that was a priority and needed to be served, and if it was missed for whatever reason, that would be my responsibility to find out why it was missed and if there were any gaps in the processes.
6. I also directly line managed two Deputy Immigration Managers who also had a foot in both sides of the business, the immigration side. They directly managed that team who had the detainee face-to-face contact every day in the interview area, and also some of the contract side.
7. From a Contract Monitor point of view my role was to ensure that the contract was adhered to by the service provider, G4S, at Brook House. The expectations, the level of delivery was met in line with the contract so that the Home Office, the taxpayer were receiving the best service from that supplier. As well as I say, if you are not under the contract they should be following you are not under the DC rules, you are not under the DSOs and any other guidance and policies that the Home Office followed.

8. Q. What were the main KPTs that you were concerned with, do you think, in relation to that contract? There is a very wide breadth of stuff -
9. A. Yes.
10. Q. What were the particular things that you were really trying to keep on top of, or felt that upstairs wanted you to keep on top of?
11. A. The two elements of the contract that I concentrated on were schedule D and schedule G. Schedule D was the operational requirements. That was a large part of the main contract. Schedule G was the performance measures. If there was a failure to meet certain aspects of schedule D, performance measures could be applied as an incentive to have that service from a service provider.
12. **Mr Marsden:** Someone had to let you know they were not delivering someone for a removal?
13. A. Yes. If they needed to present a detainee ready for discharge for the escorting provider, the expectation was that detainee was ready to be handed over to the escorting provider. If they failed to do that it was a performance failure. Unless there was very good reason or mitigation presented it would be a financial penalty for them. It is similar to if someone was granted release, ~~to pretemporary-admission,~~ or to be released with grant of bail and we asked G4S to release that person they had four hours to release that person from the centre.
14. There wasn't a huge amount of performance measures compared to what was actually in the schedule D, the operational requirements. The concentration was focused on the ones that we could ~~not~~ not performance measure because they were deemed as the most important part of the contract. It was things like admitting somebody and discharging somebody, making sure that activities were open, making sure that the Welfare Service was there. It was making sure that cleaning was done every day and people were released within the four hours, so admission, discharge, and areas such-like that we concentrated on.
15. Q. Can I go back to your immigration management role? In doing that, did you have any immigration powers, or was it entirely an administrative function?
16. A. Towards detainees?
17. Q. Yes. What would be warranted?
18. A. No. Nobody working in the IRC as it was, and I think that is still the case, because there have been some changes. There has been a split in the work in an IRC, so the contract side has split away from the immigration side. It is completely separate now. The team that I directly managed I ~~know are not going to have no longer had~~ know are not direct responsibility for them, from about August before last when they piloted a new process off the back of a Shaw recommendation, I believe, in terms of more engagement.
19. However, to answer your question, no one in the IRC had the authority to detain or release. That instruction came from the Caseworking Team supports.
20. **Ms Lampard:** You say while you were working at Gatwick, so when did you stop working at Gatwick?

21. A. Yes, I am sorry, I should have said that in the introduction. I left Brook House about two Fridays ago. It was very recent.
22. Q. Okay, so it was January 2018?
23. A. Yes, I started on Monday, 8 January. It was Friday, 5 January.
24. **Mr Marsden:** How long had you been at Brook House?
25. A. I moved to Detention Services in November '08. Brook opened in March '09. I was at Tinsley House, finding out about the business, looking at best practice, what the other centres do, because it was a brand new centre. I started as a Deputy Immigration Manager. I had an eight-month secondment at Harmondsworth as Immigration Manager. I went back to Brook House and then took a substantial role at Colnbrook. It was the same role, but a substantial role, so Immigration Manager. I came back to Brook House in May 2014 as a substantial Immigration Manager and a substantial Contract Monitor role. Therefore, roundabout since it opened on and off.
26. Q. You were, therefore, the most senior Home Office person onsite?
27. A. On a regular everyday basis. It was dependent on the Area Manager, and where they based themselves. Once upon a time when Haslar and Dover were open, the Area Manager had responsibility for those two centres as well as Gatwick. I guess if they were locally based around Gatwick they were based most of the time at Gatwick, and/or Croydon.
28. **Ms Lampard:** What are you doing now? Have you changed roles, or have you just changed base?
29. A. I have changed roles. I have left Detention and Escorting Services, but still under Returns. I still sit under Clare Checksfield's area. I work in the Portfolio Management Team on the Escorting and Travel Programme, which is primarily rolling out a tool programme to make booking tickets for detainee travel returns, and also movements around the estate ~~by, I am~~ the Escort Service Provider. It is more efficient, more than emails. It is just going to be one interface where you go straight through an Escort Travelling Programme working with the Digital Team, Digital Product Team.
30. **Ms Lampard:** Who is taking your place?
31. A. They recruited, and my understanding is he started last Monday, the 15th – someone from within the business, someone who worked, I think, in Croydon.
32. **Mr Marsden:** You don't know -?
33. A. I know his name. His name is Simon Murrell.
34. **Ms Lampard:** How did you and your team engage with G4S managers? What form did that take? Was it primarily a face-to-face relationship, or was it just a case of them sending you emails with performance figures on it?
35. A. What level of management – ~~sits in the~~ senior Management Team?
36. Q. Senior Management Team.
37. A. We had in place a weekly meeting, locally referred to as the weekly contractual review meeting. At those meetings was where they declared any failures and I would also bring any failures that had come to my attention that they may not have captured. That would come from my team and be either reactive or proactive Contract Monitoring. Things would come to our attention. We would go and have a look in the area, from that we might have

found out a bit more. Proactive would be if we decided to target a certain area we might have decided to go and look to see if security checks had been done, for example, or if the centre was clean. When was it last cleaned? We would speak to people on the wings. "You need to clean your wing. Do you have a paid worker? Have they been out today? Were they out yesterday, because the place doesn't look great?" We didn't have an enormous deal of resources.

38. We had the weekly meeting. There were also morning meetings every day.
39. **Ms Marsden:** Is that the 8 o'clock? 8.15?
40. **Ms Lampard:** 8.30, I thought it was.
41. **Mr Marsden:** Was it?
42. **A.** Yes, 8.30. That was the staff handover from the outgoing Duty Ops Manager ~~at or~~ the Oscar 1 as known, and that gave us an overview of what was and what was coming up.
43. **Ms Lampard:** Did you attend all of these meetings, or was it usually one of your staff?
44. **A.** It was usually ~~what was~~ the Deputy Immigration Managers who would go to it. I would maybe go two or three times a month. I would pop my head in, just to see. Especially if we had a new Deputy Immigration Manager, I went with ~~him them~~ to make sure ~~he they~~ understood what the meeting was about and make sure that they understand their role in the meeting weren't wondering when to exit if they were maybe new to the role.
45. **Mr Marsden:** As a rule, when Ben was there, who attended those meetings?
46. **A.** The morning meetings or the weekly?
47. **Q.** Both.
48. **A.** The morning meetings were usually chaired by Ben and occasionally he would phone in, and he would have his SMT in there. He would have the Detainee ~~Custom~~ Custody Managers in there. Certainly, Oscar 1, Healthcare, the Home Office. Welfare would also probably be in there. He would ~~put have~~ the staff detail together also from G4S.
49. **Q.** It was quite big in the sense of the operations -?
50. **A.** Yes, it was quite big. If you have been in the Centre Director's office, generally, people would be standing around the wall. I would say on average maybe a good 20 people.
51. **Q.** This would last for half an hour? Was it a short, sharp meeting?
52. **A.** It was ten to 15 minutes, dependant on what had happened the day before. ~~When Before~~ it evolved it was a very sharp meeting of what's going on today. Is there anything that we need to know about? The response would be, we are serving removal directions on this person and this person. One of them might have been high profile. One of them might have been on open ACDT, just to give them a heads-up, and we might have asked for G4S assistance because they might have been under constant supervision, or because we thought the person being given that information might have reacted in a challenging way. They were quite rare because the area was supervised. It was those types of things.

