

PRISONERS' ADVICE SERVICE

THE INDEPENDENT LEGAL CHARITY PROVIDING INFORMATION AND
REPRESENTATION TO PRISONERS

JUSTICE BEHIND BARS

Dear Friend of PAS

The past few months have seen the Criminal Justice System in the news for all the wrong reasons, most notably with the escape of Daniel Khalife from HMP Wandsworth. Media focus shed light on unprecedented staff shortages, vermin-infested cells and chronic overcrowding, with the prison at 170% capacity. Worryingly, serious issues such as these are widespread across the prison estate, a recent watchdog ruling that 10% of prisons across England and Wales 'should be shut down' and are 'no longer fit for purpose'.

PAS remains doubly committed to supporting those in prison, continuing to advise and advocate for those with little access to justice, as recent feedback from an IPP prisoner illustrates:

'I am writing to express my profound gratitude for the advice you provided me through my years of incarceration on what is now an inhumane sentence (IPP). I have been [here] since 2008 and my tariff expired years ago... I had my parole on the 30th August and within 3 days the parole directed my release. As you can imagine, I am so made up... I discovered [PAS] over 10 years ago and that's one of the few things that I can genuinely say is the best out of this nightmare. I have learned so much about the quagmire that is the justice system. [PAS] has been the light in a very dark episode of my life...'

As ever, we remain hugely grateful to all our donors for their support. If you feel inspired by our work, no donation is too small and would be very much appreciated. You can donate online [here](#).

PAS Helps Bereaved Prisoner Attend Zoom Funeral

Prisoner A rang our advice line in great distress. His 14-year-old niece had died and he wanted to attend her funeral via Zoom, which was to take place two days later. The prison had the facilities to do this, but was refusing on the basis that he was not a close enough relative.

Prisoner A's niece had had serious health issues since she was a baby. He usually lived with her family and often looked after her, monitoring her breathing and fitting her breathing apparatus. His family wanted him to attend the funeral and he was so distraught about not being allowed to do so that he was thinking of taking his own life.

While prisons have a duty to pay special attention to the maintenance of family relationships under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, there is no published policy on which prisoners should be allowed to attend funerals by Zoom. Prison policy on escorting prisoners to outside funerals restricts this to close relatives including those in loco parentis, but does not include uncles. However, the policy on releasing prisoners on special purpose licence to attend a funeral suggests that those with other 'close, caring relationships' could also be eligible.

PAS contacted the prison explaining that Prisoner A did, indeed, have a close, caring relationship with his niece and had also acted in loco parentis as a carer while living with her. We pointed out that no release or escort would be required to allow him to attend by Zoom, so it would be unreasonable, unnecessary and disproportionate to apply narrower criteria for facilitating a Zoom meeting than that used to decide whether to release a prisoner to attend a funeral outside of the prison. So, even if not considered to have been in loco parentis, Prisoner A should be considered as someone who had a close, caring relationship with his niece. The prison then asked the chaplain to contact the family, who confirmed that Prisoner A had acted in loco parentis to his niece, and he was finally given permission to attend the funeral on Zoom.



Chair, Dominique Webb

PAS Welcomes New Chair of Trustees

After ten years as Chair of Trustees, Martine Lignon will step down on the

PAS Annual Lecture

We are delighted to confirm that the PAS Annual Lecture will be held at Doughty Street Chambers in early November.

The evening will take as its focus telling prisoners stories through different media and will feature panellists, Emmy winner, [Jimmy McGovern](#) and Bafta nominee, [Helen Black](#), who have co-written the second series of BBC prison drama, *Time*. Former PAS Co-Director,

19th October, but will continue as a member of the Board of Trustees. We thank Martine for her many years of committed service and look forward to her continued involvement here at PAS.

Dominique Webb, who joined PAS as a Trustee in 2019, will take up the role of Chair of Trustees. Dominique is currently Head of Programmes for *GamCare*, the leading provider of advice and support for anyone affected by gambling. Dominique brings a wealth of experience, having spent eight years as a board member of *Merseyside Probation Trust*, and two years as Director of Operations at *Women in Prison*. She believes that providing accurate, independent information is vital in enabling people to exercise their rights, especially in such complex and restrictive environments as that of prisons.

We wish Dominique all the best in her new role as Chair of the Trustees.



Deborah Russo will also join the panel to reflect on her experience dramatising her recent PHD research.

The panel will explore the value and complexities of sharing prisoner stories, particularly given growing public interest in the Criminal Justice Sector.

The event is free to attend and drinks and canapes will be provided.

If you are interested in attending, please send an email to list@prisonersadvice.org.uk.

We are hugely grateful to [Doughty Street Chambers](#) for making this event possible.

Venue address: Doughty Street Chambers, 54 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2LS

Date: Thursday 9th November

Time: 6 - 9 pm





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**

**Freephone Service from Women's Prisons
NUMBER: 0800 024 6205
Tuesday morning 10:00-12.30**

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