

## **Brook House Inquiry Factsheet**

The Brook House Inquiry is a statutory public inquiry set up to investigate mistreatment of individuals who were detained at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) between 1 April 2017 and 31 August 2017, as shown in the BBC *Panorama* programme “*Under-Cover: Britain’s Immigration Secrets*” aired on 4 September 2017. The Inquiry was established on 5 November 2019.

### **About the Chair**

Kate Eves is the Chair to the Brook House Inquiry. She has over 20 years’ experience in the detention field, both in the UK and the United States. Kate has worked with the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman, the Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody and HM Prison Service, where she led on the national strategy for reducing prison violence.

An independent investigator, Kate has directly supervised over 200 investigations into deaths in prison custody. She has served as Secretary to two cross-government committees on violence prevention and has trained corrections staff on issues relating to prison safety. Kate has worked directly with prisoners and detainees in solitary confinement and with the families of those who have died in custody.

### **How did the Inquiry start?**

On the 4 September 2017, the BBC broadcast the *Panorama* documentary: ‘*Undercover: Britain’s Immigration Secrets*’. This was filmed covertly over 5 months at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC). The documentary contained disturbing footage, and portrayed Brook House as violent, dysfunctional and unsafe. It showed the use of abusive, racist and derogatory language by some staff towards those in their care, the effects of illicit drugs, and the use of force by staff on mentally and physically unwell detained people.

As a result of the programme, a series of investigations were conducted, including a special investigation by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) in 2019, led by Kate Eves. The Home Secretary announced on the 5 November 2019 that the PPO’s special investigation would be converted to a statutory inquiry under section 15 of the Inquiries Act 2005.

## Timeline

September 2017	BBC <i>Panorama</i> broadcast
March 2019	PPO special investigation announced with Kate Eves leading investigation
November 2019	Inquiry announced with Kate Eves as Chair
April 2020	Chair makes opening statement and evidence gathering commences
August 2020	Chair issues Core Participant determinations
September 2020	1 <sup>st</sup> Preliminary hearings
December 2020	2 <sup>nd</sup> Preliminary hearings
November 2021	1 <sup>st</sup> phase of public hearings
February 2022	2 <sup>nd</sup> phase of public hearings
September 2023	Inquiry publishes final report

### What is Brook House?

Brook House is an Immigration removal centre. Immigration removal centres (IRCs) are required to operate in accordance with a range of legislation, rules, and guidance. The Detention Services Operating Standards Manual provides the standards set by the Home Office for contractors that manage IRCs. The standards are said by the Home Office to be “*designed to build on the Detention Centre Rules and to underpin the arrangements we have for the management of removal centres*” and are “*a means of achieving a level of consistency across the removal estate*”.

Brook House is one of seven IRCs in the UK, and is located near Gatwick Airport, West Sussex. From its opening until May 2020, G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Ltd (G4S) was contracted to operate manage and maintain Brook House. This included the relevant period to the Inquiry: from 1 April 2017 to 21 August 2017. Since May 2020, Brook House has been managed by Serco Group PLC.

### Background to the BBC *Panorama* Broadcast

Mr Callum Tulley worked as a Detention Custody Officer (DCO) at Brook House (6 January 2015 – 7 July 2017). Mr Tulley contacted *Panorama* on 12 January 2016, after watching a BBC *Panorama* programme involving secret filming of abuse at Medway Secure Training Centre. Mr Tulley was employed by the BBC as a specialist researcher from 6 March 2017 to 19 September 2023. During his employment by the BBC, Mr Tulley undertook five months of covert filming in Brook House.

## **The Terms of Reference**

The scope of the Inquiry was set out in its Terms of Reference. The Inquiry set out to:

- Investigate into and report on the decisions, actions and circumstances surrounding the mistreatment of detainees broadcast in the BBC *Panorama* programme '*Undercover: Britain's Immigration Secrets*' on 4 September 2017.
- Reach conclusions with regard to the treatment of detainees where there is credible evidence of mistreatment contrary to Article 3 ECHR, and then make any such recommendations as may seem appropriate. Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights states: *No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*".

## **The work of the Inquiry**

In April 2020, the Inquiry issued a call for evidence from staff, formerly detained people, and anyone else involved in or affected by Brook House to share their experiences of Brook House during the relevant period. Significant efforts were made by the Inquiry to contact formerly detained people, current and former staff members at Brook House, as well as other G4S staff and other relevant witnesses.

In April 2020, the Chair invited applications from individuals and organisations who wished to be considered for Core Participant status in the accordance with Rule 5 of the Inquiry Rules 2006.

The Inquiry's public hearings took place over 46 days, in two phases. In these hearings, the Inquiry heard evidence (read and live) from a total of 101 witnesses.

## **Key Statistics**

- Documents: disclosed to Core Participants: Over 9,000 documents, comprising more than 100,000 pages of material
- Video evidence: circa 90 hours of video footage provided by the BBC which was reviewed for relevance and sensitivities
  - 'key footage' was disclosed to CP
  - other footage was transcribed.
- Number of core participants: 26
  - 12 formerly detained people;
  - Four former members of Brook House staff;
  - The BBC;
  - G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Ltd;
  - G4S Health Services (UK) Ltd;
  - Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group;
  - The Home Office;
  - HM Chief Inspector of Prisons;
  - The National Chair and Management Board of Independent Monitoring Boards;
  - Medical Justice;
  - Practice Plus Group;

- Serco Group PLC.
- Number of witnesses: 101
  - 78 in person, four from people formerly detained at Brook House (statements from a further 23 people formerly detained were summarised and adduced into evidence during the Inquiry's hearings)