

***Confidential***

**Independent Investigation into Brook House**

**Thursday, 21 December 2017**

**Interview with  
Clare Checksfield  
Director of Detention Escort and Services  
and  
Alan Gibson  
Deputy Director  
Head of Operations Detention and Escorting Services**

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

1. **Mr Marsden:** We both take a lead on questioning. This is an interview with Clare Checksfield and Alan Gibson. It is part of the independent investigation.  
[Introductions]
2. **Ms Lampard:** Could you help me, both of you, by just reciting what your job titles are, and explain what your job entails?
3. **Ms Checksfield:** I am the Director of Detention Escort and Services, and in fact, that means I am the lead commissioner for both the procurement and the contract management of mostly private providers. Also her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, for providing custodial and escorting services within immigration enforcement.
4. **Mr Gibson:** I am Deputy Director, Head of Operations Detention and Escorting Services. My role is primarily to oversee the day-to-day operation of the business of the provision of custodial services and escorted services.
5. **Q.** We want to begin, by talking about the detainee population at Brook House. As we understand it so far, there are now about 37/38% time-served foreign national offenders there. Does that accord with your thinking?
6. **Mr Gibson:** It is probably slightly higher right now.
7. **Q.** What do you reckon it is now?
8. **Mr Gibson:** It could be well in the 40s.
9. **Ms Checksfield:** We can give you weekly figures.
10. **Q.** It would be really helpful if you could let us have the figures from probably about the time that the 60 extra beds were put in – that October 2016, if we could have the proportion of time-served.
11. **Ms Checksfield:** I don't think they came on-stream until January. We can do a chart.
12. **Q.** Could you? Last Christmas we were told that there were about 49% - that is quite high, isn't it? Is that as high as it goes? What is the most that you have ever had there?

13. **Ms Checksfield:** We are talking about the four main male detainee establishments, and at the moment The Verne was still in that mix, so The Verne, Morton Hall, Heathrow and Gatwick, I would say the range is somewhere between 38 at the lowest, and then it very occasionally gets above 50. For reasons more of geography rather than anything else, it tends to be higher in Morton Hall and the Verne. Morton Hall because it takes more people from the Northern prisons, and The Verne, some of it is to do with location.
14. **Q.** Where is The Verne?
15. **Ms Checksfield:** Dorset, but closing in two weeks.
16. **Q.** Somebody has indicated to us that there is an agreement between the Home Office and the MoJ on the numbers of time-served that will be held in prisons. Is that correct?
17. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes.
18. **Q.** Can you explain that agreement to us?
19. **Ms Checksfield:** If you went back to 2015, there is a Service Level Agreement between Prison Service and the Home Office. You reach the end of your sentence, and then there is a transition at which you become held under immigration powers if you fall into that category, to be deported. The number that are then still in prison, who might leave from prison, has varied, until December 2014 it was as high as 1000.
20. **Mr Marsden:** People who remained?
21. **Ms Checksfield:** Of people who were held under immigration detention powers, but still held under HMPPS and, simply, that is transactional rather than anything else, because they pay on a cost-per-bed night on the prison service. That was an expansion of immigration detention capacity.
22. **Q.** The estate?
23. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, the estate. When The Verne changed from a prison to an immigration removal centre, it added 580 bed spaces, at which point we took the opportunity to drop the cap, if you like, on the beds available in the prison service to 400. It has stayed at 400 since then. We have now had a slight refinement; this is mainly to do with money rather than beds, so now there is a range between 350 and 450 and we would expect to be within that. If we go over that, they will penalise us financially - if we go underneath that, they will give us money back, but it is all based on a risk assessment which is that there are some people who come out of the prison service whom we would never hold in the immigration detention estate.
24. **Q.** Due to the nature of the offences?
25. **Ms Checksfield:** The reason for the 2014 shift was not simply one of capacity, it is to meet the principle that, by-and-large, if you have served your sentence, we take the view you should be in an immigration removal centre, with a more open regime, rather than a prison.
26. **Q.** Is it actually lawful for a period? Can you continue to be in prison under immigration law?
27. **Ms Checksfield:** Absolutely, yes.
28. **Q.** Without some smart lawyer saying –?

29. **Ms Checksfield:** This has been going on for a decade. I absolutely assure you it has been challenged and defeated.
30. **Mr Gibson:** Sometimes they are held in remand conditions.
31. **Ms Lampard:** We have a Category B establishment in Brook House.
32. **Ms Checksfield:** I am going to repeat myself, Kate, you haven't got a Category B establishment.
33. **Q.** Tell me what you have.
34. **Ms Checksfield:** You have a building that is built to Category B physical security standards, but it is not run as a Category B regime.
35. **Q.** I entirely see that. Just give me the justification for that? Obviously, it is security.
36. **Ms Checksfield:** To quickly go back, this is all about the changing nature of immigration detention. If you go back originally, and I will send you my favourite chart which shows this quite clearly, detention for immigration purposes is relatively recent at this kind of scale. It became used more widely at the point of the early 2000s, a big rise in asylum applications. The Home Office, of course, has no immigration detention facilities of its own, so the smaller, older establishments, like old Harmondsworth and old Catsfield, were being used for detention in a slightly incoherent manner. What was missing was the kind of specification of "What kind of population do you need?". In terms of the expansion, and the expansion, of course, also coincided with the 2006 time-served FNO crisis, which revealed that large numbers of time-served FNOs who nominally said "You must be deported", were just being released into the community. That is what lost Charles Clarke his job.
37. **Q.** What year was that?
38. **Ms Checksfield:** 2006. What that did, there were two twin pushes – one was to put what I will call "civilian detainees" into conditions that were less prison-like, so Yarl's Wood, which you know well. Yarl's Wood was brilliant. Without the Category B security specification, because it was built in an attempt to build something that was more akin to a Travelodge, and less prison-like than others, Brook House was built against the backlash, and I think the answer is that Brook House was opened in 2009, but the specification and new build will all have been against the background of what we suddenly do with the time-served FNO population. The reason for the Category B specification was a lot of it came from the fire at Yarl's Wood, which revealed two little things, and there was a fire at Harmondsworth as well. I will find this single chart - I don't think you can use it publicly, but what it will show you is dramatic drops in capacity when Harmondsworth burns, and then a drop in capacity when Yarl's Wood burns. Part of that was simply that the structure of the building could not withstand people punching holes – it wasn't fit for purpose.
39. I think there were two poles of assumptions – one was that the population would be totally compliant, the civilian view, the other one was "They will all be terribly dangerous, and we have to do something about it", the secure view. The combination of the physical structure – Category B basically means cement walls, it also means designing the centre so that you can zone off areas, so you don't have a big open area where everyone can gather and also reasonably strong perimeter security. That is a five-metre fence with barbed wire on the top, and the Council has put double perimeter security as well. That is why Brook House was built to that standard, and the only other

immigration removal centre been built since Brook House was Colnbrook, which was also built to the same standard.

