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G4S: a history of discrimination, human rights violations, malpractice and mismanagement in the UK

Background

1. G4S is the third-largest private employer in the world, after Walmart and Foxconn. It conducts operations in around 120 countries with more than 620,000 employees. Formed in 2004, it was born of a merger between the UK-based Securicor and Denmark-based Group 4 Falck.
2. G4S's UK public sector operations include the following: they manage five UK prisons, three secure training centres, two immigration centres, and one pre-departure accommodation centre.¹ They also provide security at eight UK airports and eight ports. They further manage eight children's homes, and provide monitoring for over 14,000 offenders across the UK through their electronic tagging systems. They provide security for 500 police stations and 30 custody suites, as well as facilities management to Government facilities, including 168 hospitals and healthcare centres and 35 schools.
3. As their own website describes:

¹ The pre-departure accommodation, known as Cedars, is run by G4S with the charity, Barnados, and is now closing, although a new pre-departure unit is to be established as part of an existing Immigration Removal Centre, Tinsley House. See the Written Statement of Baroness Williams of Trafford, Minister of State for the Home Office, 21 July 2016, available here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statements/?page=1&max=20&questiontype=AllQuestions&house=commons%2clouds&keywords=cedars>.

“G4S is the largest integrated security and outsourcing company in the UK and Ireland, with a turnover of more than £1.7 billion and over 55,000 employees managed from over 100 offices.

“More than 10,000 customers, including 59 FTSE 100 companies and the majority of UK Government departments, depend on G4S to provide them with a safe and secure way to deliver their services.”²

Its record in the UK

Abuses in youth detention centres

4. In 2015, an Ofsted report found that G4S staff at Rainsbrook youth prison behaved “extremely inappropriately, causing distress and humiliation”.³ It found that “[p]oor staff behaviour has led to some young people being subject to degrading treatment, racist comments, and being cared for by staff who were under the influence of illegal drugs.” As it found, “On a number of occasions clear clinical advice was overruled by non-health qualified senior managers. Because of this one young person did not receive treatment for a fracture for approximately 15 hours.” Six members of staff were dismissed. G4S lost their contract to run the facility in September 2015.⁴
5. G4S has also faced serious allegations of abuse taking place in its Medway Secure Training Centre, with seven staff members reportedly suspended in January 2016 after allegations surfaced that they were physically and emotionally abusing children.⁵ Staff – including those in leadership positions – were alleged to have bragged of their treatment of those at the centre, saying of a child, “we just destroyed

² G4S, ‘What we do’, available here: <http://www.g4s.uk/en-GB/What%20we%20do/>.

³ ‘Inspection of Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre: February 2015’, available here: <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/secure-training-centre-reports/rainsbrook/Rainsbrook%20STC%20Ofsted%20report%20February%202015%20%28PDF%209.pdf>. See also *The Guardian*, ‘G4S-run youth jail criticised over degrading treatment of detainees’, 20 May 2015, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/may/20/misconduct-youth-jail-rainsbrook-ofsted-g4s>.

⁴ *The Guardian*, ‘G4S loses contract to run Rainsbrook young offender facility’, 4 September 2015, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/04/g4s-loses-contract-to-run-rainsbrook-young-offender-facility>.

⁵ *The Guardian*, ‘Seven G4S staff suspended over abuse claims at youth institution’, 8 January 2016, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jan/08/g4s-staff-young-offenders-institution-suspended-medway-kent>.

him – absolutely destroyed him”.⁶ G4S staff were also alleged to have falsified reports of their behaviour so as to avoid fines for “losing control” of children.⁷

6. G4S had faced previous allegations of failing to properly run the facility, when disorder broke out at Medway in 1998.⁸ According to the Guardian, subsequent investigations have revealed that abuses in both facilities may have continued throughout the almost two decades of their operation,⁹ including claims from whistleblowers in 2003 that “a boy had his shoulder dislocated whilst being restrained” and another had been grabbed by the neck and told, “you will fucking respect me”. G4S were alleged to have been made aware of the allegations at the time.
7. A G4S training manual from the period, explaining the use of restraint by its staff in secure training centres, was seized by police after Myatt’s death. It was reported as listing the names of 11 instructors, with their nicknames in brackets. These nicknames reportedly included “Rowdy, Clubber, Mauler and Breaker”.¹⁰
8. Both G4S and Serco have also made out-of-court settlements with 14 children who brought damages claims alleging that they had been assaulted by staff at secure training centres between 2004 and 2008.¹¹
9. As *The Guardian* reported, “The families of Myatt and Rickwood discovered that in all four STCs in England and Wales staff were routinely using force to discipline children... against the terms of their contracts with government... Four years ago, the Guardian received irrefutable evidence that children continued to be restrained for non-compliance in STCs and young offender institutions long after the deaths of Myatt and Rickwood.”
10. Two other individuals have come forward to describe their experiences in Medway in 2011, with one stating, “...if we refused to go to our bedroom within 3-5 minutes

⁶ *The Huffington Post*, ‘Teenage prison abuse exposed’, 12 January 2016, available here:

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/joe-plomin/teenage-prison-abuse-exposed_b_8960968.html.

