



IAPDC

## PSG NEWSLETTER

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Umbrellas created at Ann House (secure hospital) in 2019. Image courtesy of Koestler Arts.



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## TWO YEARS OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

In the latest edition of Inside Time, IAPDC Chair, Juliet Lyon, reflects on two years of restrictions imposed in prisons following the outbreak of COVID-19. While severe restrictions and extreme isolation imposed at the outset of the pandemic will have saved lives, the toll on mental and physical health is high and currently not fully understood. The IAPDC is therefore calling for individual mental and physical health checks for all people in prison to understand the needs of the population and inform appropriate support.



To inform the IAPDC's advice to ministers, the panel welcomes views from people in prison and allied organisations about the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on detained populations and the implications for their safety and wellbeing.

## JOINT LETTER TO SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND JUSTICE

The IAPDC - in conjunction with Royal Medical Colleges, staff associations and unions, scrutiny bodies and health and justice charities - has written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Sajid Javid MP, and the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab MP, asking that they and their departments work together to provide additional mental health support for prisoners and advising them to offer individual mental and physical health checks to everyone in custody. A letter in the same vein has been sent to the First Minister for Wales, Mark Drakeford MS.

It has been two years since the prison service introduced a full lockdown with severely restricted regimes in the face of the pandemic. It is time for a thorough review of the impact of this form of extreme imprisonment on the mental and physical health of people detained by the state and the remedial action that would be prompted by such a review.



Umbrella of Hope. HM Prison Full Sutton. Commended Award for Painting, 2020. Image courtesy of Koester Arts.





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## UPDATE ON RECENT IAPDC SUBMISSIONS

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### *Prisons Strategy White Paper*

Last year the Ministry of Justice published the [Prisons Strategy White Paper](#) which set out the department's approach "to cut crime and protect the public with a modern, secure prison estate, designed to rehabilitate prisoners". In its response, the IAPDC calls on the Government to make the prevention of avoidable deaths in custody its top priority and prioritise the areas of prison policy and operations which would have the greatest impact in reducing such deaths. The panel emphasised that prisons are not safe places and the planned expansion of the estate set out in the strategy presents a real risk that the number and rate of deaths of people held in the care of the state could increase.

The Government should:

- invest in healthcare and community alternatives to imprisonment;
- make use of evidence-based design of new establishments which prioritises the prevention of deaths, replaces existing unsafe buildings, removes ligature points and meets the demands of the prison population's shifting demographics; and
- work in accord with other agencies, departments and strategies, including proposed reform of the Mental Health Act and revised National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

You can read the panel's full response to the strategy [here](#).



Window, Kemple View (secure hospital). Image courtesy of Koestler Arts.

### *Improving the outcomes for women in the criminal justice system*

In March 2017, the IAPDC published '[Preventing the Deaths of Women in Prison](#)', a report presenting the results of an information gathering exercise which informed the [Ministry of Justice's Female Offender Strategy](#), published in 2018. This committed to reduce the imprisonment of vulnerable women who could be better supported in the community.

Earlier this year the Public Accounts Committee announced an inquiry to assess the government's progress in achieving the aims of the strategy. The IAPDC's [written evidence](#) concludes that significant work is still required to complete the implementation of the strategy, in particular investment in alternative options that divert women away from custodial sentences such as community sentences with treatment requirements (CSTRs) or residential women's centres which help to reduce the number of women entering the prison system.



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## PROTECTING LIVES: PREVENTING SUBSTANCE MISUSE-RELATED DEATHS IN CUSTODY

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The IAPDC and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) have been working together to examine how best to prevent drug and alcohol-related deaths in custody. A new joint report, '[Protecting lives: a cross-system approach to addressing alcohol and drug-related deaths within the criminal justice system](#)' was published in January 2022 and was sent to the ministerial co-chairs of the Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody (MBDC). Recommendations from the report include the need for:

- Better resourcing of community drug and alcohol services that divert individuals with substance misuse problems away from short custodial sentences into treatment in the community.
- Wider collaboration between prison and community staff to encourage continuity of treatment, particularly during the transitional period when released from prison.
- Increases to the use of newly available opioid substitution therapy to help improve continuity of treatment and as a form of harm-reduction for opioid abuse.

Since publication, the panel and RCGP have discussed this report with senior leaders in HMPPS and the NHS, while ministers have recently agreed to a [meeting](#) to discuss the findings and recommendations. The panel also presented this work at the Addictions Professionals and RCGP Conference on Thursday 24 March 2022.