40. I am now involved in planning and thinking through the specification for the once-in-a-generation chance to design a new immigration removal centre in Heathrow, if the third runway goes ahead. What we are trying to do is revisit that balance between the external perimeter security and the flexibility of the population. The one thing is you cannot predict 30 or 40 years ahead, which is the lifetime of a build, precisely the changes in a population. You will have to have a building that can flex accordingly.
41. **Ms Marsden:** Was Brook House seen as time-served foreign national prisoners and a civilian population?
42. **Ms Checksfield:** We have never designed anything that separates them. They have all finished their sentence.
43. **Ms Lampard:** Is there some consideration given to the fact that a large amount of that population have never committed any sort of offence, and have never given any indication that they need to be housed in more secure surroundings?
44. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, it is. There is a slightly mixed economy. It is true that there are people who have not committed any criminal offence; it is not true to say they have not committed no offence, because all of them are there because they have reached the end of the road and have no right to remain in this country. There is no-one in there who has not had a large number of goes at trying to establish their right to remain. You have to start this narrative in 2010, because from that point there are no families detained, except in wholly exceptional circumstances in a tiny bit of the estate.
45. Of course, we recognise that the population has a wide range of people in it. If I start at the top in terms of the most risky and most disruptive, first of all we would make the assessment as to whether they should be kept in prison. Some proportion of them are removed before they even leave prison. All of them get some form of risk assessment, and I think what you would have experienced in Yarl's Wood is slightly different, it is the only women's estate, but you would like a judgement as to where you might send them.
46. For example, this sounds like a trivial example, but there are subtleties to it, you would not send someone convicted of arson to Dungavel because they have a Grade 1 listed, wooden staircase, you would think about where we would put them. Because of our current estate, Brook House, Colnbrook and Morton Hall are more able to cope with a very high proportion of time-served FNO prisoners.
47. How do we think about where we put people who are not time-served FNOs? Again, they fall into different categories. There is a group of people that are asylum seekers, but they have already been judged to be fit for detention, and they, because of the hope that Detained Fast Track will come back in, are kept at Harmondsworth and Yarl's Wood because they have got courts nearby.
48. **Q.** You mean Gatwick? Harmondsworth and Gatwick?
49. **Ms Checksfield:** No, Harmondsworth takes a higher percentage of the asylum group than Gatwick.

50. **Mr Gibson:** It is also worth saying that there are quite a proportion of detainees who we know absolutely nothing about, because their first encounter with the Home Office or Government, as far as we can see, are the police when they get picked up.
51. **Q.** It does still leave some people in Brook House, who find themselves amongst a very strongly prison-based culture. I don't mean that yours is the prison-based culture, it is the culture that has come with the time-served foreign national offenders.
52. **Ms Checksfield:** It depends. This is a very difficult thing to unpick, because people react differently. Some people will come, yes, and then will treat this as an extension of prison, be worried about gangs and groups. On the other hand, there are quite a few things that protect against that, so we don't move people *en masse*. If you say someone came from a difficult, organised culture from, for the sake of argument, say, Huntercombe prison, they are not moved with their mates, they are moved at the point at which their sentence ends, and they are expected to be ready for removal. One of the protection points against the prison-style culture building up amongst detainees is churn and movement, whereas within the prison culture, you get people who are relatively stable and that kind of thing.
53. **Mr Marsden:** The point of people moving out of prison to, say, Brook House, is their immigration status and their case, if you like, resolved in the sense that they are then only going to be there for a short period of time?
54. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes. There is no one-size-fits-all. They could be removed very soon after being moved across, they could be there for two or three years at the absolute extreme.
55. **Q.** That is entirely individual, case dependent?
56. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, it can be complete non-compliance. The ones that tend to be very hard to remove are generally a combination of they pose a reasonable level of public harm were they to be released, they have not complied with any identification or documentation. They may have outstanding legal challenges, if you get that combination, those are the ones that tend to stick, because the Home Office caseworkers are constantly making judgements against the balance at removability.
57. **Ms Lampard:** You can clearly see where we are coming from, we are concerned about that balance between those who might present a threat and those who feel threatened within the place. We haven't yet spoken to any of the detainees, and it will be interesting to hear what they have to say, but that was clearly one of the themes of the *Panorama* programme.
58. **Ms Checksfield:** You have heard that argument that says "We have representations with people saying this is terrible – they ought to be completely separated", and my response to that would be how do you manage that safely? First of all, you manage it safely in that you try and not detain people for a great length of time. The most extreme judgements says many people will have been told several times they have no right to remain in this country and therefore they should be thinking about leaving.
59. It is worth remembering that a vast majority are in there something between three and six months. By and large, shared rooms, open regime, access to mobile phones, ability to talk to your family at any given point, activities, we would say that all of those would act towards calming the relationship

between detainees and staff. What you can't avoid is that there is a proportion of these people, and they are not exclusively time-served FNOs, so someone can have no track record whatsoever, no criminal conviction, and it takes three escorts to physically drag them out of there onto a plane. The question of how you behave in that environment, the extent to which you are prepared to resist what, in the end, is the execution of a decision by the state to forcibly remove someone from the country, is not a direct correlation to your criminal history.

60. **Mr Marsden:** You have gone from a situation where there is a strong regime and a set of sanctions to one where you are essentially at liberty, aren't you? It seems to me what manages the relationship in an ideal situation in an IRC is the relationship between officers and detainees, and it isn't the strength of the regime or the sanctions; the key to it is probably how staff and detainees interact. That is the safe plan, which in the context of Brook House and the churn and the constant movement of staff, is something that we need to explore.
61. **Ms Checksfield:** I would say also that the reaction of the time-served foreign national offenders to go from a prison regime to an IRC regime is not uniform either.
62. **Q.** It is not uniformly "I'll exploit it"?
63. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes - I mean some of them go "Thank God. I've got an open regime, I am out of prison." Certainly, that is not necessarily the immediate response.
64. **Q.** Do some go voluntarily?
65. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes.
66. **Q.** A significant number go voluntarily?
67. **Ms Lampard:** What? To leave the centre?
68. **Mr Marsden:** No, coming out of prison and knowing their fate - actually saying "I'll go".
69. **Ms Checksfield:** Again, I can't know detainees who are coming out of prison, but the overall strategy is to get more and more people to go voluntarily before they even get a detention. We now have pre-departure team at Brook House, and their express job is to encourage people from detention to leave voluntarily.
70. **Mr Gibson:** A fair number of those do go from prison without coming in here. Thursday morning, they are escorting them, and the prison service have a small team based at Wandsworth, and then can go on that, otherwise they will go into the IRC.
71. **Ms Checksfield:** There are international agreements, so particularly within the EU you can serve out a proportion of your service in The Netherlands, so you can get that under agreement.
72. **Ms Lampard:** Let's just go back to the regime. There was criticism some years ago in an HMIP report about having a system of basic standard enhanced –
73. **Ms Checksfield:** Incentives and privileges.
74. **Q.** Exactly, and that stopped. I think that also may have been challenged legally, I don't know.

