

IN THE BROOK HOUSE INQUIRY

INDIVIDUAL CLOSING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF REVEREND NATHAN WARD

1. Participation in this Inquiry has been highly important to Reverend Nathan Ward. After all, he had been trying – *for years* – to ensure that those with the power to take action and the general public were aware of the issues that were occurring at Brook House. Those efforts came at significant personal cost to Reverend Ward. Nevertheless, he persevered in the belief that one day someone with the power to do something about the problems at Brook House would listen, understand and take action to bring about swift and systemic change. As stated on behalf of Reverend Ward in his oral Closing Statement, such change is required for the sake of humanity, because the system as it existed during his employment with G4S, during the relevant period and indeed as it still exists today can only be described as barbaric.¹
2. Of course, this is not the first time that issues relating to immigration detention and the rights of immigration detainees have been examined. However, this *is* the first statutory public inquiry of its kind. Anyone with an interest in the way in which our society detains people under immigration powers and the way in which immigration detainees are (mis)treated, is likely to be paying close attention to the outcome of this inquiry. It is this Inquiry, therefore, which represents an opportunity to ensure that no other person is exposed to the same suffering of those detained at Brook House in the past and present. Plainly that would be in the interests of us all, including the relevant state and corporate bodies (even if they deny it).
3. Immigration detention is being used far too much and for far too long. A monetised system leads to a focus on profits above all else. Accountability is absent, uses of force often abusive and unlawful, self-harm endemic, and the toxic culture permitted to prevail. The system is broken and the only way to truly fix it is to dismantle it.

¹ [Oral Closing Statement on behalf of Reverend Nathan Ward 05 April 2022 53/18-21](#)

Overview of this individual Closing Statement

4. The Chair is referred to the Closing Statement on Behalf of D1527, Reverend Ward, D1851, D1914, D2077, D1538, D643 3 May 2022 (“the Group Closing Statement”). The Group Closing Statement contains detailed submissions on many of the issues at Brook House, as identified by Reverend Ward in his evidence to this Inquiry.
5. This individual Closing Statement will deal with the following:
 - (1) Fact-finding in relation to Reverend Ward’s evidence
 - (2) The evidence:
 - The hostile environment
 - Institutional racism
 - Toxic, masculine and bullish culture
 - Dehumanisation
 - Use of force
 - Responsibility for the issues at Brook House
 - The Home Office
 - G4S
 - (3) Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned
6. Reverend Ward invites the Chair to review the following alongside this Closing Statement:
 - (1) First Witness Statement of Reverend Nathan Ward 10 November 2021; Exhibits to First Witness Statement of Reverend Nathan Ward 10 November 2021²
 - (2) Second Witness Statement of Reverend Nathan Ward 23 November 2021³
 - (3) Opening Statement on behalf of Reverend Nathan Ward 25 November 2021⁴
 - (4) Transcript of Oral Evidence of Reverend Nathan Ward, 7 December 2021⁵

² [DL0000141](#); DL0000140 (adduced on the Brook House Inquiry’s website in four parts: [one](#), [two](#), [three](#) and [four](#))

³ [DL0000154](#)

⁴ [Opening Statement on behalf of Nathan Ward 25 November 2021 54/9-64/14](#)

⁵ [Reverend Nathan Ward 7 December 2021 128/20-202/24](#)

(5) Third Witness Statement of Reverend Nathan Ward 09 February 2022⁶

(6) Phase 2 Oral Closing Submissions Transcript 05 April 2022⁷

Fact-finding in relation to Reverend Ward's evidence

7. Reverend Ward is a witness of truth. He invites the Chair to accept his evidence as true in its entirety. The evidence provided by Reverend Ward has been credible and reliable. His evidence has not only been internally consistent in terms of what he has told this Inquiry and what he said about Brook House previously; it has been supported by large swathes of other evidence the Inquiry has heard about what Brook House was like and the serious issues within it. In other words, Reverend Ward has been proved right about numerous issues and there can be no criticism of the evidence he has given.
8. Reverend Ward's evidence therefore provides "*sufficiently strong, clear and concordant inferences or similar unrebutted presumptions of fact*". Further, it is "*elaborate and consistent ... mentioning the specific elements ... credible and reasonably detailed*".⁸ The evidence provided by Reverend Ward is very "*clear and detailed*", "*other similar unrebutted facts have been established*", his "*account of [systemic] mistreatment [is] consistent with [all] other account[s] ... [he] has given [and] with other evidence independent of his account*". There is wide-ranging "*evidence...to support [Reverend Ward's] complaint[s] of mistreatment [of detainees and issues of a systemic nature]*" of high "*quality*". In relation to Reverend Ward's evidence, there are instances where "*rebuttal evidence ought to have existed and does not*" and he invites the Chair to draw appropriate "*inferences...from their absence*".⁹
9. On the evidence, it is open to the Chair to find that witnesses whose evidence contradicts that of Reverend Ward have not only been inaccurate but, where appropriate, that they have been dishonest. In cases where witnesses have sought to minimise or explain away the issues at Brook House as isolated incidents involving a small number of people, Reverend Ward urges the Chair to find that such witnesses are wrong: the issues *are* structural, cultural, organisational, political and systemic.

⁶ [DL0000225](#)

⁷ INQ000195_0013-0014

⁸ 18e, CTI Note on Approach to Findings of Fact under Art 3 ECHR 250322

⁹ 18g of CTI Note on Approach to Findings of Fact under Art 3 ECHR 250322

The evidence

The hostile environment

10. The starting point for considering how Brook House came to be such a horrific and abusive place is the governmental policy surrounding it. The foundation upon which Brook House was built is the political rhetoric surrounding the ‘hostile environment’ and which by 2012 had hardened and become institutionalised in the Home Office’s official hostile environment policy with extensive primary legislation to implement it.¹⁰ In evidence to this Inquiry, Reverend Ward made the link between the hostile environment and some of the issues at Brook House as follows:

“...why would you raise concerns to the Home Office, which hire advertising buses to drive around our streets telling people to go home or get arrested? Why would you raise complaints about the hostilities of staff against detainees when you had the Home Secretary herself stating that she wanted a hostile environment? Who can you turn to that actually cares? And that very reason is why we are stood here today in a public inquiry, because, seemingly, no-one did care”¹¹

11. And:

“25. In the context of the ‘hostile environment’ and its intensification, Brook House IRC in particular, became a focal point in effecting removals as the Home Office’s main centre for the use of Charter Flights. Brook House was also reflective of the ‘hostile environment’, where the contract was geared to ensure removals were not hampered by contract failures and where penalties were placed on anything that prevented deportation, such as not producing a detainee for an immigration interview on time or not presenting them when required for escort.

...

27. I believe it is the mix of the Home Office led hostile policies, coupled with the commercial priorities of a company like G4S, which embedded an institutional culture of dehumanisation and impunity which ultimately led to the abuse of detainees uncovered in the Panorama programme. I firmly believe it is the system which drives behaviours of individuals and not a few ‘bad apples’ that have slipped through the net.”¹²

¹⁰ Immigration and Asylum Act 2014 and Immigration and Asylum Act 2016,

¹¹ [Nathan Ward, 189/2-14](#)

¹² [DL0000141_0010](#)

12. Further, the physical environment of Brook House symbolically reflected the aims of the hostile environment rhetoric and policy; it was quite literally a hostile environment for both detainees and staff. Reverend Ward stated:

“130... staff at Brook House... worked in the prison-like environment where ventilation, light and acoustics are poor, where there are few windows and with a brutal physical setting which was often excessively noisy and chaotic leading to alienation and stress. Against the backdrop of cultural and political hostility, this makes for an extremely pressurised working environment.

