



## **Brook House Inquiry Press Release**

**Issued 21 April 2020**

### **Independent Inquiry into Brook House launches call for evidence**

#### ***All potential witnesses urged to come forward***

The Brook House Public Inquiry formally launched its call for evidence today in an opening statement from Inquiry Chair Kate Eves urging those who were detained at, employed by, or otherwise witness to events at Brook House immigration removal centre between April 2017 and August 2017 to contact the Inquiry. The statement can be viewed [here](#).

The independent Inquiry was set up to investigate the mistreatment of detainees at Brook House from April to August 2017 as depicted by the BBC's Panorama programme, *Under-Cover: Britain's Immigration Secrets* aired on 4 September 2017. The Inquiry's full Terms of Reference can be found at: <https://brookhouseinquiry.org.uk/about/terms-of-reference-2/>

Chaired by Kate Eves, an independent investigator with over 20 years' experience in the detention field, the Inquiry aims to provide a clear picture of what happened to detainees at Brook House in that time and make recommendations that prevent anything like it from happening again.

Kate is appealing to anyone who was involved in Brook House or who is aware of what happened, to come forward and share what they know, including any individuals or organisations with insights into the system at Brook House at that time, who may have supported or worked with detainees or employees. The Inquiry also has the power to compel relevant witnesses to give evidence.

Urging people to come forward, Eves said:

“Sharing what you know will help to ensure that this Inquiry can answer the important questions raised by the Panorama documentary. It is important that anyone with relevant information contacts the Inquiry. The Inquiry team and I are committed to understanding the full extent of what happened at Brook House in 2017”.

In her official statement released today, Eves said:

“It is hard for many of us to understand how it feels to be held in detention. The effects can be profoundly humiliating and traumatic. If you have significant uncertainty about what is going to happen to you and your family, your vulnerability may be even greater. Language

barriers can cause difficulties communicating with other detainees and staff and you may be experiencing significant mental health issues.

“The treatment revealed in the Panorama documentary was shocking and has no place in a decent and humane immigration detention system. It is this Inquiry’s role to examine what took place at Brook House and how treatment of the nature experienced was able to happen

The Chair also acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on the Inquiry. In her opening statement she said:

“My current plan is for the Inquiry team and I, over the coming weeks and months, to assimilate and analyse documentary evidence, and to do the necessary preparation for the taking of witness statements. It is clearly desirable that witness statements should be taken during the course of face-to-face meetings. That is particularly important when a witness needs an interpreter or legal advice. At the moment, my intention is to delay any requests for witness statements until COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted sufficiently for such meetings to take place. Of course, if it appears that the restrictions are going to remain in place for many months, then this plan may have to be revisited. Whatever format is adopted, I will do everything I can to ensure that Core Participants can participate to the greatest possible extent, and that public access to the Inquiry’s work is maintained as well as it can be”.

Anyone who has information that might be of interest to the Inquiry, is being asked to get in touch either via the free information line: [0800 181 4363](tel:08001814363) or by email [enquiries@BrookHouseInquiry.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@BrookHouseInquiry.org.uk) More information and support concerning the Inquiry is available in 17 different languages on the website: <https://brookhouseinquiry.org.uk/>. Support is also available to translate witness statements and arrange translators for hearings.

Ends

### **Notes to editors**

Due to COVID-19, the planned public announcement event was replaced with a video statement from the Chair, Kate Eves. The video statement given by Kate can be viewed in full on the Inquiry’s YouTube channel from 11am on 21<sup>st</sup> April:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6a78Z5JFxtneBFQe4AV-Kw>

For more information please contact [BrookHouseInquiry@fourcommunications.com](mailto:BrookHouseInquiry@fourcommunications.com) or call Vicky McGuire on 07958 635913.

### **About Brook House**

The Brook House Inquiry is investigating the decisions, actions and circumstances surrounding the mistreatment of detainees in Brook House from 1 April 2017 to 31 August 2017 as depicted in the BBC Panorama programme ‘*Under-Cover: Britain’s Immigration Secrets*’ broadcast on 4 September 2017 ([watch here](#)) to understand what happened and make recommendations that prevent anything like it from happening again.