⁷ *The Guardian*, ‘G4s guards at youth prison alleged to have falsified reports to avoid fines’, 11 January 2016, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jan/11/g4s-guards-at-youth-prison-alleged-to-have-falsified-reports-to-avoid-fines>.

⁸ *The Independent*, ‘Inmates go on rampage at child jail’, 26 June 1998, available here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/inmates-go-on-rampage-at-child-jail-1167726.html>.

⁹ *The Guardian*, ‘Revealed: G4S youth jail faced abuse claims 12 years ago’, 26 February 2016, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/feb/26/revealed-g4s-youth-jail-faced-abuse-claims-12-years-ago>.

¹⁰ *The Guardian*, ‘Revealed: G4S youth jail faced abuse claims 12 years ago’.

¹¹ *The Guardian*, ‘G4S and Serco pay out in youth restraint claims’, 24 October 2014, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/24/g4s-serco-pay-out-100000-youth-restraint-claims-stc>.

they'll call first [emergency] response, and there will be loads of people to restrain you. And you feel as if you've been beaten up the next day."¹² Another reported at the age of 15 having been left all night in her room after miscarrying, only taken to hospital after a week and a half thereafter.

11. In fact, in 2012, a High Court judge found that the unlawful use of restraint in privately run child jails – run by G4S, in addition to other companies – had likely been widespread for at least a decade.¹³

12. And G4S's other youth detention facilities have received similar criticism. Nick Hardwick, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, found its Brinsford young offender institution to be the worst he had come across: "These are the worst overall findings my inspectorate has identified in a single prison during my tenure as chief inspector. Across all our four tests of a healthy prison, we found outcomes to be poor."¹⁴ He found high levels of violence and illicit drug use, disproportionate uses of force by staff, and some cells so unclean as to be unfit for occupation by inmates, all of whom are 21-years-old or under.

Abuses in adult prisons

13. G4S has face serious criticism over its running of Oakwood prison in south Staffordshire, with allegations of widespread drug and alcohol misuse, violence and disorder, and poorly performing, inexperienced staff.¹⁵ Health services were reportedly dire:

"Inspectors found health services were "very poor" and, according to the latest Ministry of Justice figures, there were 611 incidents of self-harm at Oakwood last year. The only adult male jail in England and Wales with a higher figure was Altcourse in Merseyside, another G4S-run prison, with 889. In contrast, there were only 81 and 56 self-harm incidents respectively in

¹² *The Guardian*, 'Former Medway inmate: 'The guard slammed my face off the ice'', 26 February 2016, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/feb/26/former-medway-inmate-the-guard-slammed-my-face-off-the-ice>.

¹³ *The Children's Rights Alliance for England v the Secretary of State for Justice, G4S Care and Justice Services (UK) Ltd and Serco plc* [2012] EWHC 8 (Admin), available here: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Judgments/crae-sec-state-for-justice-others-judgment.pdf>

¹⁴ Nick Hardwick, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, "Report on an unannounced inspection of HMYOI Brinsford by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 4-15 November 2013", available here: <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/04/Brinsford-2013.pdf>

¹⁵ *The Guardian*, 'Tales from the inside: drugs and disorder at G4S's prison of the future', 29 April 2014, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/apr/29/tales-from-inside-oakwood-prison>.

Wormwood Scrubs and Wandsworth, publicly run jails of a similar size to Oakwood.”

14. The Inspectorate of Prisons had previously found the facility to be “too violent”.¹⁶ A nine-hour “full-scale riot” reportedly broke out in early 2014.¹⁷ In 2016, prisoners reportedly staged hunger strikes in protest against their mistreatment by G4S, after one individual was found dead in his cell.¹⁸

15. In 2015 it was reported that the G4S-run Altcourse prison in Merseyside – which houses both adults and young offenders, and exceeds all other prisons in its reports of violent incidents – faced high levels of bullying, violence, and self-harm:

“Six inmates - including two 20-year-olds - have taken their lives in the past four years, while there were nearly 900 incidents of prisoners self-harming themselves in 2013; up from just 290 in 2009.”¹⁹

16. Similar rises in violence were reported of G4S’s Birmingham prison in 2013.²⁰

Protests and disturbances were stated to have broken out in 2016 after a prisoner was found dead in his cell in unexplained circumstances.²¹ And G4S faced similar allegations as to its running of HMP Wolds prison in 2012, and reportedly lost its contract to run the facility as a result.²² The Chief Inspector of Prisons had found earlier that year high levels of illicit drug use, prisoner inactivity and “very clear weaknesses”²³.