131. In my opinion, working for G4S in Brook House had parallels with working in a military environment. The language used is similar to that of a battlefield: including the 'us' vs 'them' mentality, and the environment had similar stressors. These included foreign culture and language, distance from family and friends, unreliable communication tools, unclear mission or changing mission (whether acting as a safeguarder' such as preventing a person from harming themselves or as an 'enforcer' to effect their removal — or sometimes doing these roles simultaneously), unclear norms or standards of behaviour, long periods of repetitive work, overall mission or purpose not understood as worthwhile or important, real risk of harm and long working hours.”¹³

13. It was also reflected in the fact that Brook House is a primary centre for no notice Charter Flight removals as a key component of the enforcement element of the hostile environment policy. Reverend Ward describes this as follows¹⁴:

“23. A key part of the 'hostile environment' was more aggressive policies in respect of the use of detention and a drive to increase removals, with an increased use of Charter Flights¹⁵ and policies in which individuals would be given 'removal windows' (where detained persons would be given 72 hours' notice that they could be removed without further warning over the next three months) instead of the exact date of their removal.”¹⁶

14. Reverend Ward also described that the number of Charter Flights that took place outside of normal working hours at Brook House put “*huge pressure on the IRC*”¹⁷, increased the use of E Wing “*to transfer people prior to removal, to keep disruption low during Charter flights*”¹⁸ and was

¹³ [DL0000141_0043](#).

¹⁴ [DL0000141_0043](#).

¹⁵ The IMB Annual Report (May 2021) focus's heavily on the adverse and inhumane impacts of the intensification of the use of Charter flights on detainees held at Brook House in 2020 (**Annex 10**).

¹⁶ FB (Afghanistan) & Anor, R (On the Application Of) v SSHD [2020] EWCA Civ 1338 in which this policy was found to be unlawful.

¹⁷ [DL0000141_0043 \[121\]](#)

¹⁸ [DL0000141_0043 \[273\]](#)

emphasised as of high priority in Home Office interactions with G4S management.¹⁹ The evidence of Lee Hanford, the Centre Director was that the same pressures were in play in 2016. Mr. Hanford described how the Home Office would withhold information about Charter flights even from G4S, telling only a few custody staff about the actual details, and instructing them to lie about the plans in order to ensure that the flight went ahead.²⁰ Mr. Hanford identified this as a “*significant contributing factor*” to the increased use of force at Brook House²¹ which was also documented in the HMIP’s 2016 report on Brook House²² and the IMB report for 2017 which they were already warning could give rise to *inhumane treatment on the basis of the “uncertainty with the psychological stresses that brings”*.²³

15. Like other witnesses²⁴ to this Inquiry, Reverend Ward drew a parallel with the experience of Charter Flight removals documented by the IMB in 2020 and explains his experience of their impact and importantly the link between Charter flight removals and the use of force:

“319. The notice states that the IMB have evidence that the concentrated programme of Charter flights in 2020 “indicates a series of issues ... collectively and cumulatively having an unnecessary, severe and continuing impact on detainees, particularly those facing removal on charter flights, as well as across the detainee population as a whole. We believe that the cumulative effect of these concerns amounts to inhumane treatment”. It documents an increase in the number of vulnerable detainees, high incidence of self-harm requiring use of ACDT and generally causing high levels of stress and anxiety. It also documents the breakdown in the Rule 35 process and people being removed when on ACDT and at risk of self-harm/ suicide.

320. It was clear to me that the Charter Flight removals when I worked there had adverse impacts on detainees. I would, however, also add, as I have sought to indicate above, that the pressures relating to Charter Flight and removals had a wider impact on the system and staff within the IRC because they are so politically charged and central to meeting the targets of importance to the government. Removals were often the occasions where use of force of the kind I have described above, was likely to be routinely used as the default including on vulnerable detainees with significant mental health issues, as it was in 2017 both in transfers to the CSU and for flights. I am, therefore, surprised that the concerns don’t go wider than the impact on mental health, although that is obviously serious in itself. In light of what was exposed by Panorama, this is a concern to me. Either way, it does seem to indicate that some

¹⁹ [DL0000141_0043](#)

²⁰ [Lee Hanford 15 March 2022, 87/11-25 and 88/1.](#)

²¹ [Lee Hanford, 15 March 2022, 87/3-10.](#)

²² HMIP Report on an unannounced inspection of Brook House IRC (2016), HMIP000552_0025§1.54.

²³ IMB Annual Report for reporting Year 2017, (Published May 2018), [VER000138_0023 §11.2.](#)

²⁴ Medical Justice ; [Emma Ginn \[144\], BHM000041_0052](#)

of the same toxic mix of factors I raised concerns about and in play in 2017 are still operating and significantly have been assessed to risk treatment in breach of Article 3 ECHR by the IMB. I have not seen any response from the Home Office to know if it is any different from the past, whether it continues to ignore the evidence of harm of its practices in detention and instead continues to put political imperatives above fundamental rights and the welfare of individuals.”²⁵

16. Reverend Ward gave his written evidence to the Inquiry on 10 November 2021. The Inquiry now has additional material provided as a result of an investigation into the events in Brook House during 2020 by Liberty and reported in the Observer newspaper.²⁶ This is addressed in the later evidence served on behalf of Medical Justice.²⁷ Reverend Ward notes that his concerns about the correlation between the high incidence of people with vulnerability detained for removals on Charter flight, the increase in use of force and treatment in breach of Article 3 ECHR appears to be borne out. The documents provided by Liberty state that there were 98 use of force reports completed by custody staff between 1 August and 31 November 2020, when the population at Brook House was almost a quarter of its normal occupancy of about 100 people. Notably on 62 occasions force was used to prevent self-harm. There were also 17 complaints about staff behaviour between 20 May 2020 and 31 December 2020. It is understood that SERCO warned the Home Office in monthly updates that incidents of self-harm linked to the Charter flight programmes “were driving up rates [of] use of force.”²⁸
17. It is also now known from the evidence of Mary Molyneux, the current Chair of the IMB to the Inquiry, that the response to the Rule 61 DCR Notice of the Home Office was woeful and wholly inadequate. When asked in oral evidence she said:

“There was nothing. Not even an acknowledgment. I mean I knew they had it because we copied in our people. And then I think nearly six weeks later this response comes in. I don’t think it was coincidental that it was received on the day we were giving evidence before the HASC.”²⁹

²⁵ [DL0000141_0043](#).

²⁶ ‘Suicidal asylum seekers subjected to ‘dangerous’ use of force by guards at detention centre’, 26 December 2021, The Observer, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/dec/26/suicidal-asylum-seekers-subjected-to-dangerous-use-of-force-by-guards-at-detention-centre>

²⁷ [Witness Statement of Emma Ginn \[139-145\] BHM000041_0051-0052](#)

²⁸ [Witness Statement of Emma Ginn \[144\] BHM000041_52](#)

²⁹ [Mary Molyneux 25 March 2022 162/1-13](#)

18. And:

“You know, it was a concern about safety, that there is going to be more of this if you persist. It was about process. ‘We have the right, we have the process’, so there is just a total disconnect and not, in my view, acknowledgement of the problem and the issues we had raised.”³⁰

19. This Inquiry is invited to find that the answers to the two question posed by Reverend Ward at the end of paragraph 320 of his First Witness Statement, as to whether the response from the Home Office is any different from the past is plainly ‘no’. As to whether the Home Office *“continues to ignore the evidence of harm of its practices in detention and instead continues to put political imperatives above fundamental rights and the welfare of individuals”*, the answer must be a resounding ‘yes’.

20. This, therefore, entirely accords with Reverend Ward’s evidence that the political context of the hostile environment means that policies and procedures for safeguarding are deprioritised and willfully ignored. People were and are detained when they ought not to be and the very systems and processes purportedly designed to protect vulnerable people systemically fail and had no prospect of being effective with consequent inevitable harm for those detained. Reverend Ward said:

“284...I was very clear that policies external to the centre were not being followed by staff. I understand the safeguarding policy completed in relation to children was developed into a safeguarding policy for vulnerable adults too. It is clear from the Panorama documentary on Brook House that policies set in place to protect vulnerable people were not followed. Furthermore, it should be understood that no policies or procedures can ultimately protect vulnerable people who find themselves in an institution in which they should not be held, and which is operated as a hostile environment.”³¹

21. Further, in oral evidence to this Inquiry, Reverend Ward stated:

“A... Welfare is addressed within the contract, but, actually, when you look at the performance points awarded, it’s very evident that, actually, welfare is an addendum opposed to the raison d’etre, as it were. It’s clear that from the Home Office’s point of view, the removal centre was there to remove people from the country, and it’s that whole overarching conflict between having

³⁰ [Mary Molyneux 25 March 2022 163/1-21](#)

³¹ [DL0000141_0099](#).

