



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

25th February 2020

Dear Home Secretary,

Serco contracts for Brook House and Tinsley House immigration removal centres

We are writing following your department's announcement on 20th February that Serco Ltd has been awarded the contract to manage Brook House and Tinsley House immigration removal centres (IRC).

We are extremely concerned by this news, and by the continued involvement of Serco in the running of IRCs more generally.

Since 2007, the company has held the contract for Yarls Wood, an IRC for women and families. During this time it has faced repeated allegations of abuse. This has included sexual abuse of female detainees by guards, as exposed in investigations by the Observer and Channel 4 amongst others.¹ Indeed, just this month a court heard evidence of multiple injuries sustained by a Nigerian woman at the hands of Serco guards who were attempting to take her to an airport for a removal fight that the Home Office had in fact cancelled.²

Serco has also demonstrated itself to be an untrustworthy contractor. The company is currently being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office in relation to its contract with the Ministry of Justice for the electronic tagging of offenders between 2010 and 2013. In July 2019 Serco admitted to misleading the Government over the profits it had made from the contract, and was fined £19.2m. Two of its former executives are now facing criminal charges by the SFO for fraud and false accounting.³

Moreover, you will know that Serco provides asylum housing in Scotland, and in 2018 faced outrage for issuing notices that it planned to change the locks in cases where asylum applications had been refused and tenants had not moved on.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/17/serco-yarls-wood-asylum-centre>;
<https://www.channel4.com/news/yarls-wood-immigration-removal-detention-centre-investigation>

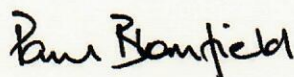
² <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/11/woman-cleared-of-assaulting-yarls-wood-guards-during-struggle>

³ <https://www.sfo.gov.uk/cases/serco/>

Any abuse at an IRC is obviously your responsibility as Home Secretary. Given the evidence above, we would question on what basis you saw fit to contract Serco to run Brook and Tinsley House IRCs.

We would be grateful if you could urgently re-consider your decision to grant the contract to run Brook and Tinsley House to Serco. We also request that you publish all documents relating to the procurement process.

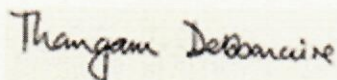
We look forward to your response



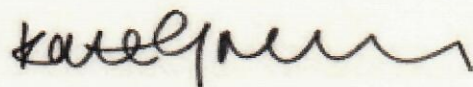
Paul Blomfield
MP for Sheffield Central
Vice-Chair, Joint APPG
Inquiry on Immigration Detention



Alison Thewliss
MP for Glasgow Central
Chair of APPG on Immigration Detention



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