

# PRISONERS' ADVICE SERVICE

THE INDEPENDENT LEGAL CHARITY PROVIDING INFORMATION AND  
REPRESENTATION TO PRISONERS

JUSTICE BEHIND BARS

Dear Friend

With [International Women's Day](#) on Sunday 8 March, as a supporter of [Prisoners' Advice Service \(PAS\)](#), you'll know how much our work can help adult women prisoners in England and Wales, providing legal advice and support, and taking legal action on their behalf.

That's why we hope you'll make a donation in our favour today, 6th March, and help us win up to \$1,000 (£779) in matched funding from GlobalGiving's Girl Fund. Your donation could also help us win another \$10,000 (£7,799) or more in funding (as well as a lot of useful publicity) throughout the coming year. Here's how!

Please vote for PAS with your gift of any size, between 6th and 13th March!

Simply [make a donation](#) of any size today (6 March, or at any time through to 13 March). That's right, any size gift - whether it's £10 or £100 or £1,000. This contest is all about having the most individual donors during the week-long campaign, not the most money raised, so we need lots of people to give at any level you are able to if we are to have a chance at being chosen for the year-long Girl Fund...

Organisations receiving the most donations from different people between today and 13th March are eligible for further funding from GlobalGiving's Girl Fund: If successful they will receive a monthly payment for a year from donors who care deeply about girls' and women's issues.

Thank you for thinking of us!

## News: PAS Overturns Prisoner Visitor Ban

In January 2020, PAS took on the case of Prisoner A, a 60 year-old black women, who contacted us at one of our Outreach Clinics. Having just lost her brother, Prisoner A was looking forward a much-needed visit from her two adult daughters. However, the prison was delayed in searching visitors on entry and, as a result, the daughters were delayed getting into the visits hall, thereby cutting into their visiting time. When the daughters politely questioned staff about the

length of the visit, they were told that they were being rude and aggressive and were physically removed from the visits hall. Although both women maintain that they had remained calm throughout the incident, they were then banned from visiting their mother again until April 2020 and were told that they would be on closed visits for three months after that.

Visitor bans engage a prisoner's European Convention on Human Rights Article 8 right (the Right to Private and Family Life) and must be considered on an individual basis. Any decision to impose a ban must be proportionate to the risk the prison is endeavouring to reduce. PAS believed the prison's response to the situation was disproportionate and that the ban should be lifted. We therefore wrote to the prison, challenging the ban and arguing that the prison's decision to sanction the daughters was not consistent with the incident.

Our Caseworker further arranged a meeting with the security manager at the prison and a request was made to view the CCTV of the visit. As a result of the meeting and the letter to the prison, the security manager reviewed the CCTV and confirmed that the ban appeared to be disproportionate and that he would meet with the Governor to discuss this. The Governor then made the decision to lift the ban and confirmed that the daughters would not be placed on closed visits.

## **PAS Responds to Record Call Numbers**

In 2019, PAS received 28,788 calls to our Advice Line, of which, we were successfully able to answer 21,989, or 76%. This is a 22% increase on the number of successfully answered calls in 2018. During that year, we answered 17,690 calls. This means that we spoke to 4,299 more callers in 2019 than in 2018, something PAS can rightly be proud of. Such a large increase in successfully answered calls is due to the appointment in June 2018 of our dedicated Advice Line Caseworker, Harry Wade, whose role is part supported by The Persula Foundation.

In addition to the number of successful calls to our Advice Line overall, from a



PAS will once again take part in the annual London Legal Walk this year. Organised by [The London Legal Support Trust](#), the event is due to take place on Monday 8th June 2020, when a rag-bag team of PAS staff and volunteers will do their level best to get all the way around the 10k route!

The London Legal Walk raises much needed funds for charities that provide life changing legal advice and representation to

sample of some 550 callers, the percentage breakdown of protected characteristics prisoners who were able to speak to one of our Caseworkers over the telephone is heartening in its diversity:

- Women Prisoners: 7%
- Older Prisoners (over 51): 17%
- BAME Prisoners: 55%
- LGBT+ Prisoners: 10%
- Disability & Health: 43%
- Foreign National Prisoners: 24%

With regard to women prisoners, the percentage figure for 2018 was 4%, so the percentage of women using our Advice Line has gone up by 3% (c832 calls) over the last year. This is commensurate with the expansion of our services in 2018-19 to include advice on Family Law as well as Prison Law.

Finally, the new Advice Line evening slot of 4.30pm to 7pm on a Tuesday is proving very popular. In its first four months at the end of last year it received some 1,017 calls in total!

All in all, it's safe to say that 2019 was a bumper year on the Advice Line!

those in need. In 2019 15,000 people took part in the challenge, making their way around London for justice and raising a record breaking £890,000 for free legal advice charities in London and the South East in the process. Watch this space for details of how you can support us.



For all the latest PAS news, don't forget to follow us on Twitter and Facebook!



PAS' telephone Advice Line is run by caseworkers four days a week. Our telephone number is globally cleared within all prisons throughout England and Wales. **Please note: In order to assist a prisoner, we need to be contacted by them directly before we can discuss matters with family members.**

**NUMBER: 020 7253 3323**

### **OPENING TIMES**

**Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
10:00-12:30 and 14:00-16:30;  
Tuesday Evening 16.30-19.00**

Prisoners' Advice Service is a registered charity (No: 1054495) and is a company limited by guarantee (No: 3180659).

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