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## ***Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody***

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[www.independent.gov.uk/iapdeathsincustody](http://www.independent.gov.uk/iapdeathsincustody)

**Justin Russell**  
**HM Chief Inspector of Probation**

Congratulations on you on your appointment as HM Chief Inspector of Probation! Can I affirm our commitment to support you, your staff and wider operational leads, to reduce deaths in custody. I would also like to raise an issue which I think will be of interest to you as you begin your new role.

### **The Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody**

As you know, the IAP is a small, independent arms-length body developed after the Fulton review, which established the Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody. Our role is to act as a primary source of advice to Ministers on how best to reduce deaths in State custody. The IAP is co-sponsored by the Ministry of Justice (the lead sponsor), the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care. Prisons, approved premises, police custody, secure hospitals, establishments holding people under the Mental Health Act, and immigration centres all fall within our ambit.

Panel members have considerable knowledge of relevant areas such as psychiatry and human rights – and also have experience of leading services within custodial environments. The IAP identifies and draws on examples of national and international good practice, and is supported by a broad group of around 200 interested parties, including members of bereaved families and health and justice professionals. Our single objective is to help prevent avoidable deaths, natural and self-inflicted, in custody and to enable the State to fulfil its obligation to protect life.

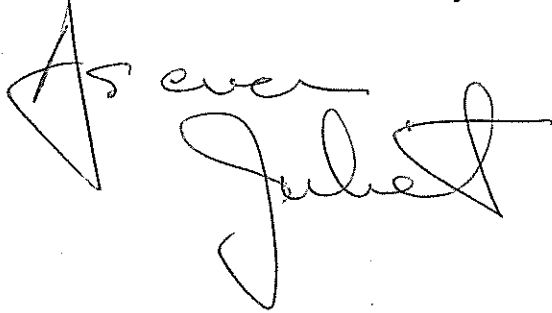
## **Preventing the deaths of those in approved premises, or subject to probation**

As you will know, there were 955 deaths of offenders in the community in 2017/18. Since these are people who are serving their sentences in the community, or those on post-release supervision, these are not deaths in custody and – while still of concern – do not fall under the strict remit of the IAP.

However, within this overall total, there were 11 deaths of people who were residents of approved premises in 2017/18. As these are considered deaths in custody, they fall under our remit and that of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), and the local Coroner.

Two members of the Panel – Professor Jenny Shaw and Deborah Coles – and I recently met your predecessor, Dame Glenys Stacey, to discuss these deaths. We learned from Dame Glenys that she had never seen a PPO report or Preventing Future Deaths (PFD) report from a Coroner relating to any death in approved premises. We believe this may be an instance where the system is not working as effectively as it could – we think that this sort of information would be helpful to you as Chief Inspector when considering the performance of probation services. It would open up the opportunity of checking implementation of/compliance with recommendations in a similar way to the way in which HM Chief Inspector of Prisons plays a role in checking on HMPPS's response to PPO recommendations. I recently met Amy Rees, DG – Probation, who confirmed that she will ensure that your office receives all PPO and Coroner reports relevant to your remit.

It would be good to meet as soon as your diary allows to discuss this issue, and broader areas where we may be able to work together to prevent loss of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Juliet Lyon', with a large, stylized initial 'J' on the left.

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

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