*an open policy of a hostile environment whilst having a detention centre rule that says it should be humane. "Hostile" and "humane" aren't really used in the same sentence."*³²

22. The hostile environment therefore shaped the culture at Brook House and is a key cause in Reverend Ward's view of the inhumane environment at Brook House and the abuse and mistreatment of detainees that has taken place there. He stated in his written evidence to this Inquiry:

*"352...I believe that 'humane' and 'hostile' are simply two words that don't go together. They are incongruent, opposites and incompatible. A system designed to be hostile is a system that cannot be humane. It's that simple."*³³

23. The influence of the hostile environment is one of the key reasons that Reverend Ward considers the Home Office, as well as G4S, culpable for the multiple atrocities that occurred at Brook House. Reverend Ward invites the Chair to make findings to that effect.

Institutional racism

24. It is impossible to separate the politics of the hostile environment from institutional racism. A policy of a hostile environment has racism and xenophobia at its core. Reverend Ward said of the term 'institutional racism' in oral evidence to this Inquiry:

*"...So institutional racism, from my perspective, is where you have engrained in the DNA, the fabric of the institution, the overarching culture of separation of racism as well, and when we study racism and the sociology behind it, the new forms of institutional racism as well, where we refer to groups based on nationality and kind of conflate that down, is how I would describe it..."*³⁴

25. From the evidence this Inquiry has heard, from Reverend Ward and others, racism was *"engrained in [its] DNA [and] the fabric of the institution"*³⁵. Reverend Ward said:

³² [Nathan Ward, 7 December 2021, 144/11-21.](#)

³³ [DL0000141_0124](#)

³⁴ [Nathan Ward, 7 December 2021, 176/11-18.](#)

³⁵ [Nathan Ward, 7 December 2021, 176/11-18.](#)

“147...Given the make-up of Brook House and the diversity levels of staff and detainees, I would also say that...dehumanisation contributed to the institutionalised racism that was present in Brook House.

*...
149. As I have explained in detail, I do not believe that even the contractual arrangements provided the resources and regime to ensure an appropriate and professional service to people, who by their very nature are 'non-white British', but also who are vilified and demonised as a group and hidden away from society and the general population.”*³⁶

26. On the question of diversity amongst staff at Brook House, Reverend Ward gave evidence about a stakeholder survey which was carried out in April 2013³⁷, in which 34.4% of respondents stated that they were White British, while 35.7% of respondents stated that they were White English, which in his view inevitably impacted upon the culture of Brook House and the racism present within it.³⁸
27. The same survey identified high levels of racism and discrimination in the perception of Brook House staff³⁹, which supplements the evidence of current and former Brook House staff members such as Conway Edwards⁴⁰ and Shayne Monroe⁴¹ about the discrimination they experienced based on race.
28. Although Reverend Ward did not personally witness some of the overtly racist language that was clearly being used at Brook House (about which this Inquiry has heard substantial evidence and is collated in an Annex to the Group Closing Statement) he provided evidence to this Inquiry that during his employment with G4S he witnessed the use of “*cultural stereotypes*” based on nationality. He further noted that staff used these stereotypes or generalisations to manage the population, which was “*an important feature of the ‘us and them’ mentality*” at the heart of the institutional racism operating at Brook House.⁴²

³⁶ [DL0000141_0051](#).

³⁷ DL0000142 – not published on Inquiry website

³⁸ [DL000061_0052](#).

³⁹ [DL000061_0053-54](#).

⁴⁰ [Conway Edwards, SER000459_0014-0015](#)

⁴¹ [Shayne Munroe, 4 March 2022, 29-30/19-25, 1-2](#)

⁴² [DL000061_0052, Para 154](#)

29. A clear example of the effect of such a mentality and the pervasive nature of racism at Brook House can be seen in the evidence of Dan Small, when he said to this Inquiry:

“...I had never made any racist remarks until I became a DCO at Brook House and witnessed the casual use of racist language by those around me, including some managers, on a daily basis. As an impressionable and emotionally immature young man, I felt subject to peer pressure to adopt this language and behaviour in order to impress colleagues...”⁴³

30. Reverend Ward’s evidence of the culture at Brook House as institutionally racist was supported by the evidence that Professor Bosworth gave to this Inquiry. She said:

“So here I’m talking about how -- I mean, I suppose I’m basically talking about racism, but it’s -- I think -- I mean, I’ve certainly seen this in my research and it was evident in the material that I read and watched for the inquiry that, you know, in a circumstance where the officers find it very hard to actually have a meaningful interaction with people, then what they often rely on are just views that they would already have about the national group, and so you sort of see this in, you know, generalised comments about particular nationalities, which I think -- so -- and I think that’s the predominant form that racism takes in IRCs. It’s not that often -- at least, in my experience, it hasn’t been that often that people will necessarily use a racial epithet in a discussion with a detained person because, you know, most people know that that’s, you know, not on. But what they will do is they will kind of generalise about all -- you know, “All Albanians are like this, all Jamaicans are like that”. That view is racist, but, also, that view makes it very hard for them to actually deal with the person in front of them as an individual.”⁴⁴

31. Reverend Ward invites the Chair to explicitly find Brook House and the hostile environment policy that impacted upon it institutionally racist. It is within such an inherently inhumane and degrading environment that mistreatment and abuse occurs with impunity.

⁴³ [Dan Small, BDP000003_0008, Para 23](#)

⁴⁴ [Mary Bosworth, 29 March 2022, 35-36/7-25, 1-4](#)

Toxic, masculine and bullish culture

32. A culture of racism was not the only degrading aspect of the institutional culture which had a severe impact on Brook House and in turn on the people detained there. In Reverend Ward's written evidence to this Inquiry, he stated:

"159. The assaults and abuse we witness in the Panorama are a gross manifestation of the institutional corrupt and toxic culture...Whilst the footage inevitably focuses on a core group of staff, in my experience, it is likely the behaviour of staff was perpetuated by the system in which they were working in. It represents a system in which members of staff felt confident enough to take this action and even cover up outrageous abuse without repercussion. I see this core group as the people who exercised the 'physical' sense of power, who would be relied on to attend incidents and to take the lead on using force but, I do not believe from my knowledge that they could have conducted themselves in this way without the wider institutional culture of dehumanization and othering that was at play, which made this conduct accepted by many more staff."

160. I think it is important to recognise that individuals behaving like this are likely to become the dominant group in part at least in response to fear and the threat from the unsafe environment that was also a prominent feature of the experience of Brook House; with insufficient staff numbers, training and skills to properly and safely manage the population. This was evident when I was working there between 2012 and 2014 but other factors such as prevalence of illegal drugs and additional numbers of detainees would only have exacerbated the levels of fear and threat and general chaos experienced by staff in later years. In this context, the mentality of 'us and them'...intensifies further and contributes to more conflict and tension, and a reliance on those with physical power and dominance among the staff group whose behaviour then becomes normalised and accepted..."⁴⁵

33. Reverend Ward also said this in his evidence to this Inquiry:

"174. The truth is, there was a limited pool of staff that we were able to recruit from. A majority of staff had few qualifications, many came from baggage handling at Gatwick airport, and they were working in complex and institutionally corrupt environments with people with complex needs, many of whom should not have been in detention at all if the Home Office was doing its job properly. The DCOs would rise through the ranks to become DCMs and there was an entrenched culture which did not benefit from fresh perspectives. This was worsened by the fact that G4S had a recruitment scheme whereby if you recruited someone and they remained in the job for a certain amount of time, you would receive £250. This encouraged staff to recruit their friends, which would inevitably entrench these cultures."

