



D740
c/o Detention Services

Brook House
Date: 9th May 2017

Dear **D740**

Complaint Reference Number: CMS 131000144986

Thank you for your complaint letter dated the 19th of April 2017 concerning various issues you raised about Brook House. I am writing to advise that I have now completed our investigation into the issues you raised and would like to offer the following response.

This investigation was conducted by myself, Steve Skitt, Head of Brook House, and our Residential and Regimes Manager – Juls Williams. It involved contacting various departments for information regarding your complaint; namely our Aramark Manager regarding the Shop and Catering services here; our Facilities and Health & Safety departments to check about the under bed lockers; our Clinical Lead regarding the Healthcare services at Brook House; the Head of Safeguarding for information regarding the safeguarding of residents here at the Gatwick Immigration Removal Centres.

Your complaint letter contained six main issues which have been investigated and shall be addressed in turn.

Firstly, you wrote that "Detainees are self-harming, attempting suicide, committing suicide and acting with such aggression in short, The Brook House has turn to a human torture house".

We acknowledge that Detention can be a stressful time for individuals and every person who self-harms will be supported under the Assessment Care Detention Teamwork (ACDT) process, which is an individual care plan, and falls in line with Detention Services Order 06/2008. We also apply a clear strategy which complies with Article 2 of The Human Rights Act – Duty to Protect Life. We are committed to preventing suicide and self-harm by supporting detainees at high risk through individual plans. We offer support, encouragement and practical opportunities to detainees to enable them to develop coping strategies and manage their own personal safety. All G4S staff are trained and annually refreshed in managing and supporting detainees at high risk and to date, Gatwick Immigration Removal Centres, including Brook House, is the only Detention Centre to have never had a death in custody.

Secondly, you went on to mention a number of issues you had with the accommodation at Brook House. This was with regards to the number of people in a room; the rooms having no windows and no fresh air ventilation; a dislike for the rooms having the toilets within them and the mattresses being old which made the beds uncomfortable; you catching your legs on the under bed locker key and being unable to open the bedroom doors as there were no handles on the doors but being locked up for 11 hours a day; the fact that it is so noisy here and that the bedding provided is of a rough quality which leaves small dust particles of cotton causing you allergic reactions.

It would not be possible to allow one person per room as the capacity set by the Home Office could then not be met due to the size of the building. The rooms here were designed and

certified by the Home Office, with a certified capacity, including some of our rooms now accommodating up to three people. They fall within all fire and health and safety regulations and are equipped with furniture and equipment that would be appropriate depending on the level of detainees occupying the room. I accept that with a number of people sharing a room, there may be occasions where people leave an odour from using the toilet, but all rooms having an extractor unit which is located within the toilet area and we have privacy screens which are placed in each room.

Due to the design specifications of the building and its location, all windows are quadruple glazed due to Brook House being located next to Gatwick Airport. It is not possible for the windows to be able to be opened due to security reasons, but also for the health, safety and wellbeing of all the residents here. All rooms are serviced by an air conditioning system that draws air in from outside where it is filtered twice before being circulated around the whole centre. This is regularly serviced and we have recently had this tested to ensure this system is appropriate for use at Brook House. The air conditioning system is also checked on a daily basis for any faults and all rooms within the centre are kept at a constant temperature.

In regards to mattresses, if any person has a concern with theirs, they can raise this through the wing application request process and if it is deemed to be unserviceable, it will be replaced. On average we replace 240 new mattresses per year. In regards to our bedding, we buy these from a National Offender Management (NOMs) supplier and we have to purchase items that fit current fire and health and safety regulations. If, on medical grounds, it was found that the supply of this bedding was affecting someone, then upon medical advice we would look to procure alternatives, however it does not appear from Healthcare that you spoke to them about your allergies.

I contacted our Health & Safety manager, along with our Facilities department to check if they had received any reports of detainees harming themselves on the locker keys from the under bed storage. They both confirmed that they had never had any reports of people cutting or scratching themselves on the under bed locker keys, but it was commented that the keys are there for people to use to lock their personal items away in the cupboards, but to then remove the key to ensure the security of the items placed in them.

With regards to you being locked in your room, our current core day, which has been agreed by the Home Office, is from 08:00 – 21:00. During this time, detainees have full access to the centre and all its regimes on offer, including outside activities, but we have to request for people to return to their rooms for the doors to be locked from 21:00 until 08:00 the following morning, for the safety and security of everyone in the centre. You also mentioned that being locked in your room without fresh air created a suffocating atmosphere, which caused you to feel symptoms including dizziness, headaches and depression, but for any of these we would always recommend that you attend Healthcare to seek advice, which Healthcare confirmed they had no record of you doing. Due to the operational requirements here, it would not be practical to allow people keys to their own rooms as it would be a security risk, not only to the centre, but to individuals within the centre. There are no handles on the doors within the rooms for safety and security reasons, but all rooms are equipped with an emergency room call system where you would be able to press a button and speak to a member of staff – at this point you could ask for help in opening the door if it was during association times, or raise the alarm in an emergency.