53. As it evolved those meetings did become more elaborate. The Duty Director from the day before would give a rundown of what had happened in the centre the day before as a verbal handover to the incoming Duty Director, and things like that. If Ben was in he would chair it.
54. **Ms Lampard:** Is there any difference in style, in your view, now that Lee is dealing with that, chairing those meetings?
55. **A.** I think there was a noticeable difference when Lee came in in 2016, because Ben went to Medway.
56. **Q.** That's right.
57. **A.** Lee came in. He just had a different approach. He was maybe a bit more dynamic. He was a bit more – what's going on? Who's off sick? What are you doing about it? Who's rang him? Are you ringing him? It had a bit more of an operational approach.
58. **Q.** As opposed to a slightly more passive approach by Ben, maybe?
59. **A.** Arguably so.
60. **Q.** Yes. You have talked about some of the things and how you would monitor performance on measurable things. For example, when has the cleaner been?
61. **A.** Yes.
62. **Q.** Incidentally, the cleaning, just while we are on it. As I understand it, Aramark have, until now, been doing all the public spaces, all the common parts, and then paid activities staff were doing the cells. People were also meant to be doing their own cells. Is that right?
63. **A.** Yes, Aramark were responsible for all but the residential units or wings, courtyards. The residential units and courtyards were cleaned by paid workers. That's the risk that G4S were willing to take, even if it meant that the cleaning wasn't up to perhaps the standard.
64. **Q.** As I understand it, Steve Skitt has gone back to look at the contract and has now decided that he is going to hold Aramark up to doing the residential units as well. Did you know about that?
65. **A.** I had heard about it. I don't know what contract they have with Aramark. Apparently it has changed recently, but as far as Aramark are concerned it is not their responsibility, it never has been, and we have been told that from day one.
66. **Q.** It may be that Steve is actually going to have to make a new contract with them rather than suggesting that he has somehow found a way of making them do it. We will have to go back to him about that, I think, probably.
67. **A.** Yes, I think the contract isn't very clear. When ~~it was~~ first set it up, if that was the case, then Aramark would have been in there a long time ago.
68. **Mr Marsden:** Is there a contract between G4S and Aramark?
69. **A.** Yes, they subcontract Aramark to provide catering and cleaning.
70. **Ms Lampard:** What do you think prompted Steve to suddenly get on and do something about that contract? Had you raised it with him?
71. **A.** I had been raising it for years about the cleaning.

72. **Mr Marsden:** That is quite interesting. As the local Contract Monitor you have been saying to them something in terms of, "it isn't good enough"?
73. **A.** Yes. ~~Appointing~~ ~~And pointing~~ them. ~~They~~ have been appointed thousands this year already for it.
74. **Q.** Sorry, say that again.
75. **A.** Performance measures have been applied against the cleaning this year.
76. **Q.** Right, okay. In 2016?
77. **A.** 2017, and before. With the weekly contract review meetings we then had monthly and quarterly. ~~I think~~ ~~they~~ were referred to as MCRMs and QCRMs, so W being weekly.
78. At the monthly that was raised, and the quarterlies just basically replaced the monthlies, just to give you an idea. There was a meeting every month. The last time I raised it in a quarterly was in July, and that is when I said the year to date G4S have already paid, I think it was close to £5,000. If you break that down to a pound per hour for paid work it didn't make any logical sense to me that the place wasn't clean and spotless. I think it was the consistency of having detainees and staff working on the wings knowing that the paid cleaners were there. The paid activities, the people who had signed up to do paid activities their responsibility was the cleaning. Therefore, it wasn't so much always getting people out of the rooms to do the cleaning, it was then the quality checking of the person to sign off to say –
79. **Q.** It has been done.
80. **A.** Yes.
81. **Ms Lampard:** I don't know where it has got to now, but we must find out whether or not they are still relying on the same system, or whether they have persuaded Aramark to –
82. **A.** Yes.
83. **Mr Marsden:** From a Contract Monitoring point of view, there were sanctions and they were applied if they fell short of the -?
84. **A.** Yes.
85. **Q.** They would incur significant financial penalties for not delivering?
86. **A.** Absolutely. The opportunity was there. If the first time I walked around it was dirty I wouldn't necessarily apply any points. It would be a conversation and the lead up to the expectation that the centre is cleaned at least daily in all the communal areas, as per the contract, and the litter bins in the courtyards.
87. When you walk around and it is clear that it hasn't been cleaned for a couple of days - I understand that there's 400 or 500 people living there. There will be maybe 100, now 140 people on one unit, but when you walk into a shower and have a look you know if it has been cleaned in the last 48 or 72 hours, purely from the colour of the walls. I think they are nearly white backs and sides, so if you go in and it is grey and it is brown, it hasn't been cleaned today and it hasn't been cleaned yesterday.

88. That is where I went in, subjectively – would I take a shower in it? No, I wouldn't. That debate went round and round, but if I went out and saw that it was dirty and I thought it fell short of the contract and I applied that, they are perfectly in their rights to then appeal that. I am only the first level. There are people above me in Commercial and seniors whom they can appeal to. That is the process that we all work to. I was the first level of this is what I thinkmean.
89. **Ms Lampard:** Did they tend to appeal, or did they acknowledge that it was dirty?
90. **A.** Appeals, no, not often. There were not many at all. Probably the last one I can think of was about failing to present three Jamaican nationals for a charter flight.
91. **Q.** I am sorry to bang on about this cleaning business, but when we arrived at the centre for the very first time Ed and I were struck by how scruffy it was and how dirty we thought it was. Interestingly, very shortly thereafter the refurbishment programme started on B wing, and it has been rolled through now, and I think it is nearly finished. What prompted that refurbishment, that cleaning programme?
92. **A.** The cleaning programme was a bolt-on because they were putting inundation points in the doors. As they had to close the wing down to put all the inundation points in every single door, it was a prime opportunity to have the wings refurbished. The rooms were all painted, and did some deep cleaning.
93. **Q.** That had been decided earlier, last year, or something?
94. **A.** I don't know when they decided, but it was a great opportunity. It would have been a shame to miss that. However, at the same time, this should have been the norm. Regular deep cleaning should have been the norm.
95. **Q.** It wasn't?
96. **A.** Not just because it was an opportunity because the ward-wing was shut.
97. **Q.** They had never taken that opportunity before?
98. **A.** They had done some cleaning before.
99. **Q.** Yes. How often would you think?
100. **A.** I wouldn't be able to tell you. The last time they probably did it was when they put the triple beds in. They put an additional bed in sixty of the rooms, so 20 on the big wings - A, C and D. They did a really good deep clean then and polished all the floors, and replaced some of the flooring outside the servery because it is a busy area and gets scuffed.
101. **Mr Marsden:** Can I ask a question about the nature of your relationship with them? You are there. You have the Immigration Manager role, you have the Contract Monitoring role. You were there a long time. Is there an awkward relationship? Is there tension? It would be helpful to have tension between you and them, as in, you are there to see that they do what they should do.
102. **A.** Yes, of course. A working relationship is very important because if you work by the letter of the contract it will be a very difficult place to work. I have to understand that it is a big centre. It is a busy centre. It is a complex centre. Cleaning, making sure perhaps that D wing is cleaned isn't a priority in terms of getting people in on time, looking after them, and getting them out on time. I understand that. If the library is not open for half an hour in the morning it is

not massive. I would like to know why it isn't open. If it is going to be open tomorrow, great.