⁴⁵ [DL0000141_0055](#)

...

176. I raised that the institutional culture at Brook House was poor and unprofessional during my employment and upon my resignation. It was frustrating because the culture was accepted and entrenched and I saw no inclination by senior managers to do anything about it. There was also no apparent incentives placed on those above them from the Home Office or GAS to change the culture. The combination of a lack of strong, principled leadership and indifference meant there was no real counter balance to all the factors that created this toxic environment and which lead to a culture of impunity and an accountability deficit which I fear is still in place today without some radical changes having taken place”⁴⁶

34. The toxic and masculine culture was even a feature of the training on control and restraint. Reverend Ward stated in his evidence to this Inquiry:

“232. The toxic masculine culture which filtered down to GAS was evident. I witnessed staff being trained in degrading ways such as forcing them to dress up in boiler suits and helmets to do chin-ups, with press-ups if they made mistakes. I complained about the C&R training to Wayne Debnam and Ben Saunders at the time as I felt it was inappropriate, humiliating, and set the wrong culture for the centre. They stopped the warm-up practices for a certain period of time. I complained about the C&R training more than anything, as I saw it as being central to the running of Brook House, which to my mind was wrong and perpetuated a negative, macho-aggressive culture.”⁴⁷

35. Despite the culture of Brook House being clear for all to see, and despite Reverend Ward raising concerns about it during the course of his employment⁴⁸, mostly nothing was done about it. Reverend Ward said:

“162...I would say that the general culture and ethos was known but largely unmonitored and unchallenged in Brook House... There was no effective method or time for the culture and practice to be reviewed and challenged. It was not a priority or on the agenda at Brook House. The focus was much more on finances and meeting the Home Office's objectives around removal and responding to that pressure...

...

164. Generally in Brook House, there was a toxic-masculine and bullish culture. From the perspective of the staff themselves, the toxic and corrupt institutional culture, mired by bullying

⁴⁶ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0052-62.](#)

⁴⁷ [Nathan Ward, DL00000141_0082](#)

⁴⁸ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0052-62.](#)

*and dominance, is exemplified in the internal stakeholder survey I completed in around April 2013...*⁴⁹

36. In confirmation of Reverend Ward's perception of the culture at Brook house, Michelle Brown said in her evidence to this Inquiry that she *"would describe the culture amongst SMT as stressful, male orientated and untrusting"*⁵⁰ (see also her grievance), while Derek Murphy said, *"I can't remember would told me to man up, but that was the culture there: you either put up or shut up"*⁵¹ and Owen Syred described a *"culture of laddish behaviour among large numbers of DCOs."*⁵²
37. Reverend Ward invites the Chair to find that Brook House was plagued by a dominant toxic, masculine and bullish culture, which enabled the mistreatment of detainees to occur with impunity and that there was a clear failure by G4S and the Home Office to take any appropriate action in the face of that which was obvious.

Dehumanisation

38. It is clear how a system designed to be hostile, which is defined by institutional racism and a toxic, masculine and bullish culture, leads to the dehumanisation of those unfortunate enough to find themselves detained at Brook House. Reverend Ward said in his written evidence to this Inquiry:

"137. The dehumanisation of detainees was perpetuated by language of 'othering' which was fed down through Home Office hostile policies to the IRC. Individuals were referred to as 'detainees' rather than 'residents'; and the 'rooms' looked like and were called 'cells' by staff. This dehumanised prison-style language could also be seen in the phrases used for the night state ("bang up" and "lock down") and removal from association (being sent to "the block"). During Charter Flights, staff would refer to individuals as being 'loaded' onto flights, as if they were cargo. This dehumanisation of detainees which was present when I was employed there is seen so often and repeatedly in the Panorama footage (both in the documentary, the wider unused footage and the transcripts) and in such graphic terms that there can be no other

⁴⁹ [Nathan Ward, DL00000141_0055-0056](#)

⁵⁰ Michelle Brown, INQ000164_0011, Para 14 – relevant page not published on Website

⁵¹ [Derek Murphy, 2 March 2022, 8/14-15](#)

⁵² [Owen Syred, INN000007_0026, Para 109](#)

conclusion that the language used by staff and the disgraceful treatment of detainees can be nothing other than standard and accepted practice.

...

141. I believe the design of the centre and the processing of detainees in a functional way also contributed to their dehumanisation. The physical layout of Brook House is plain and designed around the task of processing individuals. When placed in this setting from the outset, detainees are depersonalised; they are provided an identity number, have their personal belongings removed and given generic, institutional clothing (if they do not have their own) and bedding. Staff interact with detainees often using their identity cards to get information required, which dissuades human interaction. Care is formalised and staff only see detainees during 'wing office opening hours'. This subtly reinforced the idea that staff did not care as people, and only as a function. Only in that context can you understand how the staff could treat detainees, not only in such a manner that was seen at its most extreme in the Panorama documentary, but also in the more repeated mundane day-to-day regime - disrespect was hard wired in.

...

143. From my experiences at Brook House, I also witnessed a culture of perceiving non-compliant detainee behaviours as disobedience rather than a manifestation of trauma or distress. Disturbed behaviour was also seen as non-complaint, deliberately disruptive or attention seeking rather than symptoms of mental illness.”⁵³

39. There is a synergy between Reverend Ward’s views based on his direct experience of working at Brook House and Professor Mary Bosworth’s account of ‘prisonisation’. Professor Bosworth said in evidence to this Inquiry:

“...I think it’s quite clear that it did affect the treatment of detainees because I think what it does, if you put people – if you lock people up in a building that looks like a prison, you tell those people and the people who are looking after them that they are criminals, and so then there’s a sort of symbolism to it, which I think you – in Brook House, we also – there’s a lot of evidence to show that that kind of symbolism was reinforced in the training materials, in the language that people were using. It’s also reinforced by the fact that there are some people in Brook House, at any given time, who have served a criminal sentence in a prison. So they get kind of bundled together in explanations for who the detained population are. I think – I mean, I refer to it in my report as ‘prisonisation’, the idea that the custody officers are actually working in an institution that was effectively a prison with people who were, therefore, criminal and dangerous”⁵⁴

⁵³ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0047-0049](#)

⁵⁴ [Mary Bosworth, 29 March 2022, 13/7-14/2](#)

40. Echoing what Reverend Ward had to say about the military-style nature of working at Brook House⁵⁵, Professor Bosworth said:

- “... I think the use of counter-terrorism language around ‘conditioning’ or even, you know, the terminology of ‘security incident reports’, I think that is also present in prisons. I think that – I think, in a removal centre, that sort of language does quite a lot of damage because it elides populations that are actually really distinct but which are easy to push together because of, you know, nationality, actually, and also sometimes because of racism... So I think there’s a way in which it becomes very easy to move from national stereotypes to sort of fears around terrorism, which then, of course, just distance the population.”⁵⁶

41. Further, the evidence of Dr Brodie Paterson also provides support for Reverend Ward’s views on the dehumanisation of detainees at Brook House. Dr Paterson gave the following evidence to this Inquiry:

“106. De-humanisation is more likely to happen more where the victim is already a member of a marginalised or stigmatised group or where action is justified on the basis of the transgressions of that individual or group. As Arendt (1951) observed, labelling in some circumstances creates ‘moral distance’. This serves to render those affected by the label less than human and thus undeserving of the natural human pity that might otherwise serve to prevent abuse. Unfortunately, there is little doubt that a series of narratives have served over time to distance or other asylum seekers from ‘us’ (van Dijk, 2000a, van Dijk 2000b). Of particular significance to the context of an IRC such as Brook house is a theme in the narrative distinguishing between ‘genuine’ asylum seekers, i.e. those seeking refuge and bogus asylum seekers framed as only entering the country for economic benefits and deserving of sanction and punishment (Layton-Henry, 1992; Sales, 2002 Greenslade, 2005). This narrative has gained prominence as a result of UK government policy since 2012, which has sought to create a ‘hostile environment’. The aim being to create a life “so unbearable for undocumented migrants that they would voluntarily choose to leave” as their access to public services becomes increasingly restricted (University of Portsmouth, 2021: n.p.). Central to the frame underpinning the policy is that of threat. Immigration is depicted as threatening British values, culture and living standards, public services, and security through rising extremism and criminality (Hubbard 2005). Community integration and public order are framed as being at risk if tough action is not taken (Goodman 2008). These themes are considerably more heightened in discussions of non-white and more culturally distinct individuals (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017).”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ [DL0000141_0043](#).