Brook House is a large centre, with a maximum capacity of 508 residents as governed by the Home Office. Because of this, there are times when the centre may become busier than others, but ultimately we are filled as per the demand of the Home Office and our agreed requirements as part of the G4S contract. We do have staff who patrol the centre to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents here and by doing this, they monitor the noise levels, then where necessary they will challenge anyone or group of people they feel are being too loud. This happens throughout the day and during the night.

Thirdly, you noted that the Health facilities were poor and that Doctors prolong treatment with pain killers but are not willing to sort them out sincerely.

Our Clinical Lead advised that detainees are fully assessed on admission - they are given a time to come to Healthcare to see the Doctor as they need to be seen by a Doctor within 24 hours of admission (under Detention Centre Rules 2001 – Rule 34). If people are already on pain medication then they will be assessed to see if they need to continue and they will only be given pain relief if it is required. Regarding normal appointments, people can come up between 09:30 to 11:00 to the nurse's clinic, which is open every day. The nurse will triage them to ascertain if they need to see a Doctor. If people have headaches, toothache or general pain, they are advised to obtain paracetamol from the wings and nurses can give mild pain killers if deemed necessary. She also advised that you did not attend a Doctor's appointment which had been booked for you, and never went to Healthcare, but you were also not on any pain relief.

You later mentioned in your complaint letter about the Internet facilities being too old and too slow, which wastes people's time when they are trying to access their inboxes.

We have looked into the IT issues here and found that they are caused by detainees downloading large files or inappropriate material.

The next issue you detailed was regarding the shop and the low quality but high price of its products. Also you said about the low quality food which is served for lunch and dinner, which sometimes there is not enough of for everyone.

The Aramark Catering Manager advised that the selling price in the shop for goods is set at less than the recommended retail price and items such as confectionery, drinks, groceries and sundries are on a whole cheaper than at a similar sized retail outlet. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) and the Home Office do check our pricing in the shop and have no issues. The brands on sale in the shop are a mixture of lower brands such as Happy Shopper to McVities, to allow a variety for all detainees depending on their funds available. Food is often an individual's perception, what one person does not like another will and we cannot do anything about that. The same applies for people who like spicy food and others who do not. With regards to there being enough, providing the food is served in the portion sizes it is meant to be, then there would be enough, however, if a wing does run low on food at meal times, then officers will return to the kitchen for more food, whether it is the same as what is on the menu or not, additional food is supplied. The issues you raised could have been discussed at the monthly food forum meeting, or brought to the attention of a G4S manager for them to pass onto the Aramark Catering Manager too.

The final aspects of your complaint letter mentioned about people being able to carry their own mobile phones and about some staff being arrogant and rude, when they should be polite and helpful.

People are allowed to carry their own phones if they are not deemed to be prohibited. The only phones we permit people to take in are those which just allow phone calls and text messages, but if someone had one of those types of phones then they would be allowed to carry them with them. People are able to purchase this type of phone from the shop or we offer loan phones. Contractually we are not permitted to allow people to carry smart phones on them due to them having cameras on them and access to the internet.

With regards to staff being rude, it is a personal opinion as to how an individual's behaviour or attitude is perceived. All staff receive training which covers customer service, along with Acting Inclusively training which looks at Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity. We expect our staff to be professional at all times and to follow the Gatwick Immigration Removal Centres Code of Conduct. We challenge staff behaviour and attitudes if reported to us and people can make us aware of any issues via the Home Office Immigration complaints process, as you have done. If

you found certain individuals to be rude or arrogant, then we need more details to be able to investigate any particular instances or officers further for you.

Having reviewed all of the evidence I have obtained during this investigation, I have concluded that I am unable to uphold any of the aspects from your complaint letter, for the reasons described above, but I hope that my explanations have addressed your issues.

I hope you feel satisfied with the way in which your complaint has been handled, however, should you wish to discuss any aspect of it, please feel free to contact me.

If you remain dissatisfied you may also appeal to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman who is independent of Immigration Enforcement and G4S. You must do this within three months of receiving this letter. I have enclosed a leaflet which explains the process "How to complain to the Ombudsman". This leaflet can also be found at http://www.ppo.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/PPO_Complaint_leaflet_Dec_2013.pdf

The PPO cannot deal with any complaints relating to your immigration status, including any decision to remove you from the United Kingdom, nor does the PPO deal with complaints about healthcare. You can only appeal to the PPO if you are the person with the complaint. Complaints from third parties cannot be accepted.

Any expression of dissatisfaction from a resident is taken seriously, irrelevant of the outcome, and we will endeavour to learn to continuously improve our service and care.

To help us continually improve our Complaints Handling Process, we have also enclosed a Complaints Handling Feedback Form with this letter which we ask that you complete and return to the Home Office (by posting, emailing or placing it in the Home Office Complaints Box).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention.

Yours sincerely

Signature

Steve Skitt
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G4S Gatwick IRCs
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DPA