103. However, at the same time the expectation is that the place is clean. For example, I have already said, the relationship was good. We did clash heads every now and again, so the interpretation of the contract perhaps it is not that clear, the contract in parts. You might read it and read it one way, you might read it another way. It is dependant, I guess, on what side of the fence you sit on. However, a lot of the time it is clear and that is what we are working towards, to meet what's in the contract. It was frustrating at times, because I have raised that this is happening. It was not always at the weeklies. There are the emails before, I could drop in and speak to Ben. Ben often came in and spoke to me about things that were going on in the centre.
104. However, I think perhaps more so when Lee came in, he was a bit more challenging about what I was asking, why I was asking. "It is unreasonable to charge 300 points for a courtyard that's not been litter-picked", but I wasn't going to be led into a conversation about what the contract says because we are eight/nine years into the contract. If that is how strongly you feel about it you have to ask for a change in the contract because you think it's unreasonable. At the end of the day, if an area isn't litter-picked, then the chances are that other areas are also not being cleaned.
105. It wasn't me who should be saying to their staff, "why isn't this clean?" They should be saying it was what I was trying to steer them to. I never got there.
106. **Ms Lampard:** However, you think that maybe Lee is more proactive in terms of managing it and managing his staff, perhaps, than Ben?
107. **A.** Yes, he has a plan, has Lee. I am not saying that in a sarcastic way, but in the fact that there's staff recruitment. They are going to have a DCM on every wing. They are going to have this, that and the other.
108. **Ms Lampard:** As far as we can establish, at this early stage, the staffing has been an issue for some significant amount of time, but probably got a bit worse after the Tinsley House refurbishment when people went back to Tinsley House, found themselves working at Brook House with fewer staff and that accelerated people's dissatisfaction. Does that sound about right to you?
109. **A.** Yes, for that period.
110. **Q.** When did the Tinsley House refurbishment take place?
111. **A.** It shut for refurbishment, and I need to obviously check dates, but from memory, I think it shut in September or October '16. It might have been later. It might have been November, and it reopened the beginning or the middle of May '17. The majority of the staff were at Brook House at that time.
112. **Q.** Since that time, in particular, staffing has been apparently pretty tight. Is that fair?
113. **A.** Yes.
114. **Q.** We have not been there yet.
115. **Mr Marsden:** Tinsley, that is.

116. **Ms Lampard:** Not Tinsley, Brook House – that is not true. I once saw three DCMs on a wing, but mostly we are seeing two people there, and possibly even one DCO. How much of the time was that the case that there were two or one DCOs on a wing?
117. **A.** I don't know for sure. Anecdotally, staff say, "one's been put on for escort, one's in a courtyard, and that leaves me. The officer is talking on the wing with detainees answering questions." That's anecdotal. I don't physically have the evidence to say it went down to one between these hours.
118. **Mr Marsden:** Would they incur any fines over staffing?
119. **A.** Yes. For not meeting minimum staffing requirements they were - they weren't massive.
120. **Ms Lampard:** What was the minimum staffing requirement?
121. **A.** When the contract started there was a physical number of DCOs that should be in between 8am and 9pm, so unlock. At night state it would be 11. At the beginning of the contract it was converted into hours. Over a 24-hour period they would have to have x number of hours – DCO, DCM hours. It would mean clocking in and clocking out.
122. **Q.** They weren't meeting those?
123. **A.** Not every day. It fluctuated.
124. **Q.** Did the new contract, then, whenever that came in – when did that come in, do you know?
125. **A.** The contract for?
126. **Q.** The contract you've just referred to under which they changed the contract - from bodies to hours. Do you know when that happened?
127. **A.** Very early on in the contract. It must have been '09. I wasn't in those meetings, as such.
128. **Q.** Do you have any sense that it led to less of a demand for bodies? Was it a lower number of hours? Was it the same?
129. **A.** It was a direct conversion. If the expectation was that you had 38 DCOs working that 13-hour period, you would have basically 38 times 13 hours. If As time had gone on there's an addition of 22 beds, extra staffing requirements and for the standalone patientspositions, and then with the addition of 60 beds that has increased again. That is currently being looked at and worked on by Commercial. Those were my last few meetings that I was involved in in trying to work back and work out if we are actually on the correct figure.
130. **Q.** Somebody could tell us how many hours extra were meant to be applied for the 60 extra residents?
131. **A.** Probably, yes. The last couple of meetings that I was involved in directly relating to what the staffing figures should be in addition to those 60 beds, was currently that the Home Office had come up with one figure and Lee had come up with one another. He was questioning that.
132. **Q.** There's still not an agreement on what the extra should have been?
133. **A.** Yes. There might be now, because of the Christmas break. I know it is a poor excuse, but it does knock quite a few things out of sync for a couple of weeks. That was well in hand by the time I left.

134. **Mr Marsden:** What was your overall impression of their handling of staffing over the period of your tenure?
135. **A.** Handling in terms of -?
136. **Q.** In terms of recruitment, in terms of anticipating turnover, in terms of getting people to ITCs, in terms of retaining people. Just the management of this is key resource, that without it you couldn't run the place.
137. **A.** Absolutely. The ITC recruitment has been at least two years. It has been back-to-back ITCs, so back-to-back recruitment for DCOs. I know that, because I receive the figures, but also I have done at least five presentations to new DCOs last year alone. It was just a 30-minute slot as part of the ITC. We are the Home Office, this is what we do. That is partly in relation to staff retention. The staff attrition rate was quite high. I think it was about 76 resignations across Tinsley and Gatwick in 2017, something like that. I have heard that figure –
138. **Ms Lampard:** We have, yes.
139. **Mr Marsden:** That is the figure that we heard.
140. **A.** Yes. They can recruit, but I think the retention is potentially where Brook and Tinsley. Part of that was, I think, part of that was the terms and conditions changed for a lot of the Tinsley staff, so maybe that was a larger reason for the number of people going when they did.
141. **Ms Lampard:** In a sense, some of this is soft stuff, isn't it? You have the numbers, but, actually, how people are feeling, why they are resigning, some of that sort of stuff, is that stuff that you would have drilled down into, or was it simply their responsibilities to find out and sort that out?
142. **A.** It was their responsibility. It would have been ideal to try and have a picture of why people were resigning.
143. **Q.** Yes. Did you ever ask about that?
144. **A.** We have asked if they did exit interviews. They said that they did. As far as I know it was never asked to be shared. I definitely didn't ask for it to be shared.
145. **Mr Marsden:** Is this because you thought that would have been getting you into territory that wasn't your responsibility?
146. **A.** Yes. It was not necessarily because it wasn't my responsibility. It would have been interesting to know why, but what we could have done with that information I don't know.
147. However, it would have been great to drill down and find out the real reasons why people were leaving. It would be quite interesting, because it is Gatwick, and there are lots of employment opportunities in Gatwick, and London is up the road.
148. **Q.** If you walked around day-to-day in the centre, would DCOs talk to you, or would they have seen you as, that's Paul, he is from the Home Office? Would they see you as he is on the other team?
149. **A.** Yes.
150. **Ms Lampard:** You and your staff?