¹⁶ Nick Hardwick, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, “Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Oakwood by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 10 – 21 June 2013”, available here: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128112038/http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/prison-and-yoi-inspections/oakwood/oakwood-2013.pdf>

¹⁷ *BBC News*, ‘Oakwood prison disorder was full-scale riot, says officer’, 23 January 2014, available here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-25846596>.

¹⁸ *Birmingham Mail*, ‘Inmate hunger strike after burglar’s death at troubled G4S-run HMP Oakwood’, 11 March 2016, available here: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/inmate-hunger-strike-after-burglars-11025213>.

¹⁹ *Echo*, ‘Exposed: The alarming self-harm rates and suicides of young men at Merseyside privately-run prison’, 7 February 2015, available here: <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/exposed-alarming-self-harm-rates-suicides-8599851>.

²⁰ *Birmingham Mail*, ‘Rising violence inside G4S-run city jail’, 28 June 2013, available here: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/violent-attacks-increase-hmp-birmingham-4390938>.

²¹ *Birmingham Mail*, ‘Riot squad officers sent into Winson Green prison’, 9 July 2016, available here: <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/riot-squad-officers-sent-winson-11591366>.

²² *The Guardian*, ‘G4S loses Wolds prison contract’, 8 November 2012, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/nov/08/g4s-loses-wolds-prison-contract>.

²³ HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Report on an announced follow-up full inspection of HMP Wolds, 23-27 April 2012.

17. Another prisoner at G4S-run Frankland prison was found dead in his cell, having been reportedly left alone to die there after vomiting blood in the prison canteen.²⁴ As stated by the coroner, “It struck me as being almost unbelievable that what happened in this case happened. That Mr Gibson was left unsupervised for quite a period of time when there was clearly a medical concern from a nurse and a doctor.”
18. And in November 2015 a 37-year-old epileptic man died in his cell at G4S-run Parc prison in Wales. As the inquest jury found, he had never been diagnosed with epilepsy, since G4S had in 2013 repeatedly failed to take him to his medical appointments, despite referrals from neurologists after he began suffering seizures from December 2012 onwards.²⁵ Repeatedly stymied due to a lack of escorts, when G4S did take him to an appointment they failed to convey the relevant information to the consultant. Had professionals received the necessary information over the period, the jury found, he would have received the required treatment.
19. And inspectors had independently reported their “grave concerns” over the violence, self-harm, and illicit drug usage found in Parc prison, along with “weak” mental health provision and “a sense among prisoners that they were unsafe”.²⁶
20. G4S was also reportedly required to pay £6,000 in damages to a 79-year-old former serviceman who was chained to a G4S prison officer during his 14-day stay in hospital after a heart attack, even whilst using the toilet and the shower.²⁷ Peter McCormack, who was disabled as a result of being shot in his right knee during service in 1956, was reported to have “spent 14 days attached by his wrist to a 2.5 metre closet chain, despite having been described as a model prisoner. It was removed only briefly for him to take off his upper clothing, and when he was under heavy sedation undergoing an angioplasty procedure.”

²⁴ *ChronicleLive*, ‘Paedophile left to die alone in HMP Frankland after vomiting blood in canteen’, 24 July 2016, available here: <http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/paedophile-left-die-alone-hmp-11644468>.

²⁵ Inquest, ‘Jury identified serious failures by G4S at the inquest into the death of Mohamoud Ahmed Ali’, available here: <http://www.inquest.org.uk/media/pr/jury-identified-serious-failures-which-led-to-the-death-of-mohamoud-ahmed-a>.

²⁶ Peter Clarke CVO OBE QPM, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, “Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP/YOI Parc by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 30 November – 1 December 2015, 18 – 22 January 2016”, available here: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/06/HMP-YOI-Parc-web-2015.pdf>

²⁷ *The Guardian*, ‘G4S ordered to pay £6,000 to elderly disabled man over hospital handcuffs’, 24 September 2014, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/sep/24/g4s-pay-6000-elderly-disabled-man-hospital-handcuffs-court>.

Abuses against refugees and migrants

21. G4S's staff at its Brook House and Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre have faced repeated allegations of abuse and mistreatment. In 2010, Dame Anne Owers, the former Chief Inspector of Prisons, found Brook House to be "unsafe", with bullying, violence, and drugs a serious problem. Individuals who were deemed to be "recalcitrant" were placed in solitary confinement. As she found, "Our surveys, interviews and observations all evidenced a degree of despair amongst detainees about safety at Brook House which we have rarely encountered. At the time of the inspection, Brook House was an unsafe place".²⁸
22. G4S staff working at Brook House Immigration Removal Centre have been found by the High Court to have falsified an asylum-seeker's documents, removing reference to paperwork left in the individual's bags on his removal.²⁹ The judge stated that the G4S employees' behaviour was "corrupt and truly shocking".
23. G4S was also one of several private firms alleged to have used detainees at their Removal Centres as cheap labour, paying them as little as £1 per hour to cook and clean.³⁰
24. G4S still runs Tinsley House, the Removal Centre at which children were formerly detained. On their watch, a 10-year-old Nigerian girl reportedly attempted suicide by strangulation.³¹
25. G4S has also faced serious allegations of abuse during the removals process. For example, in October 2010, a 46-year-old Angolan man, Jimmy Mubenga, died whilst being removed from the UK by G4S security guards.³² Reportedly shouting, "They're going to kill me", he was stated to have died of cardiac arrest after having his head

