

Correspondence

Brook House immigration removal centre

The findings of the public inquiry into the immigration removal centre (IRC) known as Brook House (BBC News, 19 September 2023) are alarming but in my opinion not altogether surprising.

In 2011, I was employed to undertake a pilot study at the IRC on behalf of my then employer, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, with a view to improving services. The study lasted a total of 6 months, and detailed proposals were made; however, my recommendations were shelved.

I am glad to hear about the suggestion made by the inquiry chair Kate Eves that the law be changed to limit the duration of detention at IRCs such as Brook House.

I have for many years as a consultant psychiatrist and expert witness in immigration cases recommended that where the authorities are unable to make a decision about the future of a claimant in a timely fashion, the claimant should be released immediately.

It appears from the inquiry that services at Brook House are substandard at every level and that better services are needed in this critical area of practice. Psychiatry should lead as it once did in the prison service.

Giuseppe Spoto, FRCPsych, MA, FAcadMed, MEWI, Consultant Psychiatrist, Independent Doctors Federation, London, UK. Email: giuseppe.spoto@ntlworld.com

Declaration of interest

None

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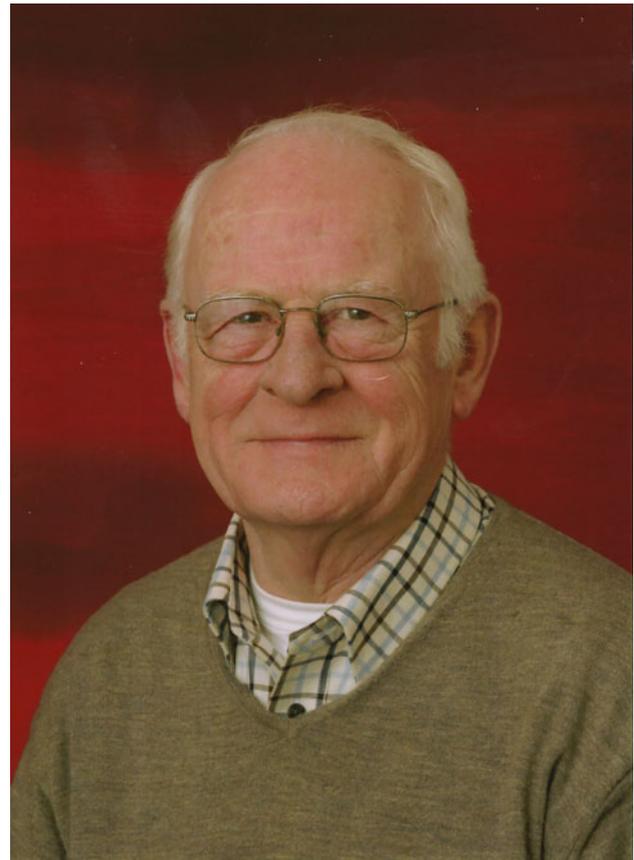


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Obituaries

Thomas James Fahy, MD, FRCPsych

Formerly Professor of Psychiatry, University College, Galway, Ireland



Thomas James Fahy, who died on 9 January 2023, aged 86, following a long illness, made enormous contributions to the development of psychiatry in England and Ireland. A Foundation Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Tom was deeply involved in College activities and was Founder Chairman of the Irish Psychiatric Training Committee. He was Professor of Psychiatry at University College, Galway, from 1975 to 2001 and served on the Irish Medical Council and Medical Research Council, among other bodies.

He led the modernisation of clinical services in Galway and linked his academic work with the development of evidence-based care. In 1982, he co-authored a substantial study, *Electroconvulsive Therapy in the Republic of Ireland*, which showed that Irish psychiatrists' attitudes towards ECT were broadly similar to those in Great Britain, although there was less emphasis on complex issues of informed and valid consent in Ireland, and premises and equipment varied considerably across the country.¹ The report presented recommendations to the Irish Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists relating