75. **Ms Checksfield:** That is something we have got reservations about.
76. **Q.** Stephen Shaw did suggest you needed to re-think how you dealt with that. What has become of all that?
77. **Ms Checksfield:** No, he didn't, he just said "Get rid of it". We haven't. We are slightly uneasy between that, and this is the most difficult aspect of the debate. We have had these conversations about all of our operators about incentives and privileges, and it is not helped that in the prison service Chris Grayling, when he was Secretary of State, turned the whole thing on its head and said "You have got it all wrong. What you need is you need people to come in, is the most basic level", so they are brought into the system with almost nothing, and I can't remember the precise details of them because it has been overtaken, come in, wear not your own clothes, have no privileges, and then you literally you earn your privileges and move up. That didn't really work, partly because it was such a change from the way in which the prison service had operated, which was softer around the boundaries as to how you worked it. Our operators all take quite different views, and I would say that there is a spectrum. The only people that really use incentives and privileges in the way you might recognise it is Morton Hall, because they are an HMPPS run immigration removal centre, and it is in their DNA. I don't think they place a huge amount of weight on it, but if I said to them "Get rid of it", they would explain that it actually helps them.
78. **Mr Marsden:** Sorry, do you know how that operates?
79. **Ms Checksfield:** I don't want to talk about the detail because it is slightly irrelevant because they haven't got much room, so what can you do? They cannot have access to paid activity, you can reduce gym time. They say that even some of those subtle gradations help them a bit.
80. **Mr Gibson:** Certainly, you don't lose your mobile phone, you don't go on a restricted visit regime.
81. **Q.** It is at the edges you mean?
82. **Ms Checksfield:** Exactly, it is at the edges of what you can do. Most of the other suppliers, so the private sector suppliers have, by and large, got used to operating without it. We said to them, and I can't remember precisely, but we said "You must have an Incentive and Earned Privilege policy" but left it up to them as to how they managed it. In practice they are not really managing it.
83. **Ms Lampard:** Is it actually allowed under the immigration removal service rules?
84. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes.
85. **Q.** It is allowed?
86. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, but what it lacks which the prison service has is an adjudication regime and appeals and all the rest of it. The prison service incentive comes with an internal governance system that we don't have, and we don't want to introduce. The related discussion is the more interesting one, which is what sanctions do our detention centre operators have for bad behaviour?
87. **Q.** What was the basis on which the HMIP said that they were disapproving of the original scheme?
88. **Ms Checksfield:** I don't even particularly remember. That comes from the school of thought that tips the balance the other way, which says everyone in



immigration removal centres "It is your line and Kate hasn't committed any offences, and therefore this is a remnant".

89. Q. They weren't actually relying on any legal or statutory basis, they just thought they didn't like the look of it?
90. Ms Checksfield: Yes, they didn't like the look of it.
91. Mr Marsden: It is interesting, though, if you talk to people at Brook House, you don't get a sense that they think they have any discretion over this, do you?
92. Ms Lampard: No, they think they were told not to have an incentive scheme, and then, I think that sense of it was added to by the issue of using paid work and access to paid work as an incentive and punishment arrangement, which, of course, can't happen. It is clear from the rules that everybody has a right to paid work if they want to.
93. Ms Checksfield: No, it can happen, Kate.
94. Q. Can it?
95. Ms Checksfield: It does. The Home Office has the power to prevent people having access to paid work if they are not compliant with practice.
96. Q. My reading was that it says that you will have access to paid work. We might have to have a bit of a correspondence about this, and the HMIP last year said it is still being used as a form of punishment, stopping people having access to paid work.
97. Ms Checksfield: Yes, it is still in use, but we are completely within our rights to use it. We can pick up that point.
98. Q. Would you like to tell me what makes you think that there is a right to stop people from working as a punishment?
99. Ms Checksfield: They are not working. One, they are not working, and they are now calling it "Paid activity", because we now realise that whatever predecessor of mine called it "Paid work", the detention centre rules called it "Paid activity". It got renamed as "Paid work", it is not work, so it falls outside any of the legal requirements in terms of work. We have done quite a thorough review on that.
100. Q. My reading of the rules was that actually it says people will be able to work.
101. Ms Checksfield: When you say "The Rules", what do you mean? The detention centre rules?
102. Q. I mean the detention centre rules, yes.
103. Ms Checksfield: Subsequently there are the Detention Centre Rules 2001, so they have gone over them since then, and this was brought in to deal with people who were not cooperating in any manner whatsoever.
104. Q. You will let me have the subsequent guidance which clarifies that?
105. Ms Checksfield: Yes. The point I am coming to is, in some ways, irrespective of the guidance and the details of who is doing what, it comes back to sanctions. The pure form of the dealing with people is it is all about relationships, it is all about de-escalation, it is all about improving information, for example, for detainees. Pre-departure teams means them having better access to Home Office people that they can talk about their cases with. It is all about using sanctions, coercion, as an absolutely last resort. That is there as it is.