151. A. Not at Brook. I experienced that at Heathrow, certainly at Harmondsworth. There is a different supplier in there.
152. **Mr Marsden:** That is Mitie, isn't it?
153. A. It is now. It used to be GEO when I worked there, and a little bit from Serco, but not really, because a lot of the DCMs were there from the start.
154. We had a very good rapport with DCMs. Now it has changed. Some of them are still there from the day one, but a lot of them have changed. I had the impression that maybe my shoulder was being shot from from certain SMT members to their staff. "Paul", or "the Home Office want this" or "Paul said this." It would be down in the interview corridor, and if detainees had been brought up late then you will know about it type of thing. However, that came later, that was more when Steve Skitt came into post more so than before. I felt that I had a good relationship. I know that behind the scenes probably my name wasn't always in lights, but I didn't mind that. What people say about me behind my back is up to them, but as far as I was concerned, if I was the test, then good, because it meant that they needed to deliver.
155. Q. Would they tell you, would DCOs say to you, "this is what it is like. This is how it is. " -?
156. **Ms Lampard:** Or "Steve's giving us grief because you moaned about this"?
157. A. I think downstairs in interview corridor, I don't know if my name was used, but certainly I think they felt the pressure down there because the contract requirement originally was to present someone within 15 minutes, and that was later changed to 30 minutes because it was reasonable to find someone in 30 minutes. However, as the last few months have ticked by, the getting detainees to the interview corridor within the 30 minutes there has been a large volume of misses.
158. Q. Did you have the impression people might tell you things that they might not tell senior managers?
159. A. Of G4S? If you filter it out, I guess you could say, everyone has bad days, everyone gets bored with their work, or cross with work, or feels under pressure, or feels that there is not enough support. A lot of it, I think, was just general, but some of the time it was, "we are so short today. I am quite worried."
160. Q. In a sense, you had quite an ability to pick up a picture about the centre – not enough staff, people moaning a bit, a bit of dirt around the place that nobody seemed to be taking very seriously. I wonder whether you thought at any stage this centre doesn't feel quite right, it is not quite working, something is not quite right?
161. A. The number of new staff coming in, the experience is quite an important factor in an IRC, because it is a big IRC. It is not Tinsley. It is Brook, and it is on the same level as Colnbrook and Harmondsworth.
162. Q. With a very challenging population.
163. A. A challenging population, yes. Often the ones that can't go anywhere else will come into one of those three centres.
164. There was a lot of new staff. I guess, to try and answer your question, the concern I felt was more was about staff training. Some would go through the

ITC, and that is absolutely right that they do and they learn the fundamentals and the way that they conduct themselves, and they pass the physical parts of it, the C&R, the First Aid, and understand the law. However, on-the-job training, role training I felt was missing, and was something that I did raise with G4S. I found that most apparent in the interview corridor. It was a very straightforward area. People come in, you search them, they sit in the waiting room. They are brought out for the Home Office. At the end of the interview they were given back their bits and bobs, their phones, and then they are gone. In the meantime, they should be patrolling and discreetly monitoring the area should there be any reaction to whatever news these guys were getting.

165. A lot of the time down there it felt like the staff didn't know what they were doing, and I have quotes that I have been told since I have been down there. When I have gone down the staff have said, "Paul, I have been waiting an hour for this guy. Can you push G4S?" I used to pop down and ask, "are you on your own?" "Yes, I have been on my own for a while." "Do you know why there's such a long wait?" It used to be a reply of, "I don't know. It is my first day down here. I have just been put on here." It was that kind of comment. On the back of that I did raise what is the on-the-job training? That is happening in the interview area, which is quite a straightforward place, and someone from the Home Office is there all the time. If there is any presence, it is generally down there all the time, because that is where the work is conducted from a Home Office point of view. Then what training are they given on reception when someone first comes in? I am not saying that they didn't have any, but then you have the other areas like the residential units, and you have what is known as the E wing, which houses more vulnerable people, and people who perhaps in the wider sense are there for a reason with a higher ratio of staff. Then you have the Rule 42 area.
166. Q. That sort of concern you might have raised with them, and there are other indicators, aren't there? For instance, the violence and assaults on staff, you were presumably aware of those sorts of figures, were you?
167. A. The staff assaults, yes, the indirect and direct assaults.
168. Q. Yes. Those were figures reported to you, were they?
169. A. Yes, they were.
170. Q. Some of that suggests things might have been getting out of hand a little bit. We had the incident on 28 November when there was that mass insurrection of people on the C wing. Do you remember that?
171. A. I do remember that. I wasn't on call for that, and I found out when I came back into work. I wasn't aware of it before I came back into work.
172. Q. One of them put four officers in hospital by bashing them with a broken cue. All of that sort of stuff suggests a slightly more volatile place than usual. Do you think that's fair?
173. A. Yes, for that time there were challenging detainees in the centre. It goes in cycles. You may have a number of challenging detainees at any one time in a centre. They might be cliquey, they might be linked by gangs or drugs, or something like that – whatever form they have taken.
174. G4S would often bring this to our attention and there's a new call, or fairly recently put-together call called EDB.

175. Q. Yes, we know about that.
176. A. Okay.
177. Q. When was that put in, EDB?
178. A. I can't remember the exact date. I think it has been running for about a year, it is basically for all the order centres, to get a picture. They would often come to us. G4S would come to the Home Office, and say, "this girl-guy we think should be transferred to a different centre because", for whatever reason.
179. Q. What were you reporting up the line? Do you report up the line if, for instance, you have a cocktail of things that just don't feel quite right, or staffing levels may sound okay in terms of hours, but, actually, you are not satisfied that people are being trained well enough, or that they are experienced enough? These are not necessarily all things that have numbers that you can contract manage and performance manage. They are the soft stuff.
180. A. Yes, I verbalised it to my G7M.
181. Q. Who was your Manager?
182. A. It was Michelle Smith.
183. Q. Where does she sit in relation to Alan Gibson?
184. A. She directly reports to Alan.
185. Q. What is her title?
186. A. She is Service Delivery Manager for Gatwick.
187. Q. Is she onsite as much as you are?
188. A. No, she is not here every day.
189. Q. Where is she based?
190. A. Gatwick, but she spends time in Croydon and other centres.
191. Q. You would have discussed some of the more tense things.
192. A. I probably have emails, to be honest. The last two weeks have been so busy with my new job that I wanted to spend some time today going through them but I was on a call before this for an hour-and-a-half, but that is not an excuse. There are certain things I have done. Other things like anecdotally if a member of staff said to me, similar to what you said, "there are three of us on the wing, but one has been pulled out for escorting, one's in the courtyard and I am on my own. It is down to the DCMs to go into the units", I would raise that, and I did raise that, and the instruction was go and speak to Steve Skitt and test the temperature to find out what's going on. Is there a concern? Is there something that we need to be concerned about?
193. Q. You were doing soft intelligence there?
194. A. Yes, absolutely. For a while we were asking for the staff details.
195. **Mr Marsden:** If we could see one or two of those emails – things that you were concerned about?