⁵⁶ [Mary Bosworth, 29 March 2022, 37/22-38/5](#)

⁵⁷ [Dr Brodie Paterson, BHM000045_0024, Para 106](#)

42. The dehumanisation of detainees, which from the evidence the Inquiry has heard, was the dominant attitude amongst staff at Brook House, manifests in various ways, including the routine use of violent, abusive and derogatory language towards and about detainees (further details of which are contained in the Group Closing Statement) but also critically in the use of force.

Use of force

43. Reverend Ward, who himself witnessed or became aware of inappropriate force being used at Brook House during his employment with G4S⁵⁸, explained that there was a generalised problematic approach to use of force, where force was used for convenience, against detainees who were mentally unwell and excessive (and therefore unlawful) force was used.⁵⁹
44. Dr Rachael Bingham gave evidence to this Inquiry which supported Reverend Ward's view, when she said:

*"...we are talking about an environment which has a known negative impact on mental health. So where behaviours like self-harm, like distress, like mental health problems are treated as challenging behaviour, so an inappropriate response, that leads to escalating mental health problems, increased risks of self-harm. It's a perfect storm, and, in that situation, we have people that are then unqualified to manage. Their only recourse is use of force, solitary confinement. They don't have the capacity to do a therapeutic intervention. So the possible responses are going to be inappropriate. I don't think it is possible to separate that from the abuses that we see."*⁶⁰

45. Demonstrating the endemic nature of the unlawful use of force at Brook House, and providing support for Reverend Ward's direct experience and perception, Jon Collier told this Inquiry in oral evidence that over half of the use of force incidents he reviewed gave cause for concern.⁶¹ Mr Collier also told the Inquiry that most of the video footage he viewed of use of force incidents raised major concerns⁶², suggesting that, had more footage been available, the

⁵⁸ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0086, Para 243](#)

⁵⁹ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0080-0095](#)

⁶⁰ [Dr. Rachael Bingham 14 March 2022 55/3-15](#)

⁶¹ [Jon Collier, 30 March 2022, 9-10/23-25, 1-10](#)

⁶² [Jon Collier, 30 March 2022, 103-104/16-25, 1-6](#)

problem would be of an even bigger scale than he was able to identify from the material available to him.

46. Reverend Ward's evidence that the prison-based methods of use of force are inherently unsuitable for the immigration detention context and the vulnerable population⁶³:

*"237. I do not believe that C&R as a training package designed for prisons is suitable for IRCs (it can also be questioned in prisons). Instead, investment needs to be made in developing a system which is able to deal with conflict and violence within residential settings, which has a stronger focus on prevention, de-escalation and the ethical use of force. Staff should also receive as much training in crisis communications as they do any physical restraint methods. I fully acknowledge that at times, there is a need for restraint techniques, but they should be considered a part of the wider system, not the focus. Models such as MMPR should be developed for use within IRCs and other adult contexts."*⁶⁴

47. The evidence of Reverend Ward coincides with the expert opinion of Dr Brodie Paterson as to the inherent unsuitability of the control and restraint prison-based methods⁶⁵ and his conclusion that a "*fundamental rethink*"⁶⁶ of the model for the use of force is required. Mr Collier also agreed.⁶⁷ So did Dr Bingham.⁶⁸ Reverend Ward invites the Inquiry to come to the same conclusion. However, he is also clear that the primary solution is to ensure an environment that is not dominated by routine resort to force and in particular as a means to 'manage' vulnerable people in distress, self-harming and suicidal. Reverend Ward is clear that vulnerable people including victims of torture and with a mental illness should not be in detention at all if a humane and effective detention policy was in place:

*"238. In my view, this was beyond the expertise and training of IRC staff. From my experience, if the person has symptoms of mental illness that require C&R to manage them, that is clear evidence that they are unsuitable to be detained and can't be safely and humanely managed in the detention environment. This is all the more the case if the behavior being managed is self-harm and suicide risk."*⁶⁹

⁶³ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0084-0085](#)

⁶⁴ [DL0000141_0084](#)

⁶⁵ [BHM000045_0010-11](#) [17, 36, 45-47]

⁶⁶ [BHM000045_0005](#) [29]

⁶⁷ [Jon Collier, 30 March 2022, 141/3-18 and 152/5-10](#)

⁶⁸ [Dr Bingham, BHM000033_0050](#), §133,

⁶⁹ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0084, Para 238](#)

Responsibility for the issues at Brook House

48. Reverend Ward is clear that both the Home Office (and by extension the Secretaries of State for the Home Department) and G4S are responsible for what happened at Brook House.

The Home Office

49. In addition to the Home Office setting policy and therefore the culture in Brook House, in Reverend Ward's view it is clear that the priority from Brook House's inception was costs-savings. GSL was selected to run Brook House at the lowest cost, despite clear issues with the bid, of which the Home Office was aware⁷⁰, including the very lengthy nighttime lock-ins⁷¹, safety of staffing levels during the night⁷² and activities provision.⁷³ Reverend Ward said the impact of this was as follows:

*"85. Although it is of course sound and prudent for a government body to seek value for money in procuring contracts when spending public funds, this is still a dramatic cost saving on their budget and led to what I experienced first and foremost that Brook House was under-resourced, under-staffed and with limited provision for detainees."*⁷⁴

50. In oral evidence to this Inquiry, Phil Riley accepted that costs were the key factor in the tendering process for Brook House:

*"But, you know, more widely, I accept the comments in terms of the 50 per cent costs, the 50 per cent value, the quality on there and, again, we have moved away from that in our new generation of contracts now and the costs are only 35 per cent of the assessment process, and quality and social and value are the other 65 per cent"*⁷⁵

⁷⁰ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0028, Para 84](#)

⁷¹ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0028, Para 86](#)

⁷² [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0028, Para 87](#)

⁷³ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0028, Para 86](#)

⁷⁴ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0028, Para 85](#)

⁷⁵ [Phil Riley, 4 April 2022, 35/14-20](#)

51. Further, and falling squarely within the remit of the Home Office, Brook House was designed and intended to be operated to detain people for no longer than 72 hours. Reverend Ward said:

“85. The bid submitted to run Brook House by GSL, and the proposals for how it would be operated, was prepared on the basis that it would only hold detainees for 72 hours.”