106. Lurking around the edges is the idea of what punishment is there, what sanctions do the custodial managers and the Home Office have for people who will not comply at all? There is a range of things you are dealing with, from antisocial behaviour, which you would find in any closed community and you have to make almost daily judgements as well – does that matter, or is someone just upset on Tuesday? The sanctions that we have will start with talking to people, the idea of an induction, having a relationship “We don’t do things like that here”, and relying on peer pressure. In an open regime if you have people sharing a room quite often the pressure to behave will come more strongly from them than it does from the detainees to develop, as indeed Yarl’s Wood did, and I think the G4S are concentrating more on giving detainees more responsibility over their life, being able to choose meals, being able to do things for themselves, not having to ask for access to everything.
107. What Brook House brought out was what do you do in terms of physical use of force, because physical use of force is sometimes used right at the last stages when someone is about to go on a plane and leave? Sometimes it is also removing them to somewhere outside the open regime, so that is where Brook House has the options of the Care and Separation Unit, or indeed, the E-Unit, to manage people for a short period.
108. Alan runs an internal operational system in which we talk on a weekly basis with each of the custodial operators, we identify the people that are behaving extremely badly, either because they are a risk to themselves, or they are a risk to others – whatever they have tried in terms of all of the things available to them does not seem to be having any impact. At that point, we bring together a multidisciplinary approach, which is also bringing in case workers and try and say “What do we do? Can we remove this person home early? Is there anything obvious that we need to do? Do we need to escalate access to mental health if that appears to be an issue? Do we think it is worth trying at another centre, because they may be locked in with some group of people that is not working for them?” They could be at risk of bullying, or, indeed, is their behaviour so bad that they need to go back into the prison system? That is a relatively small number of people - when I happened to look at it today it was five people.
109. **Mr Marsden:** You have someone disruptive who they are calling out.
110. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes.
111. **Ms Lampard:** We are keen, if we may, to listen into one of those from that end. It would be interesting to hear.
112. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, but then coming back to sanction, the only express sanctions that we have are removal from the country, which is the purpose of it, removal back into the prison system with fewer privileges. There is a mechanism for lack of access to paid activity.
113. **Mr Gibson:** I should just say removal to the prison system never really applies as a sanction, it is because the assessment is we cannot safely manage this person.
114. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, you are absolutely right. I would have to look it up.
115. **Mr Marsden:** That is presumably *in extremis*?
116. **Mr Gibson:** Very much *in extremis*. It takes quite a lot of negotiation to get someone back into the prison service.

117. **Ms Lampard:** You will consider removing the opportunity for paid activity? It is interesting, though, that they don't believe that they can do that.
118. **Ms Checksfield:** It is a Home Office decision. The distinction that I am hearing from this, Kate, is that the lack of access to paid activity relates to compliance with the Home Office, not in compliance with the way in which you behave -
119. **Q.** That is what is apparent from the detention centre rules, which talks about what can be and should be allowed to them within the centres. I think you and I are not at odds.
120. **Ms Checksfield:** We are, because it is not an inalienable right. You do not have the right to go in and work and be paid, because it depends on what is available.
121. **Q.** It does say "To the extent that it is available you will have it", and certainly they make that distinction because clearly you can't make it available to somebody who is a user of drugs - that wouldn't be sensible.
122. **Ms Checksfield:** It is voluntary.
123. **Q.** It is voluntary, but it is nonetheless true that the rules suggest that it is your right to have it, and it will be made available to you if there are places for you. That is the basis on which HMIP was saying it can't be used as a punishment, or part of a regime of punishment within the centre, and that was my reading of it too.
124. **Ms Checksfield:** In a way this is a completely abstruse argument because the effectiveness of, let us call it a consequence rather than a sanction, is most people believe pretty limited.
125. **Q.** Okay, but anyway, you will clarify for me how it fits into the regime so far as it relates to non-compliance with Home Office?
126. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes. I would say that we have not formulated a final reply back to Stephen Shaw on the two issues of policy of incentive and privileges, and I would say that certainly our opinion at the moment is that we do not see great added value in having these policies. However, in the absence of a complete review of all the powers and how each centre is run, nor do we think that there is a need for absolute conformity in every centre, so we want our operators -
127. **Mr Marsden:** To find a right solution.
128. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, to have a considerable role in how they manage it and what they do.
129. **Q.** What Brook House might need might be different.
130. **Ms Checksfield:** Might be different to Yarl's Wood, so I want Yarl's Wood to be able to operate differently. Equally I want Dungavel to be operated differently because, not only is the population different, but the building is different and how you might manage those is not quite the same.
131. **Ms Lampard:** Okay. Can we ask you about the 60 new people who arrived in October of last year? Was it October of last year? I think it was.
132. **Mr Marsden:** January.
133. **Ms Checksfield:** I don't think it was operational until January.

134. **Ms Lampard:** The basis on which that was decided on, how did that happen? Did you just say you wanted more beds and G4S said -?
135. **Ms Checksfield:** It was a combination. The actual conversations go back three or four years, and again, they are fairly routine. You tend to, within the contract, have conversations with the contractors sometimes about remedying maintenance problems, etc. In this case, G4S I think came to us, but we ended up with a conversation which was about two alternatives for increasing bed space at Tinsley House and at Brook House, the two twin parallels. Also, there was a wholesale redesign of what were slightly desultory dormitory rooms in Tinsley House. Traditional bed space was brought in both at Tinsley House and at Brook House that go through the usual business case approval process, as well as adjudication as to how safe they are – ventilation, fire safety and everything else.
136. **Q.** What was agreed as the need for extra provision of staff and facilities in order to allow that to happen smoothly? What did you agree needed to be added?
137. **Ms Checksfield:** I would have to go back and look. There is a formal contract chain, so any time you have a change in numbers and beds of that nature, there is a notice of change, and that is agreed with the contract to get some more staff.
138. **Q.** Could you let us know what that was? I don't want to look at the contract, I suspect it will cause me to go cross-eyed, but what we would like is to know how many more staff it was agreed that there needed to be? I assume that it was paid for by the Home Office. If you could tell us what, in the sense, you bought for getting the 60 extra in, in terms of people, facilities – I don't know what else it might have been, but that would be helpful.
139. **Mr Marsden:** I am quite interested in what was their response to the request? Was it solicited? Was it "We see big risk here"?
140. **Ms Checksfield:** We wouldn't have had that conversation, if our operator had said "No, we see huge risk about this". Just remember there is a big difference between us and prisons – the decision about who we put in detention is an administrative decision. This is not us going "We have got pressure on beds" in the same way you have these conversations sometimes in prisons, because they have to find accommodation for everyone who is sentenced. We are not under quite that same constraint.
141. **Q.** Just for follow-up, they didn't say at any point that they saw it as problematic?
142. **Ms Checksfield:** No. We had gone directly against Stephen Shaw in terms of this, he said two things that we did not accept at Brook House. The first one was that we should remove the safety netting, and I said to him personally "I am afraid I know it has saved at least one life, possibly more, so we will stick to having that". When he wrote his report the rooms had not been completed, he said "Please don't, they must not happen", but didn't come and give us the rationale behind it.
143. **Mr Marsden:** The 60 additional –
144. **Ms Checksfield:** The 60 additional beds. We took the judgement that we would proceed with it, because we thought we had made the right risk assessments as it was happening, and went ahead.
145. **Ms Lampard:** It does make it a very crowded place. It is a tight site, with a large population in it. It does mean that there are difficulties in managing flows of

people – you can see them trying to get into some of the public spaces. Do you ever get feedback to that extent? Have there been subsequently moments when they have suggested it is difficult to manage that number of people?