²⁸ Anne Owers, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, "Report on a full announced inspection of Brook House Immigration Removal Centre 15-19 March 2010", available here:

http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/03/Brook_House_2010_rps_.pdf

²⁹ *R (on the application of AB) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2013] EWHC 3453 (Admin). See also *The Guardian*, 'Three G4S immigration centre officials involved in forgery, says judge', 10 November 2013, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/nov/10/g4s-officials-accused-forgery>.

³⁰ *The Guardian*, 'Private firms 'are using detained immigrants as cheap labour'', 22 August 2014, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/aug/22/immigrants-cheap-labour-detention-centres-g4s-serco>.

³¹ *The Guardian*, 'Detained Nigerian girl found trying to strangle herself', 21 October 2009, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/oct/21/detained-nigerian-girl-strangle-immigration>.

³² *The Guardian*, 'Security guards accused over death of man deported to Angola', 14 October 2010, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/oct/14/security-guards-accused-jimmy-mubenga-death>.

pushed between his knees, whilst seated, by G4S guards. After an inquest jury found that he had been unlawfully killed, the G4S guards were found not guilty of manslaughter in the subsequent criminal trial.³³

26. Kept from the jury were very many extremely racist text messages found on the mobile phones of two of those accused.³⁴ The coroner had in fact already found that “there was enough evidence to cause real concern, particularly at the possibility that such racism might find reflection in race-based antipathy towards detainees and deportees and that in turn might manifest itself in inappropriate treatment of them.”³⁵
27. Similar findings of racism among G4S’s guards have been made, such as those by the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick, who stated, “Inspectors were very concerned at the highly offensive and sometime racist language they heard staff use between themselves”.³⁶
28. Similarly, investigations by *The Independent* in 2010 alleged that “[a] criminal record, even for assault, is not a barrier to someone becoming a private-security escort”. Moreover, it was reported that “[e]scorts have a financial incentive to ensure removals are successful because the majority of their income is an hourly wage” – suggesting that successful removals would amount to many more hours on duty, since G4S staff would accompany detainees on their flights. It was further alleged that guards used deception to coerce individuals to board flights, with one guard reported as saying, “For us it doesn't matter if you don't go to Cameroon but if we don't travel to Kenya, we won't get paid so let's go there and if you refuse to go to Cameroon we'll bring you back.”³⁷

³³ *BBC News*, ‘Jimmy Mubenga: Heathrow deportee ‘unlawfully killed’’, 9 July 2013, available here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-23244203>. The full inquest jury verdict is available at: <http://www.inquest.org.uk/media/news/jimmy-mubenga-inquest-jury-verdict-in-full>. In relation to the criminal trial, see *The Guardian*, ‘G4S guards found not guilty of manslaughter of Jimmy Mubenga’, 16 December 2014, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/16/g4s-guards-found-not-guilty-manslaughter-jimmy-mubenga>.

³⁴ *OpenDemocracyUK*, ‘The racist texts. What the Jimmy Mubenga trial jury was not told’, 17 December 2014, available here: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/clare-sambrook/racist-texts-what-mubenga-trial-jury-was-not-told>.

³⁵ Report by the Assistant Deputy Coroner, Karon Monaghan QC, Under the Coroner’s Rules 1984, Rule 43: Inquest into the death of Jimmy Kelenda Mubenga’, available here: <http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Rule-43-Report-Jimmy-Mubenga.pdf>, paragraph 46.

³⁶ Nick Hardwick, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, “Detainees under escort: Inspection of escort and removals to Nigeria, 20-21 April 2011”, available here: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140528080344/http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/detainee-escort-inspections/nigeria.pdf>

³⁷ *The Independent*, ‘Abused, humiliated and abandoned. What really happens when the UK deports failed asylum-seekers’, 4 July 2010, available here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home->

29. It has faced other serious allegations of malpractice and abuse during removals. A report by Medical Justice documented many instances of alleged mistreatment during the removal process, with the largest proportion of incidents being those allegedly involving G4S and Group 4.³⁸ A review of the report by Baroness Nuala O’Loan identified a number of matters of concern including inadequate management of and inadequate investigations following the use of force on detainees.³⁹

30. In another example, in 2010 a Zimbabwean man removed from the UK by G4S security guards sustained a broken wrist during the process. It was reported:

“During the struggle on the Virgin Airways flight, Mr Mlotshwa, who was handcuffed and wearing leg locks, alleges he was punched and kicked by guards and had his wrist twisted back.