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## PREVENTING THE DEATHS OF OLDER PEOPLE IN PRISON

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Prompted by the IAPDC's [report](#) with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) on the prevention of natural deaths in custody, the Ministry of Justice has recently completed a review of compassionate release policy. During development the IAPDC called for a simplified application process and criteria to ensure a fairer and more effective process.

The panel are also contributing to the Ministry of Justice's forthcoming Older Offenders Strategy, incorporating insight into future priorities for improving prison healthcare. The strategy aims to produce a comprehensive suite of training and guidance on older individuals, improve the quality and consistency of care, working with DHSC to develop a sustainable, long-term funding solution for social care, and embed best practice around palliative and end of life care.

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## LATEST DEATHS IN CUSTODY DATA

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- Prisons: In the 12 months to December 2021 there were a total of [371 deaths](#) of people in prison – more than one death each day and the highest annual number of deaths ever recorded since current recording methods were introduced in 1978. The Ministry of Justice will publish the next quarterly statistics on 28 April.
- Secure health: The CQC have been notified of [363 deaths](#) of detained patients that occurred between April 2020 and March 2021. In 2019/20, there were 240 deaths of detained inpatients. A large number of deaths were caused by COVID-19.



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## OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE

### *Justice Select Committee's call for evidence*

In response to the recent significant increase in the remand population, caused partly by court delays and COVID-19, the Justice Select Committee has launched a call for evidence on the role of adult custodial remand. The IAPDC are concerned about the support in place for this population, which the Ministry of Justice's data suggests is at increased risk of suicide.



**You can submit evidence to the inquiry [here](#).  
The deadline for responses is Friday 22 April 2022.**

### *Churchill Fellowships on suicide prevention - opening in September*

Have you ever wanted to make change happen in an area you care passionately about? Explore new solutions with the world's leading professionals? A Churchill Fellowship is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lead the change you want to see. It funds you to spend up to two months discovering new ideas and best practice among leading practitioners anywhere in the world in order to bring this learning back to the UK to make change happen in your community or sector.

On 13 September, applications open for Churchill Fellowships across a range of themes including suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. All projects related to preventing suicide and self-harm in any setting, including custody, or supporting those bereaved by suicide are welcome. Churchill Fellowships are open to all adult UK citizens regardless of age, qualifications or background. They can be undertaken in person or online. Sign up to receive application alerts via the website homepage if you are interested.



**Sign up to receive application alerts via the [Churchill Fellowship website](#) if you are interested.**

### *PRI call for international evidence on deaths in custody*

Penal Reform International is embarking on a new programme of work to address the human rights issues that arise with prison deaths. They are aiming to collect information on deaths in prison from around the world to understand the problem. This project will involve working with partners, engagement with United Nations bodies, and issuing analysis, guidance and information about deaths in prisons to inform calls for reform and action at the national level.



**To participate please fill out the [survey](#) and send it to [Edith Riegler](#) by 15 April 2022.**



My Path, HM Prison Wealstun, 2020. Image courtesy of Koestler Arts.



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## IAPDC FREEPOST

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The IAPDC continues to welcome correspondence to Freepost IAP from people detained in custody and their families about how best to prevent deaths and keep people safe. This valuable resource helps to inform and frame the Panel's advice and recommendations to ministers and senior leaders.

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## IAPDC CHAIR RECRUITMENT

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On 31 March 2022, the Government Public Appointments Team published an advert for the recruitment of a new chair of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody. The role involves providing advice to ministers and senior leaders in the Ministry of Justice, Department of Health and Social Care, and the Home Office on how best they can prevent deaths and meet their human rights obligations to take active steps to protect the lives of people detained by the state.

Applications are open until 29 April and more information can be found on the [Cabinet Office website](#). Juliet Lyon will complete her tenure towards the end of this year.

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## ONGOING IAPDC WORK

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We are looking for new members to join the IAPDC Practitioner and Stakeholder Group. The Panel is encouraging practitioners from a range of organisations, particularly mental health settings, as well as families to join the group. If you know anyone who would be suitable, please ask them to join [here](#).

### *Deaths of people during and following police contact*

A launch event for the Policing Minister and IAPDC's police leadership initiative to prioritise the prevention of deaths in custody across police forces in England and Wales is planned for the Summer.

### *Coroner prevention of future deaths (PFD) reports*

The IAPDC is working with the Chief Coroner to arrange a series of roundtables to inform recommendations on how these reports can be better used to share learning and reduce deaths in custody.

### *Deaths of people detained under the Mental Health Act (MHA)*

The IAPDC is scoping new work on Mental Health Act deaths, particularly in relation to gaps in data collection and investigations and learning from deaths.



**If you have particular expertise and are interested in this area of custody, we are keen to hear from you.**



Dream 1, River House. Image courtesy of Koestler Arts.