146. **Mr Gibson:** Due to the 60 beds?

147. **Q.** Because of simply the numbers who are there?

148. **Ms Checksfield:** No, I think we know that there is a question as to how full establishments are, but certainly Tinsley House, in fact the proportion of additional beds at Tinsley House was higher than that at Brook. It is 60 out of a higher number at Brook, and certainly they were putting us as three rather than two, so Tinsley House taking more. I would say that the reopening of Tinsley House, there were no reported problems at all in terms of coping with more people.

149. **Q.** I haven't been inside Tinsley House, people talk about Brook House as being a very constrained environment, it has a much more constrained feel, even though it may not be bigger on footprint. With a very crowded place that adds to a heightened sense of claustrophobia and of pressure, a place under pressure. That doesn't matter, I suppose, so much if people aren't there for very long. If people are in that environment for a long time, I would imagine that is difficult. Can you let us have the length of stay, how that has been over the last year or so?

150. **Mr Gibson:** In Brook?

151. **Q.** In Brook House, yes.

152. **Ms Checksfield:** We will have to check, because it doesn't break down very easily.

153. **Mr Gibson:** It is not particularly simple.

154. **Ms Checksfield:** It doesn't break down very easily by site.

155. **Q.** Okay – well, anything you can do. Anecdotally we were told that it was built to house people for three days, is that correct?

156. **Ms Checksfield:** That is complete nonsense. I just cannot perceive my predecessor 10 years ago putting that in the specifications.

157. **Mr Marsden:** It is just one of those that has gained coinage.

158. **Ms Checksfield:** Of course. It has somehow gained coinage, because in no situation I can fathom would you build £100 million building with an expected churn of three days. That is what we have short term holding facilities for and they are small with no facilities. I genuinely do not know where it came from.

159. **Mr Gibson:** It is quite hard to find out where it came from.

160. **Ms Lampard:** Is there any figure about what was envisaged at the times you have described – the bulge in asylum seekers, and all of that, and the prisons? Is there any figure of what people anticipated?

161. **Ms Checksfield:** I would be very surprised if there is, because we don't have a time limit, therefore, there might have been some kind of planning assumption throughout the whole system.

162. **Q.** Do you have any targets in terms of numbers in terms of speed of removal?

163. **Ms Checksfield:** No. We try and keep the whole system as low as possible, but the difficulty is you have at least three different categories of people in that system. We can give you crudely the overstayer group move through the system quicker than any other. European nationals move through the system

quicker than any other and, as I say, the wicked and difficult small number are nearly exclusively time-served foreign national offenders.

164. Q. Just one thing, going back to the population then, rough sleepers were being rounded up and deported according to the press. That is what has happened recently, and somebody has said that was illegal - that was happening was it?
165. Ms Checksfield: I think "Rounded up" was too strong a word.
166. Q. Sorry, I led you on that.
167. Ms Checksfield: That sounds like huge numbers. There was a change in policy – well, it wasn't a change in policy, I would say it is an articulation of policy, so under something called "Operation Nexus", we already work with the police. Just to give you the example, and the distinction is relevant, if the police find an Italian, who is persistently involved in low level crime, but has not been convicted of anything, so this is your repeat offender, the kind of thing the local police officer would know about, without that, it is possible to remove them, so then the police would say "He is Italian, I am going to check his immigration status". You might find that he had been removed because he spent more than three months in the UK without regularising his stay. The distinction - and the reason that the courts ruled that the rough sleeper work was unlawful in that there was no individual assessment made - if immigration officers found a rough sleeper, they would immediately consider every rough sleeper they met of European origin, and then move to deportation proceedings.
168. Q. On the basis that they didn't have accommodation to come to?
169. Ms Checksfield: No, on the basis that they hadn't regularised their stay, as required to do under EU legislation, so they neither had work nor accommodation.
170. Mr Gibson: They weren't exercising their treaty rights.
171. Ms Checksfield: Yes, exactly.
172. Q. We have also been told that there has been recently an unusual increase in people on methadone programmes, or with alcohol dependency, does that make any sense to you?
173. Ms Checksfield: Yes, it does. Can I cover this from a slightly different approach? We are talking about the period during which *Panorama* filmed and trying to understand what was going on at Brook. What we knew is that at Brook House over that period, they were certainly finding more crudely psychoactive substances – we don't call them "new psychoactive substances", we call them psychoactive substances - than the other centres. Some of that is simply a feature of a combination of time-served FNO prisoners, some of whom do have access to that kind of culture, being in London, which means that it is not very far for people to go to visit and try and pass psychoactive substances through. They are notoriously hard to detect, so they come in through the post, etc. The difficulty is it is almost impossible to tell what the correlation is between number of finds and actual use, partly because people don't self-declare and, of course, you can't go around testing everyone. Often, fines show that the IRC is managing it rather better than others, who don't find anything, that have people being identified as being – a rather old-fashioned phrase – "under the influence", which of course can be linked to a certain level of violence.