52. And:

“70... The contract also reflects the intention to use Brook House as a short term detention facility at 3.1 of Schedule D, which states that the throughput would be at least 2,500 detainees per month. The operating capacity for the centre at the beginning was 426 bed spaces. It is simply impossible to be able to accept and process 2,500 detainees a month with 426 bed spaces without only holding each detainee for a few days.”⁷⁶

53. Brook House was plainly not used in the manner it was intended, instead many detainees being detained there for much longer, which can only be attributed to the Home Office, as the detaining authority. In Reverend Ward’s view, this was a failure by the Home Office to meet its own policy objective, which led to people being detained at Brook House for long periods of time.⁷⁷

54. The prolonged nature of detention and the use of Brook House for it contributes to the mistreatment of detainees and therefore the Home Office’s practice of detaining people at Brook House is a contributory factor to the abuse. Reverend Ward further stated:

“73. The IRC was, therefore, clearly not designed for those facing longer periods of detention as it developed into in practice. In my view, this played a significant role in the regime, activities and welfare provision proposed by G4S which would inevitably be stricter and more basic when an individual was expected to only be there for 72 hours before departing the UK. It clearly also played a role in the specification and design of the building which in my experience is not conducive to humanely detaining individuals for any significant period. From my perspective, it was the failure of the Home Office to deliver their end of the deal, i.e. by only using Brook House as a 72-hour centre (for which they designed it) — or by at least updating the

⁷⁶ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0028, Para 85](#)

⁷⁷ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0024, Para 73](#)

procurement proposals when it became clear the centre would be used beyond 72 hours, that contributed to the issues that developed.”⁷⁸

55. Jerry Petherick also accepted that there were serious problems in detaining people at Brook House for longer than 72 hours as was the intention. He said in evidence to this Inquiry:

“But not as a category B prison, because a cat B prison would have far wider ranges of sporting activities, educational activities, et cetera. This was designed at a period following significant disturbances at particularly Harmondsworth and Colnbrook Removal Centres, where I know, from talking to people who responded to those disturbances, the physical structure of those removal centres meant that they were significantly more unsafe, fragile, put whatever word you like. So the Home Office, understandably, wanted to increase the security of the fabric, and this was designed as a short-term holding centre. As it developed, detainees were held there for longer, and that's really when the frailties of the design became apparent, with the lack of outdoor space, with sporting space, with sports halls, education. We did what we could to alleviate some of those issues. But the fact remained that the site was incredibly cramped, and so, as the length of detention increased, and as other factors came into play -- I've got no doubt we will talk at some stage about foreign national offenders, and so forth -- and that, again, increased the challenges. The fact that Brook House was adjacent to Gatwick meant that it was used for accumulations of detainees for charter flights, and so forth, and all of those factors interplayed on it.”⁷⁹

56. Professor Bosworth also gave evidence to this Inquiry about the use of Brook House to detain people for more than 72 hours:

“Q. One of the things we heard is, albeit it was designed to be a short-term holding facility, and at the same time built to a category B prison specification, because of the short-term policy or, at least, that was the underlying idea behind it, although it hasn't worked out that way, outside spaces were not built. Does that make a difference, given what you are telling us; in other words, there's not sufficient outside space for activity, fresh air?

A. Yes. I mean, I think it's very strange that Brook House was supposedly built just to hold people for 72 hours, because I don't really understand why you'd build a category B prison to hold somebody for 72 hours. It's very expensive. And there were other category B establishments at the time, which I think -- I think Colnbrook was always a category B establishment and it was not designed to hold people for 72 hours. I know it's on record saying it was built for that purpose, with that idea, but it seems a strange expenditure of public funds. You know, the category B design, yes, comes with a couple of concrete yards, and there's -- you know, there's not enough space. Brook House is right next to the runway at Gatwick, so it's extremely noisy,

⁷⁸ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0024, Para 73](#)

⁷⁹ [Jerry Petherick, 21 March 2022, 55/23-24](#)

you hear the planes landing and taking off all the time. It's a very, very harsh environment to be in.”⁸⁰

57. Reverend Ward’s view is that the Home Office, as the detaining authority and decision-maker, held sole responsibility for the contract and therefore it was the Home Office and the Home Office alone that had the power to call a halt to things. GSL and G4S (and now Serco), while directly responsible for their organisational failings, were contracted to do the will of the Home Office and as mere agents of the Home Office, they had no real power and, even if they had, they would not have exercised it for the benefit of detainees. For example, Steve Skitt said:

“Q. Was it anything that G4S could have put its foot down about and said, "No, this is not happening"?”

A. No, I wouldn't have thought so, no. We were providing what the customer had asked for.”⁸¹

G4S

58. While the Home Office was focused on costs-savings in the contract with GSL initially and then with G4S, the focus for G4S was profit. Reverend Ward noted in his evidence to this Inquiry:

“90. The contract was... set up to encourage GSL and later G4S to cost-cut further and to share any savings with the Home Office. Schedule S of the contract explicitly compels the contractor to look for cost savings and report them immediately to the Home Office. Therefore, if profit went above the original contracted price, G4S should declare that not as extra profit, but as a cost saving to the authority.”⁸²

59. Ben Saunders confirmed that the focus was on profit in his evidence to this Inquiry:

A. Well, there was certainly focus on contractual delivery and meeting contractual requirements, minimising any penalties through effective contract delivery, and there was a focus on profit.”⁸³

⁸⁰ [Mary Bosworth, 29 March 2022, 32/16-33/16](#)

⁸¹ [Steve Skitt, 17 March 2022, 134/18-21](#)

⁸² [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0031, Para 90](#)

⁸³ [Ben Saunders, 22 March 2022, 80/6-9](#)

60. Sarah Newlands told the Inquiry that deliberate under-staffing by Mr Saunders was evidence of G4S prioritising profit over welfare:

“Q. Do you think, then, that this [deliberate under-staffing by Ben Saunders] is evidence of prioritising profit by G4S over detainee welfare?

*Yes.”*⁸⁴

61. The extreme focus on profits was at the expense of the dignity and welfare of detainees at Brook House. For example, Reverend Ward gave evidence to this Inquiry about a plan notified to him by Ben Saunders to stop giving out bedding and cutlery packs to detainees who arrived at Brook House for removal via Charter Flight in order to cut costs.⁸⁵ The decision to expand capacity in March 2013 to produce a further 22 bed spaces, with an increase in revenue of £482,000 and an increase in profit of £28,000 is another example of this mentality.⁸⁶ Reverend Ward explained in his oral evidence that G4S seized on the Home Office desire for more capacity without giving adequate consideration to the consequences this would have for the functioning of Brook House.⁸⁷ Essentially, G4S did not care about how Brook House would function with more detainees, only about the increased profit.

62. As for the failure to ensure that Brook House was only used to detain people for up to 72 hours, as it was originally intended, there was a financial disbenefit to G4S in doing anything about it in that, as explained by Reverend Ward, a higher throughput of detainees would be more expensive.⁸⁸

63. The wider impact of this money-driven attitude on the culture of Brook House is a highly relevant matter for the Chair to consider.

⁸⁴ [Sarah Newlands, 21 March 2022, 192/13-15](#)

⁸⁵ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0031, Para 91](#)

⁸⁶ [DL0000141_0032-36.](#)

⁸⁷ [Nathan Ward, 7 December 2021, 144/11 – 147/13.](#)

⁸⁸ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0023, Para 71](#)

64. Reverend Ward stated in his written evidence to this Inquiry:

“175. When I stated in the Panorama, ‘we need to look at the people that have put these people in place and allowed them to do what they’ve done’ [53:23-53:32], I was referring to how it would be very easy to narrow our focus on individual members of staff as a few ‘bad apples’. As I have sought to explain, I think this would be very much the wrong approach and would not lead to a proper understanding of the key factors that create the conditions for such a culture to be established and for such abuse to take place. Scrutiny should be much wider to ask the question as to how ‘bad apples’ got there and remained entrenched in the system. When I said this quotation, I was thinking of issues such as the vetting and training systems; and in particular the fact that poor attitudes and dysfunctional cultures were allowed to become established and left unchallenged by those in more senior positions. The Inquiry must look at those in leadership positions in G4S and the Home Office, with overall responsibility as well as those on the ground.

...

177. I think it is significant that despite the serious failings at Medway, Ben Saunders was appointed to run Brook House in 2012 and indeed remained in this post despite the Medway Panorama programme, the subsequent Police investigation in 2016 and the Medway Improvement Board of 30 March 2016 (1NQ000010), which draws similar parallels to the failings of Brook House.”⁸⁹

65. As stated by Reverend Ward in his written evidence, what happened at Medway STC and the recommendations made about G4S’s culture and leadership, amongst other things, should be a “starting point” for this Inquiry, if lessons are to be learned and real change brought about.⁹⁰ The failure by G4S to reflect and change in response to recommendations made in relation to Medway STC should, in Reverend Ward’s opinion, give the Chair serious cause for concern.