196. **Ms Lampard:** Could you perhaps let us know what sort of things over the last 12 months you have been concerned about and will have raised with Michelle as issues that bugged you?
197. **A.** Yes.
198. **Q.** Could you do that?
199. **A.** I can do it now if you want?
200. **Q.** Yes, that would be very helpful. Thank you. I have just two things. We have the impression that they are not very often open at the moment.
201. **A.** Not at the moment.
202. **Q.** How often? Somebody was saying probably only two, and some days none.
203. **A.** I didn't know there were none open.
204. **Q.** I think there was a day last week when the IMB said that there hadn't been one open. Most days, two maybe.
205. **A.** It should have been rolling.
206. **Q.** What do you mean by rolling? Not all of them open at the same time?
207. **A.** Yes, so it might be D and A open in the morning, and then in the afternoon C wing, which is primarily where the sports and tournaments take place. For example, five-a-side football will be open-on in the afternoon.
208. **Q.** There are never four open at the same time?
209. **A.** After the detainee escaped in March '16, the reaction was to shut the yards until our a security review system could take place because they should be manned, they made sure that there was a member of staff, a DCO or other on the yards at all times when they were open. There was a new recommendation and they improved the security, so they lifted the [REDACTED]. They went higher, which is what the guy used [REDACTED], and they put in extra [REDACTED] the alarm system. Previously there was just one on the outer perimeter. When that went off and by the time the staff realised the guy was up and over. They put it on the inside, put additional [REDACTED] netting to basically safeguard the and guarantee that no one could escape from the yards.
210. **Mr Marsden:** Is the [REDACTED] the stuff that goes up, or is it the netting that goes across?
211. **A.** Now it goes horizontally, and then it drops down, whereas before it just sat much lower, [REDACTED]. Then it was back to normal, and the yards were open. There was an attempt at escape, and off the back of that the yards were closed and they were manned again. The DCOs were put on there again.
212. **Ms Lampard:** Has there ever been a time when the DCOs have been on and they have managed to have all of the courtyards open?
213. **A.** I don't know.
214. **Q.** Under the terms of the contract are they meant to have all of the courtyards open?
215. **A.** It is not in the contract.
216. **Q.** It is not in the contract to have any open?

217. A. It doesn't mention it in the contract. I have looked.
218. Q. There is nothing in the contract about having to keep yards open?
219. A. No.
220. Q. Therefore, they could keep them locked all the time?
221. A. Contractually speaking, yes, but the DC rules talk about –
222. Q. Time in the fresh air.
223. A. Time in the fresh air, yes, and I imagine that would be a recommendation. It would be a severe criticism if the yards were shut all day.
224. Q. It sounds to me as though there is a minimum that they aim for which is, perhaps, two open at any time, but sometimes even that hasn't been met, I think. The IMB certainly told us that there was a day last week when they had not been open.
225. Mr Marsden: Paul, one of the things that has come across from the interviews is that in recent times the activities programme was run by Ramon who went down to Tinsley.
226. A. He did, yes.
227. Q. With his departure it felt that what was an important part of the regime of the IRC fell away, and hasn't, as one or two people have reported, been replaced. Did you have that impression that activities had –?
228. A. I think they were limited by the yards. I think that didn't help, but then a lot of tournaments and competitions took place in the afternoon anyway. However, inside there were certainly still pool tournaments going on, ~~but, most of the tournaments stopped~~. Quite possibly, but I couldn't sit here and say one way or the other, to be honest with you.
229. Q. It wasn't something that you all picked up that with this key number of staff departing, suddenly there was a change in –?
230. A. Yes. I heard, I was indirectly told that Ramon had gone down to Tinsley. I heard afterwards. I don't know if that came after the programme aired, or before. I don't know if it was planned. I don't know why he went down to Tinsley, but they had a new activities DCM, I am frantically trying to think of his name, but I can't, who was put in his place. Ultimately, Juls would know.
231. Q. His residential job title?
232. A. Yes.
233. Ms Lampard: Those sorts of things, again, they are slightly softer. The courtyard is not open, tournaments and boredom, and all that sort of stuff. Would those be issues that you might have raised with Michelle?
234. A. No, probably not. The courtyards, yes, because I thought the courtyards should be open. I suppose any security risks on the courtyards, then, with the additional security put on it, put around it, then Home Office having paid whatever it was to have that –
235. Q. You would have raised that with Ben too, the courtyards not being open?
236. A. Yes, I did raise it. I raised it with Lee and Ben.
237. Q. However, not necessarily the activities and the lack of things for people to do?

238. A. The lack of activities, no. I have to say, I didn't have much involvement in that side of things. Certainly, going forward I think there is going to be a lot more focus on where it is.
239. Q. What do you mean by that? Do you mean that somebody else will be more -?
240. A. Just as I was leaving, the Operational Compliance Team, as the Contract Monitoring Team is now going to be known as, because it's purely focused on the contract area the resource will be that certain areas divide it up between the staff across two sites.
241. Q. I see.
242. A. There will be dedicated areas. Someone will have a focus for the next six months when it kicks in, I think at the end of January for activities, for example. I can't remember what it is referred to now, regimes and activities, I think. They will be responsible for what is going on.
243. Mr Marsden: Their role will be monitoring of this?
244. A. Yes.
245. Q. Saying to G4S, "it is not happening. Why not?"
246. A. Yes, I think so. It increased to three rather than two. I would have three people sitting under me eventually, and we would have the areas divided up, and also the two from Tinsley. Between me and the Immigration Manager at Tinsley House we would know what our staff pool were working on, and they would report directly to us. We would be informed, and then approach G4S and say, "on this day this was happening. On this day we can see this."
247. Ms Lampard: There is going to be slightly more focused operational management - ?
248. A. Yes, absolutely.
249. Q. As opposed to simply monitoring line-by-line contract things?
250. A. Yes, I think so. Immigration work always took priority because the focus was having people's cases progressed to the end, whatever that may be – released or returned.
251. Q. Okay. What did you think of the IMB?
252. A. Right from day one I have to say that IMB for Brook has always been very fair, very approachable. We have always had a very good relationship. I can't remember the first person's name – this sounds awful, I can't even remember the second person's. Bobby was the one that I got to know, and when Bobby left Jackie took over. She took over almost just as I came back from Colnbrook into Brook House. We were starting a new role even though I had been there before.
253. Mr Marsden: What is the Home Office's relationship with the IMB? They have their meetings and you go. Who are they independently monitoring – both parties?
254. A. Ultimately, I guess so, yes. They could have concerns on both sides, but the welfare of detainees ultimately is their primary concern. People being looked after, are there any welfare issues, but also linked to that could be how long someone has been detained. That could directly affect someone's welfare, or mental state, for example.

255. They would often say, "I have just bumped into Mr So-and-so on E wing and he says hasn't seen the Home Office for three months" or "he hasn't had an update for three months. Are you happy for us to go down, or could you see him?" They were quite easy. Sometimes it was, "are you able to see him" or "have you sent him an email." A lot of time it was a case of he was seen last week, but because they were told it they had an obligation to report it and come to us and say.
256. We would answer any of their questions. We are very transparent with the IMB. Anything we happened to find out about a person's case, if we could, as much as possible we let them know what was going on with their case. When they were seen, why they were detained, what was the chance of them being released. They often used to come in the office and speak to the staff, and they (the HO staff) used to log onto CSID and as much as possible tell them any information that they could.
257. **Ms Lampard:** How good do you think they were, how effective were they at identifying some of the things you have talked about, that concerned you, that you raised with Michelle, and some of the other issues that will be raised perhaps more forensically in future? Do you think they took up some of the slack on that? Do you think they held the SMT to account as well as they should have done?
258. **A.** It is a hard question to answer. Did they hold them to account? Certainly, in the monthly meetings that the Home Office and the G4S Manager attended most of the questions were for G4S, and G4S would give their update, and then they did their rota reports. They were good for the Home Office in terms of they were our eyes and ears sometimes in the centre, because they picked up on stuff that perhaps we wouldn't know. For example, there are no people from Premises? to say that they don't have curtains for toilets, for example – something like that, which perhaps we might not have picked up on.
259. **Mr Marsden:** In a room you mean?
260. **A.** Yes, or the pool table is broken, and it has been broken for the last two weeks, what are G4S doing? The fax machine isn't working. There is a piece of kitchen-gym equipment that is not working. They would raise all these. All of it would be raised, and they would keep it on the minutes until there was some sort of action. They were quite good, but, again, I guess fairly soft, just thinking about it from the way that you put it.
261. They got things done by asking the questions, "why wasn't this done?", but any real concerns I am pretty sure they were raised at the time.
262. **Q.** Would G4S take them seriously? Did they see it that it was their legitimate role?
263. **A.** Yes. When Ben came in and took over from whoever departed, yes, he had a lot more time, a lot more respect for IMB. They were also good for G4S because they were also picking up areas that perhaps they may have missed.
264. **Ms Lampard:** The relationship between managers, senior managers and the staff. I think what we have come to realise is that the gap between DCMs there and the senior managers was quite a large gap, in the sense that perhaps some of the DCMs had not really stepped into full management mode of their staff.
265. **A.** That is interesting.