A Home Office investigation has now exonerated the two G4S security officers – even though one of the guards can be heard on CCTV saying that Mr Mlotshwa "put up a good fight".⁴⁰

31. In 2011, during a High Court challenge brought by a Liberty client, witness statements prepared by G4S whistleblowers stated that an individual hired by G4S expressly taught the dangerous restraint technique that had been used on Jimmy Mubenga before he died – coined by the instructor as ‘carpet karaoke’ – in which a seated individual’s head is pushed between their knees, risking positional asphyxia. The instructor was stated to have been fired in 2008, allegedly after being discovered smuggling tobacco into the UK whilst on duty.

32. After very brief, inadequate training, the whistleblowers alleged that some staffs’ use of handcuffs was, “at best, bad practice and at worst illegal”, with routine and untrained use of rigid, ‘bar’ handcuffs not used by the police due to the risk of injury. They stated that individuals hired as “experts” in the field of escort services to conduct removal training were widely viewed as “thugs”. They stated that instructional videos used during training were to depict removals conducted in breach

[news/abused-humiliated-and-abandoned-what-really-happens-when-the-uk-deports-failed-asylum-seekers-2018387.html](http://www.medicaljustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/outsourcing-abuse.pdf).

³⁸ Medical Justice, ‘Outsourcing abuse: The use and misuse of state-sanctioned force during the detention and removal of asylum seekers’, 2008, available here: <http://www.medicaljustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/outsourcing-abuse.pdf>.

³⁹ Report to the UK Border Agency on “Outsourcing Abuse”, Baroness O’Loan, March 2010. http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_147177_en.pdf

⁴⁰ *The Independent*, ‘A disturbing insight into G4S’s tactics’, 29 October 2010, available here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/a-disturbing-insight-into-g4ss-tactics-2120498.html>.

of G4S's own policy and that inexperienced staff conducted removals with little first-aid training, with long delays before that training included material on breathing difficulties.

33. The statements also described routine racist and sexist abuse among G4S staff. The statements also suggested and thereby appeared to corroborate previous claims that staff were paid extra to successfully remove people; whilst the company itself lost money from the Government if an insufficient number of removals went ahead – this appeared to leave G4S and its workers with a direct financial incentive to force removals to go ahead, whatever the risks. One of the whistleblowers felt “unsurprised” by Mr Mubenga’s death, warning of such an incident “for years”.
34. G4S has also faced multi-million pound fines from the Home Office for its extremely poor performance in providing accommodation to asylum-seekers.⁴¹ As reported in Wakefield, near Leeds, “the local council found G4S cramming more than 200 asylum seekers into one facility in breach of planning laws.” Asylum-seekers have also reportedly faced eviction as a result of poor practice by G4S, with the company failing to pay rent that they are contractually obliged to pay to landlords as part of outsourcing arrangements.⁴²
35. As Sarah Teather, the former Member of Parliament, stated of the record of G4S's contractors:

“Almost every family told us that housing contractors routinely enter properties without knocking. We heard not just from one family, but from all of them independently that people just turn up and use keys to let themselves in. People may be in the shower and if they are Muslim women they may not have adequate head covering. It causes terror for children, and is an epithet for the lack of respect with which they are treated. They are treated as luggage rather than people who deserve some dignity and respect. The Government must get to grips with that with housing contractors.”⁴³

⁴¹ *The Independent*, ‘G4S and Serco face £4 million penalty over ‘substandard’ accommodation for asylum-seekers’, 10 January 2014, available here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/g4s-and-serco-face-4million-penalty-over-substandard-accommodation-for-asylum-seekers-9051174.html>.

⁴² See *OpenDemocracyUK*, ‘G4S asylum-housing fiasco descends into farce’, 15 May 2013, available here: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/john-grayson/g4s-asylum-housing-fiasco-descends-into-farce>.

⁴³ Hansard, 27 February 2013 Volume 559, Asylum Support (Children and Young People), available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2013-02->

36. As reported in 2012, the change from council-provided housing to that of G4S and its subcontractors was “a disaster for asylum-seeker housing in Yorkshire and the North East”.⁴⁴ It was reported that “In Yorkshire almost half the 2000 asylum seekers in many towns were in council or council-contracted accommodation in 2012 and 881 were forced to move by G4S into poorer quality private rented sector accommodation.”⁴⁵
37. Hundreds of individuals were reportedly left in council housing after G4S missed a deadline to re-house them in private sector accommodation.⁴⁶
38. In one case, a G4S sub-contractor was reported to have evicted a heavily-pregnant asylum-seeker despite knowing that she was due to be medically-induced to give birth on the same day.⁴⁷ The housing support worker involved in the case is described as having “raised her concerns with managers and that other agency workers had asked if the date could be changed, but claims the company indicated that the birth date wasn’t viewed as a cause for concern”.
39. G4S has also faced allegations that it forced a transgender woman to live in one of its all-male flats and share a bedroom with a man.⁴⁸
40. G4S faced severe criticism for its decision to paint the doors of asylum-seekers whom they housed red, rendering them identifiable as such to anyone in the area.⁴⁹

