



Ministry
of Justice



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Department
of Health

Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody

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www.independent.gov.uk/iapdeathsincustody

Sam Gyimah MP
Prisons and Probation Minister

IAP REPORT: KEEPING SAFE, AND FURTHER IAP WORK

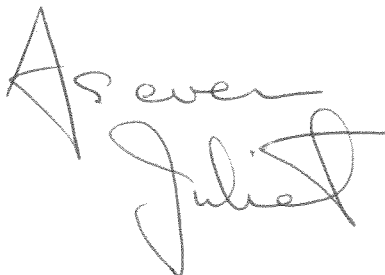
Thank you for our meeting on 25 October where we discussed some of the emerging findings from the Keeping Safe initiative. As you will recall, we received around 150 letters and messages from prisoners in over 60 establishments. We talked about the pivotal role of staff, the work of Samaritan Listeners and the importance of family contact as well as concerns raised in the letters about unmet mental health needs, lingering IPP sentences and the problems caused by NPS in prisons.

I am pleased to now provide you with a copy of the IAP's full report on the collaboration with Inside Time, Prison Radio and the Samaritans. The enclosed report contains the same themes which you have seen in the four-page supplement produced in Inside Time, but goes into greater detail on points raised and solutions offered by prisoners. The report also provides further information on each area drawn from recent reports by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, among others. I have discussed this report with Nick Poyntz from your Safety and Security Policy Team and I have been encouraged by his willingness to engage with the issues raised in it.

I know that safer custody is your top priority and that you plan to announce measures that, taken together, will help to address the hopelessness and helplessness felt by many people in custody. You welcomed the idea of communicating these plans directly with prisoners through the pages of Inside Time and possibly via a Prison Radio broadcast. It would be excellent to proceed with this and also take the opportunity, as you suggested, to thank the many prisoners who wrote and phoned in and made a such a positive contribution to suicide prevention.

Reflecting on the last Ministerial Board, I agree that the Board needs to be more action-orientated and support the reinvigoration you and Nick Hurd gave it in November. The focus on the workplan outlined in the Government's response to Dame Elish's review is a helpful way of ensuring progress in some of the key areas. The Board was supportive of the IAP's current work to collate the 'top ten' recommendations most relevant for saving lives in custody and to consider how best to embed the learning in practice. This fits well with the new thematic area on levers to support improved performance and greater accountability. You will be glad to know we are pressing ahead with this and have already arranged a meeting with leaders of regulatory and investigatory bodies to discuss their views early in the New Year. I look forward to updating the Board at the next meeting.

Look forward to our next meeting in the New Year. Meanwhile my thoughts are with you and colleagues, and especially those who work in prisons, through the stresses and strains of Christmas in custody.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "As ever Juliet". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Juliet Lyon CBE
Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody

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