

8 APRIL 2020

**FAO Lewis Kett
Duncan Lewis**

Via email only to:

lewisk@duncanlewis.com

CC: ToufiqueH@Duncanlewis.com

Dear Lewis,

**Brook House Inquiry Chair's Opening Statement
11am 21 April 2020: Broadcast via www.brookhouseinquiry.org.uk**

On 5 November 2019, the Secretary of State announced a Statutory Inquiry into the events shown on the BBC Panorama documentary, *Undercover: Britain's Immigration Secrets*, which was broadcast on 4 September 2017. The documentary raised concerns about the welfare and treatment of detainees at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) near Gatwick Airport. The Home Secretary appointed me to lead the Inquiry. Full details of our Terms of Reference are available on our website.

Since the announcement of the Inquiry, I have been setting up my team and putting in place the necessary infrastructure to conduct the Inquiry. I am writing to you to provide you with details about the Inquiry's launch.

The openness and transparency of this Inquiry are of the utmost importance to me. It is with much regret that, in view of the current government advice on COVID-19 and the need to avoid public gatherings and unnecessary travel, it will not be possible to hold a public opening hearing at this time. In order to allow the Inquiry to proceed with its work, I have taken the decision to broadcast my opening statement via the Inquiry's website at **11am on Tuesday 21 April 2020**.

The Inquiry team and I very much regret not having this opportunity to meet with all interested parties face to face. I would like to provide reassurance that it is my firm intention to hold the Inquiry's first public hearings as soon as is possible. My opening statement will provide information about progress so far and the provisional list of issues that the Inquiry will address.

In the meantime, the Inquiry's website contains information about our Terms of Reference, the protocol for applying for Core Participant Status and details on how to contact us. Information is provided in 17 languages in addition to English. If you require additional translation or interpretation services to engage with the Inquiry, please contact us to discuss this.

The Panorama documentary can also be accessed via the site. As the Inquiry gathers its evidence, that will also be available on our website.

If you have any queries about the Inquiry's work, please visit our website or contact us by email, freephone or FREEPOST. The current COVID-19 restrictions are impacting on the Inquiry's access to mail and may also result in some delays in responding to phone calls. Please be assured that we are working hard to keep those delays to a minimum and are very grateful for your patience.

I look forward to updating you on our work as the Inquiry progresses and hope that you will be able to view my opening statement broadcast on 21 April 2020. A recording of the broadcast and a written copy of my statement will be available on the website after the event.

Yours sincerely,



**Kate Eves
Chair
Brook House Inquiry**