174. **Mr Marsden:** Do you have any sense of how effective their policing of drugs coming into the centre is? It is something we are going to explore, and I would be really interested in your view?
175. **Mr Gibson:** They have been quite active in it, and one of the leaders within the estate in terms of developing their strategy being very proactive and making sure the strategy -
176. **Ms Checksfield:** Working rather well with healthcare, because of course it is a twin approach, because the thing that people worry about the most is most people just have no idea what they are using. The healthcare role in this, is the telling people of the risks personally to them, so that is worse, of course. It is the same question – you get very poor quality psychoactive drugs which send people off their heads in five minutes, especially if they have never used them before, so it is a twin-pronged approach. I would have said, we have been focussing on making certain they all have strategies in place and concentrating on it. We are still a pale shadow of the experience of the prisons.
177. **Ms Lampard:** They ought to have a drugs –
178. **Ms Checksfield:** The substance misuse strategy. We know they do have a substance misuse strategy.
179. **Q.** I haven't seen that, so that would be helpful.
180. **Mr Marsden:** Your impression is that at a practical end of it, that they are searching, and they are making finds, they are managing it?
181. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes. They haven't eradicated it.
182. **Q.** No, I'm sure.
183. **Ms Checksfield:** But nowhere has. The prison service will describe psychoactive substances as an absolute game-changer in their experience, and still our incidence is much lower in my experience.
184. **Ms Lampard:** I wanted to move onto the "No Notice" removals, which is something that has been introduced since we were in Yarl's Wood - it is a newish policy. I think I know the answer to this question, but maybe if you just told us what was the genesis of that?
185. **Ms Checksfield:** You have to distinguish two things. You first of all can flag an alert - Stephen Shaw is looking at this. We are reviewing this, and you are reviewing this, so just be prepared for that. In terms of the narrative of Brook House, this is the mixture between wanting to give people, at the point at which you say "You are going to go on X plane to such-and-such", genuinely wanting to give them time to both mentally and physically prepare themselves to do that. Sometimes that means saying goodbye to close family and friends, sometimes that means organising possessions and working out what they are actually going to take with them. This balanced against the disruption of failure of last minute removals, of people then orchestrating challenges right until the last moment, at which they get on the plane.
186. I am not going to pretend to give you the legal point on this, but the legal point has held firm, which is that if someone's removal directions have failed, then the Home Office like to give them what is called a "No Notice" removal. The first point I would make is in the narrative of Brook House, and the reason I think it has assumed a disproportionate importance is that it was used in relation to charter flights, and the first time it was used. Alan is nodding in a

weary way because he dealt with it, it wasn't so much the policy – it was legitimate, as was the excuse, it was implemented terribly badly the first time it was used for a charter at Brook House. That meant it wasn't communicated properly, people didn't understand that "No Notice" didn't really mean no notice, it meant giving people a shorter notice.

187. **Mr Gibson:** It is a window.
188. **Mr Marsden:** In practical terms how, in your view, did this operate?
189. **Ms Lampard:** I would like to hear what was wrong in the first one?
190. **Ms Checksfield:** Let Alan tell you about what went wrong on the first one, because I think that has coloured people's perception of it.
191. **Mr Marsden:** Was this a difficult charter?
192. **Mr Gibson:** I think it was a Nigerian child, so it would have been under ICSL. What went wrong was that the decision to do this was taken by case working commands and not communicated, even to us, until the last moment. We know people were being positioned on that charter. Our understanding was the normal process, as we understood it, had been followed, which gives a custodian provider time to work with detainees to attempt to de-escalate their concerns, those who get anxious, talk them down "You are going the day after tomorrow - prepare for it".
193. What actually happened was there was a communication, a conference call "This is No Notice". G4S thought "No notice, that means we can't tell them". I know a number of individuals in G4S had been risk-assessed immediately before, the first thing the person knew when they were leaving was when the room door was opened and three officers in full personal protection kit stepped in and they were taking them down to reception. That was just a very grisly, unnecessary set of circumstances and failed communications. Subsequent charters, they still operate under the same process, it has got a lot better. G4S, everybody, is fully aware of how much latitude you have. It is not no notice - you can tell people a few hours before they go.
194. **Q.** Hours rather than days?
195. **Mr Gibson:** Yes. I don't know whether you want to redact this, but I think it is fair to say there are mixed views as to whether or not this is a good idea. The division is on our side and on the casework side. It is not how we would do it.
196. **Ms Checksfield:** Certainly, I would be astonished if you did not get people in Brook House saying "The Home Office suddenly imposed this on us". We absolutely accept we collectively mishandled it very badly.
197. **Ms Lampard:** They do talk a great deal, not about that so much, just about the breakdown of trust that happens, and how it makes it very difficult to get people out. You haven't given them any time, it heightens the whole anticipation, and it is a bad thing.
198. **Mr Marsden:** We used to talk about the integrity issue, the fact that people know but can't say, or don't say -
199. **Ms Lampard:** Then people returning.
200. **Mr Marsden:** Who say "You were dishonest with me".



201. **Mr Gibson:** It is that breakdown in relationship that DCOs put a lot of store in trying to build up, because it is part of their dynamic engagement with the individual. We suddenly take that away from them.
202. **Q.** Can I just ask another question, it is relating to it? There is a slight sense, and we felt it coming back, having done the Yarl's Wood work, that it is a slightly more uncomfortable regime. I don't know whether that is just how people perceive things at Brook House, or whether it is almost a planned policy decision to make it more uncomfortable?
203. **Ms Checksfield:** What is more uncomfortable?
204. **Q.** People's detention, casework decisions to do something like No Notice. It is a more hostile environment for a detainee.
205. **Ms Checksfield:** It is consistent.
206. **Q.** I am not saying that I think this is the case.
207. **Ms Checksfield:** No. This is not about a hostile environment, what this is about is effectiveness of a process and we, the Home Office, and the whole system are managing something in which, a bit like we are looking for different ways to make the welfare of how do they manage vulnerable people in detention. We are also looking to "How do we get people and expedite the process, because we do not want them to spend time in detention?" That is not a hostile environment. There are a number of layers to it - one it is not right that you should spend so long in detention, the second one is it is not efficient that you should spent much time in detention, and it is how you marry them.
208. Of course, operationally, you are constantly looking for behaviours and persistent patterns. People have been looking at charters and also had a couple of very high-profile cases, and it is worth doing this lead in, in which Stansted Airport call centre was closed by orchestrated telephone numbers of people who were never to do with anything being told to ring up and say "Terrible things are happening at your airport because people were being removed". This charter is getting demonstrations outside the Nigerian Embassy, claims that people were being dragged from their beds, so the whole thing about "We know that this is going, and it is terrible, and people do everything possible to stop it". That was part of the background to thinking.
209. **Mr Gibson:** City Airport was closed for a couple of hours.
210. **Ms Checksfield:** For a different point. They found out a charter was going, and chained themselves to the wheel.
211. **Mr Gibson:** Going back to your comment about making it less comfortable, a lot of the work that G4S have done post *Panorama* has been to take away those low-level maintenance frustrations that people suffer, when they are in Brook – so toasters not working, the place being grotty and grubby, all of those things, and if you actually get them right, they will remove frustrations. It is a broken windows scenario – if you have broken windows you are not treated properly, so they have done quite a bit of work just to remove those.
212. **Mr Marsden:** Yes, we came to see B Wing, which has just been redecorated.
213. **Ms Lampard:** I just want to ask you about staffing and staffing levels there. If you could let me know what you think they ought to be providing in terms of staffing?
214. **Ms Checksfield:** I am going to give you the same answer I gave you for Yarl's Wood, if I just remember. Our contact structure on this means we do not take

a view of precisely what staffing levels should be, and we are not going to change that. The process that you go through, notwithstanding, of course, I agree that staffing levels and how you operate, and good quality staff is absolutely essential to the right culture. In terms of us getting assurance, the initial stage is of course that, when we design the contract, we will agree with the provider over the period what it is going to cost, and we will try and make judgements through procurement that they have staffing levels right.