66. Peter Neden admitted in his evidence to this Inquiry that senior management at G4S “failed in [their] responsibility to keep people safe in Brook House”⁹¹ and accepted that there “was clearly a failure in the system”, for which he apologised.⁹² Jerry Petherick said that he “would have expected the signs to have been picked up [and] to have been acted on”⁹³, which, the evidence this Inquiry has heard shows did not happen. G4S was, along with the Home Office, responsible for those failures.

⁸⁹ [DL000041_0061-62](#).

⁹⁰ [DL000041_0061](#)

⁹¹ [Peter Neden, 22 March 2022, 56/19-24](#)

⁹² [Peter Neden, 22 March 2022, 46-47/24-25, 1-3](#)

⁹³ [Jerry Petherick, 21 March 2022, 143-144/15-25, 1-5](#)

67. Reverend Ward raised concerns about what he had witnessed and what he was aware was occurring at Brook House with numerous people both internally at G4S, including to Mr Saunders and Mr Petherick, and externally.⁹⁴

68. However, Reverend Ward said, “... *staff on the ground are dissuaded to complain or use the whistleblowing strategy, due to a culture of fear that is instilled*”⁹⁵. He had “*witnessed staff who ha[d] spoken out being marginalised, in particular DCOs*”.⁹⁶ Reverend Ward explained:

*“305. The fear comes from the dominant institutional culture within G4S and the fact that those whom you may complain about are also the people who you will need the support of if anything goes wrong. When you observe a system which allows wrong things to continually happen without challenge, when you see people continually get away with bad things, then you soon understand that you aren't challenging the individual but the system itself. You understand that if you do challenge it, then you are putting yourself against the system itself, which is enough to put fear into the bravest of souls.”*⁹⁷

69. Had G4S listened to and acted upon the concerns raised by Reverend Ward, and others, the severity and scale of the mistreatment of detainees could have significantly reduced. For example, Stacie Dean said that the response of the SMT whenever she tried to raise concerns was “*consistently uninterested*”⁹⁸, while Michelle Brown noted there was “*little / no outcome*” following complaints she investigated and substantiated and she saw no improvement.⁹⁹

70. The collective failure of G4S leadership to listen to and value what staff like Reverend Ward, Michelle Brown and Stacie Dean had to say about the mistreatment of detainees is a central tenet of the culture of abuse at Brook House. For these reasons, the Chair is invited to record G4S’s failure to take any appropriate action in response to serious concerns being raised and to find G4S responsible for the abuse of detainees at Brook House.

⁹⁴ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0105, Para 302](#)

⁹⁵ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0105, Para 303](#)

⁹⁶ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0105, Para 303](#)

⁹⁷ [Nathan Ward, DL0000141_0105, Para 305](#)

⁹⁸ [Stacie Dean, INQ000172_0003](#)

⁹⁹ [Michelle Brown, INQ000164_0057](#)

71. Therefore, while the underlying decision-making and contractual ethos which created the backdrop for the abuse was the responsibility of the Home Office, G4S also bears responsibility for what happened at Brook House, both in terms of the staff on the ground directly carrying out abuse, the regime and conditions, the day-to-day culture and the clear failures inherent in its management and leadership structures, systems, processes and indeed the individuals it chose to employ in those positions.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

72. Even before this Inquiry, Reverend Ward was of the view that *“only fundamental change to the legal regime can realistically address the risk of repeated abuse scandals at Brook House and in IRCs more generally”* and that *“Tackling the institutional toxic cultures of dehumanisation, racism and impunity requires very robust measures to strictly limit the use of these powers.”*¹⁰⁰

73. Those firmly held views of Reverend Ward have been fortified by the significant, impactful and harrowing evidence heard by this Inquiry, which he believes shows undeniable evidence for inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment and torture, which amounts to a violation of Article 3 ECHR. It is abhorrent in Reverend Ward’s opinion that there have been no prosecutions arising out of the mistreatment of detainees at Brook House.¹⁰¹

74. Reverend Ward’s opinion is that immigration detention, if it is to continue at all, should be an absolute overall limit of a maximum period of 28 days and that it is imperative that this is implemented urgently. For those, with vulnerability (which, the evidence to this Inquiry has confirmed, there was¹⁰² and will continue to be a high incidence¹⁰³), Reverend Ward is of the view that the maximum period should to be 72 hours, implemented only if all removability issues are assessed by an independent panel, ideally judge-led, and authorised, with the possibility of an extension of a further 72 hours only if authorised by a judge and only if

¹⁰⁰ [DL0000141_0123 \[para 349\]](#)

¹⁰¹ [DL0000141_0106](#)

¹⁰² Evidenced by the high incidence of ACDT and self-harm. See also Owen Syred ([INN000007_0044](#)) and Medical Justice ([BHM000033_0030](#))

¹⁰³ The IMB 2021 Report for Brook House and the evidence of Professor Katona and the Royal College of Psychiatrists 2021 Position Statement.: [BHM000030](#)

absolutely necessary. This reflects the model used for other vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and children with families although authorization beyond the first 72 hours is by a Minister and not a judge.¹⁰⁴ Otherwise, the removal preparation process should be managed in the community. Such a framework would enable all necessary processes and procedures for removal to have been completed, prior to detention. It would reflect existing systems and processes for family returns and detention of pregnant women.¹⁰⁵

75. In relation to Foreign National Offenders (“FNOs”), Reverend Ward’s view is that, where the intention is to deport them, the Home Office ought to start the process much earlier, to afford time for legal challenges to be brought before the individual has finished their sentence and so that removal can be facilitated at the point of their sentence ending. Where it has not been possible to complete the process before the end of the sentence, the individual ought to be managed in the community until the process is complete.¹⁰⁶ The same time limits would then apply to FNOs as to all other immigration detainees.

76. As to Brook House specifically, the Chair needs no reminder that it was specifically designed to specification of a category B prison to hold people for a period of no more than 72 hours, as repeatedly stated in evidence.¹⁰⁷ Reverend Ward, is of the view that Brook House is not fit for even that limited purpose, and nor could it be made fit, even with a complete erosion of its toxic culture and the intangible aspects of the hostile environment, due to its inherent hostile and prison-like structure, fabric and environment.¹⁰⁸ This accords with the longstanding view of the HMCIP and repeated in evidence to this Inquiry.¹⁰⁹ But if Brook House is to be used at all, Reverend Ward’s view is that its use ought to be significantly limited by way of a time limit.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴This is addressed in more detail in the Witness Statement of Emma Ginn prepared on behalf of Medical Justice : [BHM000041_0053-0055](#) [149-152]

¹⁰⁵ [DL0000141_0124](#) [Para 350]

¹⁰⁶ [DL0000141_0124](#) [Para 350]

¹⁰⁷ [Gordon Brockington 31 March 2022 91/1-6](#); [Ed Fiddy 07 March 2022 153/6-19](#)

¹⁰⁸ [DL0000141_0009](#); [DL0000141_0022](#); [DL0000141_0036](#)

¹⁰⁹ [Ed Fiddy 07 March 2022 142/12-25](#); [Luke Instone-Brewer 08 March 2022 17/8-16](#); [Steven Webb 08 March 2022 133/3-11](#)

¹¹⁰ [DL0000141_124](#)

77. In the event that immigration detention is going to continue, a time limit on it is not a new idea. A 28-day outer limit for all was endorsed by the Joint Human Rights Committee¹¹¹ and the Home Affairs Select Committee¹¹² and indeed the House of Lords in a vote in Parliament last year.¹¹³

78. Senior G4S managers Jerry Petherick,¹¹⁴ Michelle Brown¹¹⁵ and Lee Hanford¹¹⁶ identified that the main problem for detainees is the uncertainty that surrounds the length of detention. Healthcare staff agreed with this view, with Sandra Calver identifying indefinite detention as the main cause of the mental health crisis at Brook House¹¹⁷ and Dr Oozeerally calling for a one-week limit on immigration detention.¹¹⁸ Even G4S staff who were involved in abuse of detainees highlighted the harm caused by indeterminate detention when giving evidence to the Inquiry, including Yan Paschali,¹¹⁹ Steve Webb,¹²⁰ Steve Skitt,¹²¹ and Ed Fiddy.¹²²

79. Dominic Aitken¹²³ reached the same conclusion following his time conducting research at Brook House, as did Callum Tulley¹²⁴ after exposing the abuse of Brook House.