[27/debates/13022755000001/AsylumSupport\(ChildrenAndYoungPeople\)?highlight=almost%20every%20family#contribution-13022755000053](https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/john-grayson/their-secret-is-out-but-for-g4s-and-friends-%E2%80%98abject-disregard-for-human-dignity-persists%20family#contribution-13022755000053)

⁴⁴ *OpenDemocracyUK*, ‘Their secret is out, but for G4S and friends ‘abject disregard’ for dignity persists’, 18 March 2013, available here: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/john-grayson/their-secret-is-out-but-for-g4s-and-friends-%E2%80%98abject-disregard-for-human-dignity-persists%20family#contribution-13022755000053>

⁴⁵ *OpenDemocracyUK*, ‘Their secret is out, but for G4S and friends ‘abject disregard’ for dignity persists’, 18 March 2013, available here: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/john-grayson/their-secret-is-out-but-for-g4s-and-friends-%E2%80%98abject-disregard-for-human-dignity-persists%20family#contribution-13022755000053>

⁴⁶ *The Independent*, ‘Another G4S blunder: Councils attack security giant after housing contract shambles leaves families living in squalor’, 19 November 2012, available here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/another-g4s-blunder-councils-attack-security-giant-after-housing-contract-shambles-leaves-families-8329407.html>.

⁴⁷ *The Independent*, ‘G4S contractor evicted heavily pregnant asylum seeker even though they knew she was being induced the same day’, 10 December 2012, available here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/g4s-contractor-evicted-heavily-pregnant-asylum-seeker-even-though-they-knew-she-was-being-induced-8399581.html>.

⁴⁸ *OpenDemocracyUK*, ‘G4S disputes claims that transgender asylum-seeker had to share bedroom with man’, 26 November 2015, available here: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/shinealight/john-grayson/neglect-contempt-and-hostility-how-uk-government-really-welcomes-refugee>.

⁴⁹ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Oral Evidence: Asylum accommodation, HC 769, Tuesday 26 January 2016, available here: <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/asylum-accommodation/oral/27873.pdf>. See also *The Guardian*, ‘G4S bosses admit number of asylum seeker homes with red doors ‘too high’’, 26 January 2016, available here: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jan/26/g4s-bosses-admit-number-of-asylum-seeker-homes-with-red-doors-too-high>

41. G4S's other facilities, including the mother-and-baby unit subcontracted to another company, have similarly poor records.⁵⁰

Other abuses

42. G4S was alleged in 2012 to use "undercover surveillance teams disguised as delivery men to spy on the sick or disabled in their homes" in carrying out investigative for insurance companies.⁵¹

Financial malpractice and other mismanagement

43. G4S have also faced multiple allegations of malpractice and mismanagement. For example, it has been reportedly fined 100 times since 2010 for breaching its prison contracts with the Government.⁵²

44. In the UK, it was forced to repay £108.9 million plus tax after it was found to have overcharged the Government millions of pounds on its contracts to provide electronic tags for use with offenders.⁵³ It was found to have been charging for the provision of tags for offenders who were dead, already in jail, or simply never tagged, and an investigation by the Serious Fraud Office began in 2013 and continues.⁵⁴ Despite this, they were paid £8.7 million for further equipment between 2014 and 2015.⁵⁵

45. In 2012 G4S was severely criticised for its failure to deliver on its multi-million pound security contract for the London Olympic Games.⁵⁶ After the estimate of the number of guards required increased from 10,000 to 23,000, security costs rose from £282

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jan/26/g4s-jomast-bosses-admit-number-asylum-seeker-red-doors-too-high-select-committee>.

⁵⁰ See The Institute for Race Relations, 'G4S, Jomast Stockton Hostel and the mother-and-baby market', 24 October 2012, available here: <http://www.irr.org.uk/news/g4s-jomast-stockton-hostel-and-the-mother-and-baby-market/>.

⁵¹ *Daily Mail*, 'Security firm in Olympics fiasco spies on the sick in their homes: G4S targets insurance claimants', 16 September 2012, available here: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2204273/Security-firm-Olympics-fiasco-spies-sick-homes-G4S-targets-insurance-claimants.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>.

⁵² *The Guardian*, 'G4S fined 100 times since 2010 for breaching prison contracts', 15 April 2016, available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/apr/15/g4s-fined-100-times-since-2010-prison-contracts>.

⁵³ *BBC News*, 'G4S repays UK government £1.08.9m after tagging scandal', 12 March 2014, available here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26541375>.

