

Name : Anonymous

Email : naomi@gdwg.org.uk

Address : GDWG, The Orchard, Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD

Telephone : 01293 657070

Executive summary

- Detainee has lived in the UK since 1995
- Detainee was detained under Schedule 3 of the Immigration Act 1971 in September 2013.
- Appeal against deportation (detainee was unrepresented as case is out of scope for legal aid) was allowed
- Home Office granted permission to appeal
- Appeal heard July 2014 (detainee was unrepresented as case is out of scope for legal aid) and remitted to FtT, to be heard in February 2015
- Detainee has applied for Section 4 support, but this has been refused as he is an EEA national

1. Conditions are not that bad in Brook House. This place is slightly better than prison in some respects, but the worse thing is you do not know how long you are going to remain here. Each day comes and goes and nobody can tell you when you might be released. I have been detained for over a year now. This is the thing that impacts most on us, the lack of information, the lack of movement on the part of the Home Office. There are no timescales. That is why people go off their minds here. You can watch it happening. It breaks men.
2. There is little on offer in the way of legal advice. They tell you legal aid is cut. They will help you if you can pay. My case was out of scope. I had no money to pay, so I am pretty much lost. My visitor told me to search some charities on the internet but I knew before I got to the computer that all the sites would be blocked. Everything of any value to your case is blocked. You see management showing people round the centre and they impress them with the access to internet and computer suite and I say to myself, but it is pointless. Everything is blocked. I am not talking about Facebook and suchlike, I am talking about basic legal advice. Duncan Lewis quoted me £4,500 to pay for my case. I don't have that money. I have represented myself in court.
3. I am lucky because I speak English. But I look at some of them when they come in, they are completely lost. You see it in their faces. Completely lost and shaken. They are easy prey. I see them giving money to private solicitors; they are clueless of their rights. They end up paying out all their money when the solicitors know they don't have a hope in hell of remaining in the UK, they take all their money and then they are deported, penniless. It is a desperate system and they are unprotected. It is hard to believe people are sent to prison

for robbery, but the solicitors rob people blind and they still seem to practice, it beggars belief.

4. You can access healthcare in Brook House, but it is basic. I have watched people in here with problems, missing appointments at hospital because G4S cannot get them there. I think the bottom line is that they do not want you to die in here. That would be too much of a shock. It is not like healthcare outside. They do the bare minimum; they offer a basic standard of care.
5. I was meant to start specialist treatment, but I have been here a year and it still has not happened. I also suffer from mental health issues. I have found it very hard to cope in immigration detention. I would go to healthcare every morning, every day. They did not like to see me there, so they put me on Valium for three weeks. I suffer from anxiety and depression, but these are common symptoms in here. They have not assessed how bad it is and how they should deal with it. They offer you anti-depressants, there is always a big queue for this, but given that the detention causes most of the problems, it is not very well managed.
6. I can communicate with the staff, I am lucky. Others cannot control their frustration. I have learnt to take myself away from situations. What is interesting is that if you do something wrong, it is immediately noted. If you assist, not a mention is made. It is like they are waiting for you to fail, wanting you to fail. Two detainees were fighting recently. One threw a chair at the other and I held one of them back. The guards thanked me. This will not be noted as good behaviour. But if I dare put a foot wrong, it will be carefully documented. The other day they asked me to interpret for a Brazilian national who could not speak English. Again, this will remain unnoticed.
7. I think the younger lads lose control more quickly than the older guys. But the older ones suffer the same, they suffer inwardly. Some people give up. They sign the papers and leave whole families behind because they cannot take it any longer. Until you are here, you will not understand. The general public have no idea what is going on. It is sheer madness.
8. I requested a transfer recently as I thought I would cope better in a different detention centre. They said I was not allowed to transfer to Dover as I had no family nearby. I requested a transfer to Colnbrook as I have family near Heathrow, but I was then offered a transfer to The Verne. It is all designed to frustrate you.
9. I believe that all the detention centres should be the same. The gym in Brook House has no free weights. I need to exercise for my mental health, and some centres have free weights and others do not, some have better facilities and more activities. It really should be the same across the board.
10. I am pleased to submit this statement, but I know nothing will change. I am staying here month after month after month. This place is not designed to make you feel comfortable, quite the opposite. It is intended to make you feel unhappy, to make you feel so wretched and ill that you sign and go. That is exactly how it is.

11. Who is paying for this? Do the British people realise I am sitting here doing nothing for a year and they feed me and I do nothing. It is all so pointless.
12. This place is going to stay with me for many, many years to come and I have been through a lot in my life. I have been to hell and back, but this is different. It is psychologically destructive. I will get through this. I have enough in me to get through, but many will remain broken.