215. As you know, the Yarl's Wood procurement ended with Serco deciding that they needed more staff than they had put in the bid. We cheerfully accept that, because that is the basis on which the contract is managed. Our job is then, having established that, as we have also noted in terms of extra beds and many other changes, we will agree a notice of change for the contract in terms of the additional numbers and additional cost. It is not that we don't completely wash our hands of that decision, because we will try and make sensible judgements and have a sense that that is working, and of course what we do try and do is make certain that the providers have really got those staff in place. We pay attention to things like churn, attrition, gaps, centre managers, so Alan or I will be involved in the final selection and the centre manager, because we think having the right centre manager is essential and although, again, G4S, remains the employer, we would want to be involved in that judgement.
216. Q. What you are telling us is that actual numbers on a daily basis is not something that you prescribe in the contract, but you will have overall figures of staff numbers, and they will determine how they deploy them.
217. **Ms Checksfield:** The G4S contract, I have a feeling it is actually staff hours.
218. **Mr Gibson:** It is staff hours, yes. They wrote all the hours.
219. Q. In a sense, the daily deployment is for them, but the overall cover figures, numbers, is for you to take a view on in terms of a bid, and then to monitor whether it is working? Do you ever say to them "We don't think you have enough"?
220. **Mr Gibson:** We say to them "You did not have as many on as you said you had on".
221. Q. Or as many hours as you said.
222. **Mr Marsden:** I am less concerned about attrition rate.
223. **Mr Gibson:** Yes. We get figures for how much overtime they are paying, we know how much attrition they have.
224. **Ms Lampard:** Have you had concerns about Brook House over the last year?
225. **Ms Checksfield:** I think that is the way to think about it. We use things like attrition reports – we might get reports from the centre, so let me take the charter as an example, in the same way that we get this with escorts. Someone will ring up Alan, probably someone with a casework inside, and say "We didn't get as many people out of the charter last night, and that was because when we got to Brook House there weren't enough people there to get people from the rooms". 90% of the time that is not true, it is something else, but it gives us the opportunity that we will then go to Brook House and say "Was there a problem?" Sometimes they might say "Yes, suddenly we had five people sick", or "We didn't ...", and the rest of it, so we might make a judgement call about that. I would say that, for me, there's a canary in the mine, this is not a contractual agreement, this is not an HMIP assessment as to what the right

- levels of staffing are. I would immediately be concerned if there was visible churn, for example, within the senior management, whether it appeared that, as Alan says, that excessively high levels of overtime were being used consistently. The trouble is, we don't have easily comparable data across all of them, so I can't ever, at any point, say "Yours was much worse", but you get that feel.
226. **Mr Gibson:** In other centres we have had a long concern about staff numbers just coming under all the time, and that is monitored on a daily/weekly basis, as a subject of weekly calls.
227. **Q.** At Brook House or generally?
228. **Mr Gibson:** At another centre, not in Brook. There have been red days, green days where they have enough hours in red days, or they weren't going to make it up. My team are asking themselves and asking the centre, "What has happened? You don't have any more people in?", there is an enquiry as to why suddenly that position has changed, that is the level that we look at that. One thing I would say is you will see in their action plan, whilst we don't dictate the numbers they have, they have admitted to decreasing a number of people, and we absolutely hold them to that, we do so on a weekly and monthly basis.
229. **Q.** Have they committed to extra numbers, or just to fill the gaps that they have?
230. **Mr Gibson:** It is extra numbers. It is over the budget.
231. **Ms Checksfield:** The other point is of course it is not just numbers. Anyone will tell you in any prison, it is what you make it, it is what use you make of it.
232. **Q.** I am conscious we have kept you quite a long time. Let's just have one more bash at one other thing, and it is probably a canary in the mine issue, but it is clear that they had a spike in violence against their staff, certainly in November it went up dramatically. I am not sure what you make of that, and how that relates to the rest of the estate? Is there something going on in the rest of the estate, in the world at large, or was that specific to Brook House?
233. **Ms Checksfield:** We asked ourselves that question, which was did we miss anything? Part of this is management information. These are still at very low levels. Violence is self-recorded, so suppliers tell us about violence. We have figures on use of force, planned use of force versus spontaneous use of force. You don't really get beneath understanding what is going on until you actually look at the individual report.
234. Certainly, we knew that the figures, the crude rule figures, showed an increase in violence. Brook House did not show anything, I would say, that was wildly out of kilter with the spikes that they might have seen at other centres on different occasions. Sometimes they can correlate with a grouping of individual nationalities, so you can end up with what I would call a troublesome group.
235. **Mr Marsden:** A group of Albanians.
236. **Ms Checksfield:** A group of Albanians - certainly, I had clocked it, but I hadn't clocked it and moved closer to it. I had clocked it in the same way that three months before there appeared to be something going on at Heathrow and it went up and dropped almost as quickly.
237. **Mr Gibson:** Some of it is, of course, connected with individuals as well as groups. There was an incident – I can't remember if it was in November or earlier this