⁵⁴ Serious Fraud Office press release 4 November 2013, available here: <https://www.sfo.gov.uk/2013/11/04/g4s-serco-investigation-2/>.

⁵⁵ *politics.co.uk*, 'MoJ paid G4S & Serco millions for electronic tagging during fraud investigation', 25 June 2015, available here: <http://www.politics.co.uk/news/2015/06/25/moj-paid-g4s-serco-millions-for-electronic-tagging-during-fr>.

⁵⁶ *The Telegraph*, 'Timeline: how G4S's bungled Olympics security contract unfolded', 21 May 2013, available here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/supportservices/10070425/Timeline-how-G4Ss-bungled-Olympics-security-contract-unfolded.html>.

million to £553 million. However, G4S's management fees were reported to have risen from £7.3 million to £60 million, after an increase of only £2.8 million in the firm's recruitment spending. Eventually, G4S admitted to the Olympic organising committee (LOCOG) and to the Government that "it would not be able to provide the numbers of security personnel specified in its contract"⁵⁷, forcing the Government to rely on the military to provide troops instead. G4S stated that it expected to pay a "penalty payment" of between £10 million and £20 million, with the total loss on the contract amounting to £70 million. Commenting in the House of Commons, Phillip Hollobone MP observed that "[i]n failing to honour its contract, G4S has clearly let the whole country down."⁵⁸

46. And in August 2016, G4S staff at a police control room were found to have made hundreds of false 999 calls during quiet periods to improve their perceived performance.⁵⁹

Parliamentary commentary on G4S

47. In view of the range of incidents detailed above, G4S has frequently attracted censure in Parliament. These critical comments have repeatedly, over a number of years, included calls for G4S to be excluded from the award of any further Government contracts.

48. The Home Affairs Committee ("HASC") has scrutinised G4S on a number of occasions. In 2012, HASC published a report on Olympic security, which concluded: "the blame for G4S's failure to come up with the required venue security staff rests firmly and solely with the company itself. A combination of flawed management information and poor communication with applicants and staff mean that G4S senior management had no idea how badly wrong their operation was going until it was too late to retrieve it. G4S continued to give false reassurances, based on poor-quality data, to London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games

⁵⁷ Lord Henley, statement to the House of Lords, 16 July 2012, Hansard Volume 739, available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2012-07-16/debates/12071635000282/OlympicGamesSecurity>. See also letter from the Rt Hon Theresa May MP (Home Secretary) to the Rt Hon Keith Vaz MP (Chair, Home Affairs Committee) dated 5 September 2012, available here: <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/home-affairs/HomeOffice-letter-5-Sept-2012.pdf>

⁵⁸ The Rt Hon Phillip Hollobone MP, Olympics (Security), 12 July 2012 Hansard Volume 548, available here: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2012-07-12/debates/12071258000009/Olympics\(Security\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2012-07-12/debates/12071258000009/Olympics(Security)).

⁵⁹ *The Guardian*, 'Two G4S police control room staff fired over 999 'test calls'', 17 August 2016, available here: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/aug/17/two-g4s-police-control-room-staff-fired-over-999-test-calls?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Email.

(LOCOG), the Home Office and other partners involved in the operation until a very late stage in the process.”⁶⁰

49. The Chair of HASC, Keith Vaz MP, commented that: “[t]he largest security company in the world, providing a contract to their biggest UK client, turned years of carefully laid preparations into an eleventh hour fiasco...The Government should learn lessons from this experience and establish a register of high-risk companies that have failed in the delivery of public services.” He also observed that G4S had treated its staff and prospective staff in a “cavalier fashion”, and that “[t]he data [G4S] provided to the Olympic Security Board was at best unreliable, at worst downright misleading.”⁶¹

50. In March this year, HASC published a report on the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers. It found that accommodation for asylum seekers in Middlesbrough, for which G4S was contracted to provide, had doors that “were painted a predominant colour”, and that this was “clearly wrong”. It required Jomast (G4S’ sub-contractor) and G4S to inform the Committee when repainting of the doors had been completed.⁶² Commenting on the report, the Chair of the Committee said: “G4S, Serco and Clearsprings receive millions of pounds of public money to house asylum seekers, and revelations in recent months have been alarming. The compulsory wearing of wrist bands and the infamous red doors demonstrate an unacceptable attitude towards vulnerable people.”⁶³

51. Similarly, in 2014 the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts reported that “The public’s trust in outsourcing has been undermined recently by the poor performance of G4S in supplying security guards for the Olympics...and most recently, the astonishing news that G4S and Serco had overcharged for years on electronic tagging contracts.” These (among other failures by private contractors engaged by the Government) were described as “high profile failures”, which

⁶⁰ Parliament.uk website summary of House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 7th Report on Olympic Security, HC 531-I, 21 September 2012, available here:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/120921-olympics-rpt-published/>

⁶¹ Chair’s Comments, available here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/120921-olympics-rpt-published/>

⁶² Home Affairs Committee, 6th Report of Session 2015-2016, “The Work of the Immigration Directorates (Q3 2015), available here:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmhaff/772/772.pdf>.