80. Kate Lampard said people should be detained at Brook House for no more than a few weeks.¹²⁵

81. In addition, Reverend Ward reiterates what is set out in his written evidence to this Inquiry

¹¹¹ https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201719/jtselect/jtrights/1484/148410.htm#_idTextAnchor073

¹¹² https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/913/91310.htm#_idTextAnchor138

¹¹³ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-19/debates/97E83258-6E39-432F-8AE0-C2D7E0B1966F/ImmigrationAndSocialSecurityCo-Ordination\(EUWithdrawal\)Bill#:~:text=Lords%20amendment%206%20would%20limit,immigration%20detention%20to%2028%20days](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-19/debates/97E83258-6E39-432F-8AE0-C2D7E0B1966F/ImmigrationAndSocialSecurityCo-Ordination(EUWithdrawal)Bill#:~:text=Lords%20amendment%206%20would%20limit,immigration%20detention%20to%2028%20days).

¹¹⁴ [Jerry Petherick, 21 March 2022, 98/12-25](#)

¹¹⁵ Michelle Brown, INQ000164_0054, Para 106 – relevant page not published on Inquiry website

¹¹⁶ [Lee Hanford, 15 March 2022, 82/9-11](#)

¹¹⁷ [Sandra Calver, 1 March 2022, 187/1-5](#)

¹¹⁸ [Dr Husein Oozeerally, DRO000001_0013, Para 115](#)

¹¹⁹ [Yan Paschali, 24 February 2022, 15/16-25](#)

¹²⁰ [Steve Webb, 8 March 2022, 139/11-18](#)

¹²¹ [Steve Skitt, 17 March 2022, 48/8-17](#)

¹²² [Ed Fiddy, 7 March 2022, 147/12-19](#)

¹²³ [Dominic Aitken, 8 December 2021, 69/12-21](#)

¹²⁴ [Callum Tulley, 30 November 2021, 55/15-21](#)

¹²⁵ Kate Lampard, CJS005923_0015, Para 1.57 – relevant page not published on Inquiry website

353. I think the Inquiry therefore consider recommending the following:

Strict Limits

- a. The design of IRCs should be urgently reviewed, particularly those designed to a category B prison standards. If Brook House is to continue as an IRC, it must be strictly limited to the 72 hour maximum limit for which it was intended.
- b. A 28 day time limit should be imposed on all detentions.
- c. The equivalent of the family returns policy should be implemented for all removals and an independent returns panel should be established similar to the 'Family Returns Panel' for all detainees.
- d. Detention for those with vulnerabilities should be limited to 72 hours and only extended for a further 72 hours by a Judge.
- e. This scheme should be scoped for implementation for all those detained.

Contract

- f. All future contracts should be tendered on a fixed price basis. Therefore the awarding of the contract will be based on the quality of provision alone and not 'the cheapest bid'.
- g. There should be external independent involvement and scrutiny of the contractual arrangements when made.
- h. The monitoring of the contract from both the perspective of compliance by the Home Office and the Contractor should be independent and undertaken by an independent professional inspectorate replacing or in addition to the IMB.
- i. The contractual arrangements should be published and made transparent.
- j. Schedule G of contracts should be far wider in scope and application. The penalty points must be weighted to give priority to the welfare of detainees and to heavily penalise misconduct, failures to protect their welfare and for breaches of the safeguards like Rule 34 and 35.
- k. The contracts should be re-evaluated in a way that should completely outweigh any benefit of not meeting that part of the contract.
- l. Periodic break clauses should be included so that they can be promptly brought to an end

Accountability

- m. The law should be reviewed to ensure adequate protection for those detained against abuse from staff. The fact that no official or staff has been prosecuted following the Panorama documentary reflects the legal vacuum in which detainees reside.

- n. More robust vetting procedures should be introduced for staff akin to 'Positive Vetting'.*
- o. There should be increased legal provision for all detainees, with consideration given to legal representation being required prior to detention being determined.*

Use of Force

- p. The current approach to C&R should be fundamentally changed and the manual re-written specifically for the context of IRCs:*
 - i. Removing all references to Prisons and Prisoners;*
 - ii. Highlighting and accounting for the specific vulnerabilities that immigration detainees have;*
 - iii. Account for the specific contexts in which C&R takes place in IRCs and to prioritise negotiation and de-escalation;*
 - iv. C&R always to be used as a measure of last resort.*
- q. Equal time should be given to crisis communications and conflict management as is given to the teaching of physical restraint techniques.*
- r. Use of force to prevent self-harm/ suicide and in cases of mental illness must follow NICE guidelines and be added as an indicator for a Rule 35 report. In all cases where an ACDT is opened, a Rule 35 report should automatically follow.*
- s. There should be a national centre for physical restraint that continually researches and develops appropriate techniques for the various settings in which it is used throughout the UK.*
- t. All managers should have a working knowledge of key reports that relate to custody such as the Woolf Report and Medway Report. There is no systematic passing on of lessons learnt through the generations.*
- u. All restraint techniques should be medically tested (see the work of John Parkes, Coventry University).*
- v. The Safeguarding Principles outlined by Fordham, Stefaneli and Eser in their book 'Immigration Detention and the Rule of Law' Safeguarding Principles should be adopted by Government with immediate effect.*
- w. There should be a nationally recognised suite of training courses for all those working in custodial settings, including and with specific tailored training for IRCs which is rights-based, progressive in nature and robustly assessed.*
- x. Operational staff should undertake a validated certificate course on a yearly basis, supervisors should have a Diploma, Senior Managers a Degree and Directors a master degree in a relevant course. These courses should cover not only operational practicalities but also underpinning theories of sociology, psychology, criminology, human rights, security and risk management.*

y. The content, delivery and compliance training courses should form of contract monitoring and be a part of HMI inspections.

Self-Harm

z. The management of suicide and self-harm should be treatment led and implemented by healthcare and apply NICE guidelines and not the Prison Service guidelines.

aa. Self-harm and/or a credible risk of suicide should be sufficient to mean that the person is not suitable for detention in an IRC. Rule 35(2) reports must be issued and result in review and release.

bb. Imposition of Rule 40 and 42 removal on association should not be applied to those with a mental illness and if it is judged necessary should be an indicator for a Rule 35 report and release from detention.”¹²⁶

82. It was 2014 when Reverend Ward resigned from G4S.¹²⁷ He was subsequently diagnosed with PTSD, anxiety disorder and insomnia from the trauma he witnessed and experienced whilst working for G4S at Medway STC and then at Brook House.¹²⁸ Such an impact on Reverend Ward’s mental health is not too dissimilar to the impact detention during the relevant period at Brook House has had on the former detainees this inquiry has heard evidence from.¹²⁹ Immigration detention is a broken system, which breaks people. It did so prior to and 2014, in 2017 and it is still doing so today.

83. This inquiry represents a real opportunity to change all of that but to have a real impact significant changes to the system are required. As stated in Reverend Ward’s Oral Closing Statement, to do anything less than those significant changes will allow the corrupt and toxic institutional culture of abuse, bullying, disrespect and dehumanisation to continue.¹³⁰ In Reverend Ward’s view, it is the duty of us all to put a stop to that cycle. He hopes that this inquiry is, finally, the catalyst for that to happen.

¹²⁶ [DL0000141_0124-0126](#)

¹²⁷ [DL0000141_0005](#)

¹²⁸ [DL0000141_0042](#)

¹²⁹ See, for example, [DL0000143_0031](#)

¹³⁰ [Oral Closing Statement on behalf of Reverend Nathan Ward 05 April 2022 53/18-21](#)

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