

Private & Confidential

DPA

07 December 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to your letter dated 14 November 2016 regarding your concerns in relation to searching visitors and the areas you are detailed to carry out your duties. Further to this letter we met on the 17 November 2016 to discuss your letter and I have gone through them as below.

I understand fully from your perspective and I agree in principle the points you raise however in line with the operational requirements of the DSO regarding searching, male staff cannot search female visitors, detainee or staff. In carrying out a Level A or B search this is the criteria in line with the Equality Act. Assistant Custody Officers tend to be detailed in certain areas of the Centre according to their gender for example the Satellite Gate or Internal due to female visitors attending, this however proves to be difficult on occasions as we have a smaller group of female ACOs in comparison to your male colleagues. I intend to discuss this with the Oscar 1 and have subsequently sent out an email to all the DCMS regarding the detailing of female ACOs so a far greater variety roles can be considered to deploy to across the centre but ultimately due to our operational commitment to certain specific roles that would require a female member of staff to be deployed to this cannot always be achieved.

You raised a point that there are never enough female staff. I agree with this given some are currently on maternity leave or long term sick or have moved on within the business. I will assess this via our next recruitment process for ACOs.

The points you have raised are valid and we do have staff on restricted duties which can assist the ACO group. I cannot resolve this situation immediately but as above will consider these actions to move forward and look at options that can be considered in line with our HR policies that could potentially increase the number of female staff within the ACO group.

You raised the point that male ACOs do not carry out some of their duties. I advised you to let me know who they are so I can look into these concerns in more detail.

You raised that point that you feel unsafe if you are on your own with visitors and they could be a rapist.

I advised you that we have to treat all our visitors in a courteous and decent manner and that they are considered as law abiding people with no specific known threat or risk to our staff.

You raised the point that you require a male presence in the Satellite Gate or Internal as there are generally two females present.

I agreed when we can have a mixture of both male and female in areas to be deployed effectively.

I agreed to raise this at the daily morning meetings and with the SMT.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to raise your concerns and coming to meet with me and discuss them and by addressing these points I have outlined I hope will assist you in the points you have raised moving forward.

Please do not hesitate to contact me further regarding the above or any other concerns you may have.

Yours sincerely

Steve Skitt
Deputy Director
G4S Central Government Services