266. Q. Did you pick that up? Did you have a sense that DCMs were struggling, that they weren't really managing, that they didn't really feel part of a management structure?
267. A. Yes. I felt a big issue was the SMT and some of it was internal promotion - great, brilliant. However, were they the right people on an interview? I didn't have anything to do with the process, but the end result I think there was a bit of inexperience. They have gone from peer working to then having to manage their peers.
268. Q. This is the DCMs or the Senior Management Team?
269. A. The Senior Management Team.
270. Q. Yes, okay.
271. A. I felt there was probably one or two good senior managers. The rest I thought it was an issue.
272. Mr Marsden: It was an issue?
273. A. I think it was an issue.
274. Ms Lampard: Yes, we have picked that up. Which ones did you particularly have concerns about? You may not want to say.
275. A. Everyone has different styles, but ~~she~~ (Steve) didn't seem to understand. In the weekly meetings I was raising things. ~~Clare~~ He didn't know why, what was happening. Why was this being raised again, and ~~you~~ he used to point ~~to~~ out an SMT member. ~~We~~ He would say, "go on then. Fill your boots with your news again. What's gone wrong this week?" that kind of thing. As much as I was raising the same issues week-in, week-out –
276. Q. That was his attitude that you were just filling your boots with things you wanted to grumble about?
277. A. No. The Audits Manager used to come in, who would have the list of the weekly failings. It is a horrible term, failings, but it was, and then mitigation for that failing, but the meeting would start – Barry was the Audits Manager. ~~We~~ He would say, "go on, Barry, do your worst" type of thing. It was almost as if to say, we know we are going to get spanked again –
278. Q. However, doesn't really own the problem.
279. A. Exactly, hence why I ~~think~~ he shoot from my shoulder.
280. Q. What I think we are also hearing, and you may say this is not right, is that in relation to dealing with other staff there is a hierarchical investigations blame, disciplinary sort of approach, rather than engagement, this is what we have to do, ownership of the problem, support for staff to develop, and for everybody to understand what it is they are doing and why they are doing it. Does that ring true for you?
281. A. That is what should be, absolutely.
282. Q. However, that has not happened in recent times?
283. A. There was only one member of the SMT who would do that. Who would absolutely own their area and know it inside out.
284. Q. Who was that?
285. A. Michelle Brown.

286. Q. Michelle Brown, yes.
287. A. She was in Welfare and moved over to Security. One of the first things she did was put on a uniform, and went and worked in the interview corridor for a day. She looked at what are the challenges, what was going on, why is it failing? Who doesn't get on with who? Where's the clash? Why has this grievance gone in? What's gone on? She looked underneath it.
288. Q. There is, I think, a very strong grievance culture in the place rather than resolution of problems. Does that strike you?
289. A. I have never dealt with the grievances. I hear bits on the grapevine, but to be perfectly honest, it is not something that I am necessarily that interested in, purely because it is a G4S management problem. If you have grievances in your staff areas, then they need to go down there. If someone had been suspended, then, yes, we want to hear about it, and we want to know the reason why because we still need to consider if that-suspension of DCO certification is appropriate whilst that investigation is carried out.
290. Q. What was your impression of the relationship between members of the SMT?
291. A. I doubt if it was amazing. I don't have anything to base it on, just various conversations. Little bits that come out that you hear, or if you sit in a meeting and observe you can often see –
292. Mr Marsden: The dynamics.
293. A. The dynamics and the side looks towards someone if someone says something. You pick up on certain things, it is not hard to do.
294. Ms Lampard: Therefore, not good dynamics, but you didn't have any particular concerns?
295. A. No. Sometimes good. If there was a charter, or when someone was planning for that charter, I know who I would want to be a DD for that planning, and for the day. I knew perhaps the G4S Deputy Director for that day, for the day of the charter. The confidence levels rose and failed, dependant on who was running the centre that night, or that day.
296. Mr Marsden: That's interesting.
297. A. The charters are a big deal. A lot of money would go into planning charters and having maximum return for plane escorts that are being paid for. The whole point of it is to return in bulk.
298. Q. Was that a key performance target for you over the team?
299. A. It wasn't so much in the contract or a performance failure, if someone wasn't presented to hand over to the escort provider for a charter it would still fall into failed to discharge, or to know why. However, just because I was told that the ministerial level were interested this charter needs to go. Certainly, after the one at Stansted didn't go, because I think people locked themselves in to the plane, and some things had gone on, one of them was moved to the RAF –
300. Q. Brize Norton.
301. Ms Lampard: Can I ask you about searching? Was searching part of the contractual obligation, how many searchers there are of staff and detainees?
302. A. Detainees no, staffing yes.
303. Q. Right.

304. **Mr Marsden:** Rooms?

305. **A.** Every day you used to do fabric checks, or LBBs – that is an old prison term I think, but fabric checks. Every single day an officer should enter the room and check, basically, that the windows are secure and haven't been tampered with, that the lock is okay. Whilst they are in there they should be looking around and seeing if there is anything that perhaps they shouldn't have like loads of blades, three or four mobile phones, three or four sim cards, because that is intel to suggest that perhaps there are other things going on, any contraband.

306. **Ms Lampard:** Were you ever searched?

307. **A.** That is an interesting question. I was, yes. There was a really good Duty Audits Manager called Vicky. She went on maternity leave. I think she went off in April, so April 2017. I think I raised it at the end of 2015 or the beginning of January 2016 staff searches, we needed to see what they were doing, because we were informed, we knew that NPS was on the rise in the centre. Steve kept saying it. "It is going to come in from prison. It is going to come in from prison." We learnt all about psychoactive substances, I think they are called.

308. **Q.** New psychoactive substances.

309. **A.** New psychoactive substances, and what it could do – anything from nothing to the worse case scenario, and anything in between. What's the plan? What are Security doing about it? Therefore, I asked for staff searches. It took me a while, and to be frank, it was fobbed off. The only staff searches I had was new ITC staff, so everyone on day one of the ITC apparently gets searched, so that's good. However, they are not going into the centre, so it is not contractual. Everyone needs to be searched over time as part of the staff searching plan if they are going into the centre.

310. Off the back of that they wrote a new staff searching policy, and they declared that they had failed to start to search their staff.

311. **Q.** They declared they had failed?

312. **A.** Yes.

313. **Q.** That was early '16?

314. **A.** That was early '16. I am sure I have all mitigation tables and comments on the shared drive, shared folders.

315. The staff searching did then increase. It happened once or twice going in, and since *Panorama* there has been a high number of staff searches.

316. **Q.** During 2017 you think they might have done it twice, or during early '16 and '17 they did it twice?

317. **A.** Yes.

318. **Q.** Twice in the whole of the '16/'17 period?

319. **A.** I am not sure about 2015, but 2016, yes.

320. **Q.** It was probably only once each year?

321. **A.** I couldn't speculate, but I can find out. G4S would have those records.