⁶³ Chair’s comments, available here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/immigration-directorates-report-published-15-16/>

“illustrate contractors’ failure to live up to standards expected”.⁶⁴ In particular, the report declared that it was “scandalous that G4S and Serco overcharged the taxpayer tens of millions of pounds for electronic tagging”.⁶⁵

52. Further, on 11 July 2013, Sadiq Khan MP (then Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, now Mayor of London) said in a Commons debate on the electronic tagging scandal: “There appears to have been a systematic pattern of fraud, and if we add to that the events of the past week and the inquest verdict [regarding the death of Jimmy Mubenga], the fiasco at last year’s Olympics and the security that G4S failed to provide, we see a pattern emerging. Will the Justice Secretary confirm that those two companies [G4S and Serco] will not be awarded any further Government contracts?”⁶⁶

53. Echoing Mr Khan’s comments in the same debate, Keith Vaz MP (Chair of the Home Affairs Committee), said simply: “G4S should never have got another Government contract after the shambles of the Olympics”.⁶⁷

54. Again, in January 2016, in a Commons debate following the allegations of mistreatment of detainees at Medway Secure Training Centre, Andy Slaughter MP observed that the allegations were “only the latest in a long line of failures and mismanagement from G4S”, and called for an immediate review of all contracts between the Ministry of Justice and G4S. He also argued that “G4S should not be considered for bidding for other Government contracts.”⁶⁸ In response, Michael Gove MP, then the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, admitted that “The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right to say that G4S has, in a number of other ways, at times in the past, let the Ministry of Justice and those in our care down.”⁶⁹

⁶⁴ House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, Forty-seventh Report of Session 2013-2014, “Contracting out public services to the private sector”, 26 February 2014, available here: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpubacc/777/777.pdf>

⁶⁵ See fn 66 above, p.6.

⁶⁶ The Rt Hon Sadiq Khan MP, Electronic tagging debate, 11 July 2013, Hansard, Volume 566, available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2013-07-11/debates/13071159000006/ElectronicTagging>

⁶⁷ See fn 68 above.

⁶⁸ The Rt Hon Andy Slaughter MP, Prisons and Secure Training Centres: Safety debate, 11 January 2016, Hansard Volume 604, available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-01-11/debates/16011114000003/PrisonsAndSecureTrainingCentresSafety>

⁶⁹ See fn 70 above.

55. In the same debate, Carolyn Harris MP observed that: “In 2012 G4S failed to provide security for the London Olympics and the Army had to save the day. It has had to repay £110 million for overcharging for security tags, and £4.5 million for overcharging for facilities management at UK courts. Surely its luck is up and it cannot be offered any more Government contracts.”⁷⁰
56. Subsequently, in a debate on the same issue on 20 January 2016, Jo Stevens MP described G4S as a “a persistent offender in failing to deliver Government contracts to the required standards”, and expressed concern as to “whether G4S should be awarded any further contracts, or should even be bidding, until all the outstanding issues with the company—the Serious Fraud Office inquiry and the investigation into Medway—are resolved.”⁷¹
57. The very same day, the conduct of G4S was debated by the House in relation to a different point, in this case the painting red of doors of properties occupied by asylum seekers. Commenting, David Winnick MP asked: “Is it not a matter of concern that whenever some abuse is known about and comes into the public arena, the Minister makes a statement and somehow or other G4S seems to be involved?”⁷² Alistair Carmichael MP similarly observed that: “Yet again G4S has come to public attention for all the wrong reasons, and yet again it has been found wanting.”⁷³
58. In a later debate on a similar issue, Andy McDonald MP said that G4S: “has demonstrated that it should be nowhere near Government public service business. Just look at what it did in our prisons. We only have to cast our minds back to the dreadful fraud it perpetrated on the taxpayer over the prisoner tagging contract. It is not a fit and proper company and the sooner it is out of our national life, the better.”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ See fn 70 above.

⁷¹ The Rt Hon Jo Stevens MP, Safety in Youth Custody debate, 20 January 2016, Hansard, Volume 604, available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-01-20/debates/1601203000003/SafetyInYouthCustody>

⁷² The Rt Hon David Winnick MP, Asylum Seekers: Middlesbrough debate, 20 January 2016, Hansard, Volume 604, available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-01-20/debates/16012033000007/AsylumSeekersMiddlesbrough>

⁷³ See fn 74 above.

⁷⁴ The Rt Hon Andy McDonald MP, Asylum Support Contracts debate, 10 February 2016, Hansard, Volume 605, available here: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-02-10/debates/160210107000001/AsylumSupportContracts>