- month, where within one week there were two incidents in which officers required hospital treatment.
238. **Ms Checksfield:** This will be one of the factors that led us to introduce the excessively disruptive detainee system, because as we were interrogating our information levels, one of the things - and I can remember the meeting Alan and Sean had - was to test the working hypothesis that actually it was a very small number of individuals, disproportionate.
239. **Ms Lampard:** When did you introduce the excessive disruptive behaviour policy?
240. **Mr Gibson:** It has been well over a year now.
241. **Ms Checksfield:** We didn't know that was happening at Brook House.
242. **Mr Marsden:** Can I ask a question about that particular meeting, because going to Brook I was quite struck by the population and their description of the population? We asked Michelle about that call, she described that weekly conference call, and I think when we talked to her she said she had only referred one person in three months.
243. **Ms Checksfield:** Michelle Brown?
244. **Q.** Yes. I was quite struck by that, because I thought "That doesn't quite fit with the population".
245. **Mr Gibson:** That is not right. Last week Brook House didn't refer anyone, and I made a point on the call saying to Michelle "Did you miss it?"
246. **Q.** My question was do they use that forum effectively?
247. **Mr Gibson:** Yes, they do. Brook House put a lot of effort into managing difficult detainees. Several other centres, their approach will be "I am going to try a bit and if it doesn't work, we are going to move them out". One of the purposes of the call is that we have an estate-wide view, while you can't just pass this person from pillar to post, is moving them going to have any effect/any benefit? What we tend to get from Brook House is what you call "higher end", where they have been everywhere else, even Brook have great difficulty managing them, and potentially it is a big prison return being referred. That might be what Michelle actually means, she has only put one ?NXA up.
248. **Q.** Your general assessment is they used to call her?
249. **Mr Gibson:** Yes, they do.
250. **Ms Checksfield:** Also it is not disproportionate. The generic question behind this, and Alan and I have had this conversation, with some ruefulness, we were not worried about Brook House, because what we were seeing was consistent with what you would expect of a busy immigration removal centre with that kind of population, but they seemed to be managing it.
251. At the time I would say we were worrying more about Morton Hall and that similar population that seemed to be managing it less well. All that is telling you is that a lot of this is subjective judgement. We then also, and I mention this as well just in the terms of broad oversight, so coming back, if you like, to the Home Office role, I have talked about the canary in the mine and the contract management. We use our interactions with the centre, with the centre managers, so that we do not simply say "It is your job to run it" and we have no interest in what happened. We have a very close interest, and of course we look at the high risk, vulnerable detainees – of course there is a whole review that plays into that.

252. Also, and this is learning out of Yarl's Wood, so if you went back to 2012 there was no real system. The system that they put in place at Yarl's Wood was basic complaints, going through the complaint's system, anything that is serious misconduct bounces immediately up the system and they do bounce up the system, either to our delivery manager on site, to the ?ILB, through the anonymous complaint, through somewhere else, and they then get referred to our professional standards unit for an independent assessment.
253. I went back and asked myself the same question, where there a disproportionate number of serious misconduct referrals coming out of Brook? It wasn't there were a number, and with the benefit of hindsight when we went back nearly all of the officers that were dismissed subsequently by G4S from the programme were already under investigation by us for other serious misconduct complaints. That itself doesn't necessarily mean anything either, because a substantial proportion of them were found to be completely unsubstantiated. It exposed one thing which G4S have remedied, that because of the way it is recorded, which is a mixture of it is either a complaint by a detainee who doesn't name the DCO, we found one DCO who was being investigated for three different complaints. Interestingly Mitie, who are another provider, said "That couldn't have happened under our system. We just spotted that, and we just spoke to them".
254. **Ms Lampard:** For three serious incidents?
255. **Ms Checksfield:** Yes, and G4S have now introduced that into their staff, into their management.
256. **Q.** They now identify people who are subject to lots of grievance hearings?
257. **Ms Checksfield:** Not grievance – serious complaints.
258. **Q.** Which are substantiated?
259. **Mr Gibson:** No, just subjects of complaints, so if you get three there is then an urgent intervention.
260. **Mr Marsden:** Just suspend you while –
261. **Ms Checksfield:** You have a conversation and you try and get it, because there is an innocent until proven guilty, but then you make a judgement call, whereas certainly in this case, G4S had not spotted, partly because I think there were a group of complaints. They hadn't spotted that one name had cropped up.
262. **Ms Lampard:** We have talked about this spike, which doesn't necessarily mean anything out of the ordinary in terms of how these spikes might happen. There is also people say that once the 60 extra beds came in there was a continuous increase in the assaults on staff - do you recognise that? They suggest that there used to be about 10 a month, and from January it went up to about 20 a month.
263. **Mr Gibson:** That is quite an increase.
264. **Q.** Do you recognise that?
265. **Mr Gibson:** I don't recognise that, no.
266. **Q.** Would you give us the figures they give you on the assault of staff? Could we have them?

267. **Ms Checksfield:** I would be very surprised – this is the trouble with all of this, it is all multi-causal and variable impact. Certainly, I hadn't noticed.
268. **Q.** It may not be true, but that is what we have been told. We haven't seen the figures.
269. **Ms Checksfield:** That is from January 2017?
270. **Q.** Yes. Then finally, because then we will let you off the hook, there clearly has been a period, maybe since the beginning, we can't quite tell yet, of quite an unstable senior management team at Brook House. That has led to a lot of grievances, and there being a lot of grievances. Relationship issues, dysfunctional, did you get a sense of that here? Did you understand that was going on?
271. **Ms Checksfield:** From my perspective I would say not. I have been in post now for four years. Ben Saunders has been there for all of that time, so I can say in those four years, and we have as good a relationship with G4S senior management as we have anywhere else, I trust them, I trust them to tell us if there are serious problems. Jerry Petherick was on the phone to me within about four and a half minutes of having received the *Panorama* letter, so there is no sense from us that they were holding back. There was certainly some form of grievance between the then centre manager and then manager of Tinsley House.
272. **Q.** Stacey Dean?
273. **Ms Checksfield:** No. Duncan Partridge, but that was managed in terms of special days with me and that is now about two years ago, and he has popped up somewhere else in Heathrow. I knew that Steve Skitt was brought in to give the senior team a bit of a security edge, because he had come from a prison background, but I wouldn't say that we would have picked that up, and I am not certain that we necessarily would here.
274. **Q.** That's fine.
275. **Mr Marsden:** On the link between Home Office, local and you, is there a clear link?
276. **Ms Checksfield:** With my team, yes.
277. **Q.** They might –
278. **Ms Checksfield:** Michelle might have –
279. **Mr Gibson:** Michelle Smith is our assistant director based at Gatwick. Michelle will have a much clearer sense of whether or not there were fractures and divisions within the team. Ben Saunders was a very different person to Steve Skitt, very different background. Lee Hanford is different again, and Sarah Newland is different from all of them.
280. **Ms Checksfield:** Thinking back again, has Michelle escalated the issues within the senior management team to me or Alan as something we should be concerned about? The answer is no, and what I have seen, about 18 months ago, when Jerry Petherick rang me up and said "I really hate to do this to you, but we are under such pressure at the moment, they will accept Ben Saunders back", because Ben Saunders was the last centre director who managed Medway properly, and they agreed to him going back for six months. I said "I will only agree to him going back for six months if you provide a properly experienced interim manager, because I am not having one of my centres without a manager for six months". He produced Lee Hanford, who we all think did a good job, and there wasn't a sense of deep

disruption. Ben went, did six months at Medway, Lee managed that and then came back again.

**281. Ms Lampard:** Thank you. I suspect we might come back one more time later in the day when we have gathered a bit more, but for the moment, thank you very much indeed.

*[Interview concluded]*