

# PRISONERS' ADVICE SERVICE

THE INDEPENDENT LEGAL CHARITY PROVIDING INFORMATION AND  
REPRESENTATION TO PRISONERS

JUSTICE BEHIND BARS

**Dear Friend of PAS**

**As the crisis in prison places continues to make headlines, the alarming overcrowding of our jails can only increase the probability that the legal and human rights of the men and women who populate our prisons will be overlooked, or, worse, abused.**

**Conditions in prison are terrible. PAS needs your help more than ever to ensure that prisoners in England and Wales have access to justice and proper legal advice about what is happening to them, regardless of their ability to pay.**

**As ever, if you would like to make a donation towards our work, we would be delighted to receive it. [You can donate online here.](#)**

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## **PAS Overturns Shocking SSJ Release Decision for Terminally Ill Prisoner**

PAS recently acted on behalf of Prisoner A, a terminally ill man who had been sentenced to six years imprisonment for a drug offence, and who was considered to be low risk. Prisoner A was suffering with stage four, metastatic cancer and was desperate to spend his final months with his family.

Three months prior to PAS' involvement, Prisoner A had made an application to the Secretary of State for Justice (SSJ) requesting Early Release on Compassionate Grounds, stating that he had been given a prognosis of only months left to live. By that time, Prisoner A was already deaf, registered blind, mute, and immobile, and the prison was no longer able to manage his complex healthcare needs. Further, the prison nurses in charge of Prisoner A regularly failed to complete healthcare assessments in light of Prisoner A's rapidly developing illness. Unsurprisingly, probation had assessed the prisoner as

being of low risk to the public.

Despite the urgency of his request, the SSJ did not issue her decision on Prisoner A's application until twelve weeks later, by which time he was back in hospital suffering sepsis and bleeding in his trachea.

In a shocking move, the SSJ stated that she was not satisfied either that Prisoner A had sufficiently demonstrated that his early release would not put the safety of the public at risk, or that there was a care plan in place for his release.

At this point, our Community Care Caseworker - who had previously come into contact with Prisoner A at our Outreach Clinics inside prison walls - took on his case, instructing the family to issue urgent judicial review proceedings challenging the decision. This included an application for a court order requiring further information from the SSJ and – crucially - assurances from various public authorities that Prisoner A would receive appropriate health care upon release. The court order also required that the SSJ reach a decision within 24 hours.

A Special Purpose Licence for Temporary Release was then issued on behalf of Prisoner A - but this would only have guaranteed his release for a few days. Urgent correspondence between PAS and the SSJ then followed, with Prisoner A's family, under PAS' instruction, finally proving that his complex healthcare needs could be safely and adequately met from home. Two days later and exactly three months on from Prisoner A's first application, the SSJ approved his early release following the receipt of the new evidence.

At the time of his release, Prisoner A was given just six weeks to live. Without PAS' direct involvement, he would not have been able to spend his final weeks with his family, nor receive appropriate palliative care.

PAS has since lodged a formal complaint with the Nursing and Midwifery Council in light of Prisoner A's inadequate and negligent nursing care whilst in prison. At the time of writing, it is alleged that some of the nurses in question have previously been involved in a death in custody.

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**IPP License Reforms to Come Into  
Effect From 1<sup>st</sup> November**

The government has announced that Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) reforms will come into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024. This will affect prisoners on both IPP and DPP (Detention for Public Protection) sentences. The IPP sentence was a form of indeterminate sentence abolished in 2012.

Consultant Solicitor and Vice Chair of [The Association of Prison Lawyers](#), Dr Laura Jane's guide to the government's statement and the changes that will be made can be read [here](#). In response to the news, Pia Sinha, Chief Executive of [The Prison Reform Trust \(PRT\)](#) said, *"Continued cross-party support will be vital to deliver the necessary further reforms for those 1,200 people still trapped in prison, and who have never been released. Only then will the stain of the IPP sentence finally be eradicated."*

In light of this new announcement, we are working hard to update our toolkit, *Terminating Your IPP Licence: A Legal Guide*, published in conjunction with [The Howard League](#) and PRT, and will make the updated version available on our website as soon as possible.



## PAS Receives Five Year Award



## In Memory of Beloved PAS Trustee, Jeremy Harrison

It was with profound sadness that PAS learned last week of the passing of trustee, Jeremy Harrison.

Jeremy served as a PAS trustee for nine years, between 2015 and losing his battle with cancer on Sunday, 1 September. During that time, he attended most of PAS' London-based Management Committee meetings in person, despite living in Ireland.

In a message of condolence, PAS Chair, Dominique Webb, said of Jeremy,

"[he] gave PAS so much over the years he was a trustee, always willing to write a policy or review a business plan at the drop of a hat... But more importantly, Jeremy was always so keen to be involved. He was the epitome of the engaged trustee... He was so supportive of me personally in my

## from The National Lottery

PAS is delighted to share the news that it has been awarded £200,215.00 in National Lottery funding to support our core Advice Line service over the next five years; and will receive some £40,000.00 per annum.

The Advice Line, founded in 1991, now attracts over 30,000 callers every year. It is our signature provision for prisoners and receives calls from across the length and breadth of England and Wales.

The new funding, from The National Lottery Community Fund, which distributes money raised by National Lottery players for good causes, will ensure that the service can meet demand for another five years. The amount and longevity of the award will also provide stability and support for the whole organisation.

transition to becoming Chair, a very gentle, kind and talented man.”

Jeremy brought a wealth of wisdom and experience to PAS, culled from an admirable career spanning journalism, the third sector and the new field of Impact Measurement. He served as Public Relations Director at tenants’ rights charity Shelter, as Deputy Director of the Community Projects Foundation (now the Community Development Foundation) and was a long-term consultant for the European Commission on Education, Training and Economic Development.

Jeremy’s generosity of spirit, and his contribution to PAS, will be sorely missed.



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**

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

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[www.prisonersadvice.org.uk](http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk)

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Prisoners' Advice Service (PAS) · P O Box 46199 · London, London EC1M 4XA · United Kingdom