322. Q. Yes, but you were not aware of anything very significant happening. No, okay.
323. Mr Marsden: One person has said it to us before, I don't know whether this chimes with your experience that despite the proliferation of drugs at Brook House there had been more searching in Tinsley than there had been at Brook House. Would that surprise you?
324. A. Staff searching?
325. Q. No, room searching after drugs, and the like?
326. A. I don't know. Maybe. You have different managers, haven't you, down there.
327. Q. We haven't been to Tinsley yet.
328. A. It is a different set up. You have the overarching Centre Director, and then you have manager roles.
329. Q. I think what is important that was being said was, "there's a bigger problem at Brook; we are not doing so many room searches. There's a smaller problem at Tinsley, but we are doing many more room searches."
330. A. I don't know. Possibly, if that's what you have been told, but I wouldn't know about that.
331. Q. It doesn't chime with anything in your experience though?
332. A. No, but if staff had been pulled off wings to do escorts and courtyards aren't open because they can't staff them, if I were still there I would question what priority the room searches are.
333. Ms Lampard: I think this is my final area of questioning. What sort of contact did you have with the police in relation to running Brook House?
334. A. Not really any. The relationship was between G4S and Sussex Police.
335. Q. I just ask because Sussex Police, of course, say that they had to weigh up whether or not to prosecute people for things. If they were about to be deported, or was it in the public interest? Wouldn't we rather just deport somebody? G4S say, "we can't run this centre unless people know that there are consequences of their action", and, certainly, Lee has a view that some of them need to be held here to be prosecuted as an example for what might happen to them. I just wondered whether you had ever been asked to suggest that somebody needed to be detained further so that they could be prosecuted?
336. A. I was never asked for anyone to be detained. I have been in tripartite meetings. When Steve invited Sussex Police in I was part of the meeting – Steve Skitt, myself, my Area Manager at the time, and the police in order to try to have an MoU.
337. The escape had happened, the command suite was opened and the police weren't allowed into the centre for some reason. As there was a freeze on movements the police weren't allowed in, so I think the police raised it as a bit of an issue. It was a basically a breakdown in communication.
338. Q. That was March '16?
339. A. Yes, I don't know when from meeting with the police whether there has ever been a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the police. That was Steve's responsibility. It comes up at every meeting.

340. Yes, I have been involved in those discussions. I would be interested to know what Lee's view on that is. Obviously, I don't have any real sway in that. At the end of the day it is down to the CPS, I would imagine, unless the police make a very strong case. I understand both sides, I absolutely do.
341. Q. However, you are not aware of any particular case where they said, "could somebody stay here?" and you were asked and it was refused?
342. A. I can't remember a case, no.
343. Q. I am not suggesting there was one.
344. A. I know G4S have asked the Home Office before, "can this person be prosecuted because we feel that it will be the right thing to do?"
345. Q. However, that wasn't during your time there, or it wasn't something that came through you?
346. A. It didn't come through me, but it was happening whilst I was there.
347. Q. They would have asked someone else in the Home Office?
348. A. Yes.
349. Q. They probably went straight to the caseworker, would they?
350. A. I think that's probably the feeling across the IRCs, the bigger IRCs. If the staff are being assaulted the staff, quite rightfully, should be able to press charges for how often they have been assaulted. However, as you say, weigh up the public interest.
351. **Mr Marsden:** The MoU, that's not been completed?
352. A. As far as I know it hadn't been completed when I left, and it had been going on for well over a year.
353. Q. It is interesting, because when we spoke to Sussex Police, we rather encouraged them to have all sorts of discussions at a senior level.
354. **Ms Lampard:** They suggested that there was an MoU, but it needed to be reviewed. I think that is what you may be referring to. It may be that Steve Skitt needed to review the MoU with the Sussex Police.
355. A. Okay. It was actually put on the monthly meetings.
356. **Mr Marsden:** For months?
357. A. Probably because Steve never sorted it.
358. Q. Had it not happened?
359. A. No. I said, "if you want to include me on it, Steve, I am happy to go to wherever they are based to try and get – if they are too busy to come out, give us a half-hour slot, 60-minute slot. We will travel to them to just try and have some progress on it."
360. Q. This was prompted by this 2016 lockdown, do you know?
361. A. Yes, because I think –
362. Q. They referred to that. They have certainly mentioned that.
363. A. Did they? That's interesting.
364. Q. The fact that they weren't allowed in.

365. A. Yes.
366. Q. They were called, and they turned up.
367. A. To be fair, I think it was Steve's idea to review the existing MoU that was from 2012 because he said when he was at Birmingham, or wherever he was, he had a very good relationship with the local police. He wanted to establish that in Sussex, which would be an absolutely brilliant idea, but the legs didn't carry it that far.
368. Q. Can I ask about what we call our work? Tell us about how you came to hear about it, and what did you think of it when you saw it. How did it fit with your very detailed knowledge of the place, but at a distance, if you like, because you are not delivering the service yourself?
369. A. I heard about it on the Thursday before August bank holiday, and it was sent to me probably by Michelle, to be fair. I don't know where it came from originally, but for whatever reason it came to my attention and it was sent to me in confidence, marked official and sensitive about allegations that had been received. The reason why they were so prominent is because the following day was the due diligence meeting for G4S relating to the new contract. That was cancelled straightaway and then Michelle was going on leave, and I was tasked with literally going through line-by-line, I think there were 16 or 17 pages of the part that I was sorting the allegations line-by-line.
370. Q. This is the BBC letter?
371. A. Yes.
372. Ms Lampard: Annex A?
373. A. Yes, literally going through line-by-line, and working out if the Home Office onsite, or otherwise, had any knowledge of anything going on, and-as there were quite a few incidents referred to. There were physical, but mostly verbal, and other stuff, obviously. I basically put together a summary of what had been reported and if there was any indication of any use of force reports, and if there were any incident reports that we knew about, essentially.
374. Mr Marsden: The picture that emerged from your analysis?
375. A. I was shocked. Some of the names that were cropping up I knew some of them for a long time. I had never heard of some of thea DCOs mentioned. Certainly, from going from Immigration Manager, Deputy Immigration Manager where I used to go out and do reporting every day and getting to know staff a bit more. I was as surprised, I think, probably as anybody else who first read it on paper. By the time the programme came on I wanted to see what was going to be in the film. How had they edited it, how had they made it. It came as a complete surprise to me on paper.
376. Ms Lampard: Have you or your staff wandering around the centre ever seen people behaving inappropriately? Have you ever done that, and if you did, what would you do about it?
377. A. If I had seen a member of staff acting inappropriately towards a detainee, in my position as working in that role, I would probably have gone to the Centre Director and Deputy Director and had a word with them and said, "I have just seen this".
378. Q. You have never had cause to do that?

379. A. Not at that level of inappropriate conduct, no. I have raised issues that staff – I have seen someone monitor a charter flight, for example, and a member of staff who was meant to be getting the property and giving it to Tascor, she disappeared off her post and went out the front and was mucking around out the front, in the reception. I raised that in my feedback, and I went to see Ben the next day and said it seemed a bit odd. You talk about a minute, a minute-and-a-half, two-minute delay, but when you are processing 15, 20, 25 people – increments that you don't want the coach to be late. Stuff like that I would report, definitely. I would put an SIR in if I thought that perhaps what I had seen was wrong, or I would have a word with the Security Manager, or perhaps Michelle Brown. I would put it on her radar and often she would say, "they are on our radar. We are aware. We are letting it play out to see if –", something like that. I was in a position probably where I could do that, more so than perhaps any other member of Home Office staff. I would probably say if I saw something that was a bit odd, or made me feel uncomfortable, and then I would raise that with one of the SMT members.
380. Q. Thank you. I don't have any more questions. Do you have any more questions, bearing in mind we have been a long time?
381. Mr Marsden: I suppose, in overall terms you have had the benefit of being at another IRC, how would you rate G4S's management compared to some of the other providers you know?
382. A. I think the best out of all of them locally. I know externally they are not thought of as great, but, certainly, for Brook House they were the best provider that I had worked for. I don't know why. It might have been personnel. Ben was very much on board. He got it. He understood where the Home Office was coming from, what our objective was, and what we wanted to achieve. He would say, "yes, we will do that." They often did more than was required of them, like the charters, for example. There was nothing in the contract from day one that they should be discharging people en masse with a charter, but they retrialled the double exit with them. They primarily did a whole charter from Brook House. Where ~~by~~ reception and discharge, we just had discharge and they closed reception, which made it more efficient for Tascor, and the three coaches ~~are that were in~~ there.
383. Ms Lampard: Do you think your impression of them is coloured, though, by how helpful they were in terms of the immigration process rather than actually the management and operation of the centre?
384. A. Quite possibly. Just because I thought someone from G4S was very good because from a Home Office perspective they were getting things done doesn't mean that I would want to work under them necessarily. I don't have anyone in mind, but they might be very different to how they treat their staff.
385. Q. Also, the issues we have talked about regarding staffing levels in the centre and whether the courtyards were open, and whether the place is clean, all of that sort of thing. How would they rate in terms of the actual domestic care of detainees?
386. A. Very, very good.
387. Q. You would still think that was good, would you?
388. A. For a period of time, yes, and I still think now it is. The programme would argue perhaps differently in some bits, but I just think it was a lack of senior

management oversight that led to staff perhaps thinking that they could do what they wanted.

389. You are right. I didn't think about it before, if I may say. The gap between the DCM and the next level is fairly vast thinking about it. You have a number of DCMs and you have a bigger pool of DCOs to try and line manage and everyone is shift working. You have a very small SMT group who try and have oversight, you have one Res Manager who is oversight for the entire site. It is a big, big ask.
390. **Mr Marsden:** As you said I think earlier, quite a lot of internal promotion, so people who were DCOs become DCMs.
391. **A.** Yes, I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. It is when they are promoted to DCM on the first day.
392. **Ms Lampard:** It is whether they are supported.
393. **A.** I had a call from Oscar 2 who is the Reception Manager. Oscar 2 rang me a few months ago and said, "this guy is refusing to have his fingerprints taken. Do you want us to use force?" I said, "that is not a decision that I would make. You need to speak to your Manager." He said, "I am the Manager." I said, "okay, you need to refer to the DSO. Once you have referred to it and you have tried everything that it says in the DSO, then the last port of call is to make the guy aware that you can use force for taking his fingerprints as part of the immigration process, but it wouldn't just be grab him and do it." That gave the impression that internal promotion, a new DCM, first day, Oscar 2 in charge of obtaining fingerprints and doesn't know the process.
394. **Q.** When was that?
395. **A.** I would say the latter part of last year. I would say the last six months last year. I don't know exactly when it occurred.
396. **Mr Marsden:** It was a surprising phone call to receive?
397. **A.** It was really surprising. I couldn't believe it. I was wondering why am I being asked to give authority to use force? Just because the Home Office asks for fingerprints, it is not them authorising the use of force.
398. **Q.** Is that right anyway that you would be consulted about the use of force?
399. **A.** If they planned it, yes. For example, if they said, "Home Office or Paul, we are looking to get fingerprints, or looking to use force on this person because of these reasons", would we authorise it? No, we wouldn't authorise use of force. We would authorise ~~use of force~~ Temporary Confinement in Rule 42 or Rule 40 unless it was an urgent relocation, for whatever reason, and would inform us of something, "Use of force was used on Mr X, no injuries were sustained, for this reason, etc. He is currently in ~~room~~ Rule 40. He has been checked over by Healthcare. No problems" type of thing, and then we would receive the paperwork.
400. **Q.** The decision to use force is theirs?
401. **A.** It is.
402. **Q.** As the operator?
403. **A.** Yes.

404. Q. They would come to you and say, "we are strong-holding someone into giving _"
405. A. Yes.
406. Q. The point you are making is it is indicative of the lack of experience of people.
407. A. That is what strongly came through to me. It is interesting, the disciplinary method approach. If I said, "there were five or six people late yesterday bringing up for interview", the approach of Steve was very much, "right, who was down there? Get them up" rather than him saying "what is the source? What is causing it?".
408. Q. It is very much focused on an individual has done something wrong rather than the system wasn't working?
409. A. From the little bits that I have seen, yes.
410. Q. Yes, I think we have picked that up.
411. Ms Lampard: Thank you, Paul, very much indeed.
412. Mr Marsden: It has been very helpful.
413. Ms Lampard: It has been very, very helpful. Great, thank you.
414. Mr Marsden: Someone will type this up into a transcript and send it to you password protected. If you ring the office, Nicola or someone from our team will give you the password. If you wish to amend it, then it is fine to do so. There is a strange interval where it was on pause at the point you mentioned that individual. Shall we send it to your office email?
415. A. Yes, thank you.
416. The only other thing I was going to say about the programme is the thing that struck me other than obviously the physical assault and the racist language used in the lift is about the age dispute case. I think it was a female DCOM about the age dispute and I think she made a comment along the lines of, "I am not going to be the first person to raise it", and that, to me, was potentially equally as worrying as verbally assaulting someone who's being medically assisted. I couldn't understand why she said that.
417. Ms Lampard: As I understand the age dispute policy, DSO, there are certain bits of evidence that will be held to decide the case, but if there is still anxiety about it you can get a Merton compliant test, or if there is no evidence then you get the Merton test. Even in the face of evidence might you sometimes still say, "let's get the Merton test".
418. A. Yes.
419. Q. What if G4S themselves kept coming back to you and saying, "you may have decided, but we are worried about this person"? Could they get the Merton compliant test?
420. A. As you say, it depends on the evidence. If they do have concerns they may, for example, ask to move them down to Tinsley House whilst we approach the caseworker and say, "we do have concerns about this guy. When was the Merton age assessment completed? If he had one, if he doesn't have one could we ask for a Merton age assessment?"

421. However, my understanding is that any age dispute case should, in theory, be taken out of the centre anyway and age assessed unless there was evidence to show that person –
422. Q. The Social Services might do it themselves.
423. A. Yes.
424. Q. I know that they could say to Social Services, “we are concerned”, and Social Services might do it, mightn’t they?
425. A. Yes. The chances are if they are that concerned we would also be concerned. We would be seeing the same thing.
426. **Mr Marsden:** Your point about the DCO makes the comment about, “I don’t want to be the first to raise it”, there’s the culture of being concerned about raising things.
427. A. Yes, if I am right, from watching the programme, that was about the age dispute case.
428. **Ms Lampard:** It was.
429. A. She said, “I am not going to be the first one to raise it.” I couldn’t understand why would you not mention age dispute? You are not saying, “I saw my fellow colleague hit someone. I am concerned about this guy.” That’s a cultural bit. That concerned me more. Why was that comment made?
430. **Ms Lampard:** There are two possible problems there, aren’t there? One is that she is not trained enough to understand why that is an issue and why that is a safeguarding issue, and the second is, even if she were aware of that is it the case that she just can’t be bothered, which would suggest a cover –
431. **Mr Marsden:** Yes, or are people fearful? This is something that we have picked that lots of people are fearful of raising –
432. **Ms Lampard:** Issues that might cause a difficulty.
433. **Mr Marsden:** Yes, it is best not to.
434. A. Maybe, yes.
435. **Ms Lampard:** Thank you very much, Paul.
436. A. That’s okay.
437. **Mr Marsden:** Thank you for your time.

[Interview concluded]