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| **[cid:image001.jpg@01CF1DC9.99EEF4C0](http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk/)**                                   09-HMP-Send-3453                                                                                                             Global giving campaign – Now Live.    Welcome to our May Update.  If you would like further information please go to our [website](http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk/) or contact us [admin@prisonersadvice.org.uk](mailto:admin@prisonersadvice.org.uk).  **Prisoners’ Advice Service News Update**  **Success Stories**  **Community Care**  We acted on behalf of a disabled prisoner (Prisoner B) who had been provided a broken wheelchair that was not fit for purpose.  The back wheels were so small that he could not reach them to push himself along and therefore he was not capable of independent movement. Further the footrests broke and were not replaced. Prisoner B has a progressive spinal condition which means that he cannot raise his feet. So the absence of footrests caused his feet to continually drag along the ground when he was being pushed along, causing pain and ruining his shoes. The situation caused him to feel very vulnerable and humiliated and his mobility was severely restricted.  Prison officers refused to push him in his wheelchair; some alleged they required training in order to so do. This meant that Prisoner B was unable to move around the prison unless a fellow prisoner helped him. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on public bodies to provide necessary ‘auxiliary aids’ to disabled persons (in Prisoner B’s case a working wheelchair).  By the time Prisoner B contacted us, he had been using a broken wheelchair for over six months and had been submitting written and verbal complaints asking for a replacement. Our Community Care Caseworker wrote to the prison pointing out the breach of their legal duty and asking them to provide a suitable wheelchair and assistance. Our Caseworker eventually threatened Judicial Review if this was not forthcoming. Prisoner B has now been provided with a functioning wheelchair that he can push himself.  The prison now also pays another prisoner on his wing to act as his carer.  **Home Leave**  From a female prisoner’s testimonial:  “My next experience of using PAS came about when my home leaves from HMP Send were stopped without being given any reasons in writing by the authorities.  Although I was told verbally the reasons were that the security in HMP Send considered me as at 'risk of absconding' due to my impending confiscation proceedings in April 2014. I contacted PAS by phone and they kindly took down all the details and asked me to obtain further information.  They then faxed a letter to the resettlement governor requesting the reasons for their decision.  Subsequently my ROTLs were re-instated.  I am still in the dark as to why these were stopped but am grateful to PAS for sorting it out for me so I can continue my resettlement in the community and maintain family ties with my children.”  **News**  **Appeal by PAS and Howard League to Judicial Review Decision**  Unfortunately the High Court dismissed PAS & The Howard League’s legal challenge to legal aid cuts for prisoners. We went to court in early March to seek two separate but linked judicial reviews against restrictions to legal aid imposed by the government in December 2013.  Our argument was that the cuts create an inherently unfair system.  The High Court recognised that legal aid cuts for prisoners may well be unfair and may not even save costs. It concluded however that these are political issues not legal ones. We have appealed the High Court’s decision and are waiting to hear from the Court of Appeal anytime soon.  **­­­­­­**  **Global Giving campaign: now live! – please donate:**  PAS has launched an on-line fundraising campaign for the month of May - to support our legal advice work with women prisoners and disabled prisoners.  Please consider donating to the project through [this link](http://www.globalgiving.co.uk/projects/legal-advice-for-women-and-disabled-prisoners/).  We are taking part in a fundraising challenge, organised by Global Giving, whereby we need to raise at least £2,000 from 50 donors within one month, and may be eligible for additional funding from them if we secure enough donations or donors.  Please help us reach this target – in order to expand our work with vulnerable prisoners.  (In the light of the legal aid cuts, we are having to increase and diversify our sources of fundraising income.)  Thank you for your support.  **PAS Debate: 21st May**  The rule of law has been a fundamental tenet of British justice since the Magna Carta.  Legal aid enables the most marginalised and vulnerable people in our society, including prisoners, to assert their legal rights.  With swingeing cuts to legal aid in the name of austerity, has this put at risk the ability of individuals to protect their legal rights and hold the State to account?  The fourth PAS annual debate takes place on 21 May.  This year’s topic is “Can the Rule of Law survive without Legal Aid?”  To book a free ticket please email [Helen.Brown@prisonersadvice.org.uk](mailto:Helen.Brown@prisonersadvice.org.uk) for further information.  **PAS to feature in BBC Radio 4 Documentary: 12th May**  Our Community Care Caseworker, Laura Orger, and one of PAS’ former clients, were interviewed for [‘Disabled and Behind Bars’](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b042zb50).  Award winning journalist Nikki Fox investigates disability in British prisons, asking former inmates, officials and the Government whether disabled criminals are punished more severely than others.  It will broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on May 12 at 11:00am.  **London Legal Walk: 19th May**  PAS has entered in this year’s sponsored London Legal Walk to take place on 19 May 2014 to raise money for legal advice centres and law centres operating in the London area. If you wish to sponsor us please [click here](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserProfilePage.action?userUrl=PrisonersAdvice2014&isTeam=true).  **The Great Legal Bake**  PAS staff, volunteers and friends rose to the occasion for The Great Legal Bake, eventually producing almost £300 of dough, thanks to the sweet-toothed generosity of The Prison Reform Trust and local law firms. We thank them for their support. |
| **[cid:image003.jpg@01CF1DC9.99EEF4C0](http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk/)Address                                Telephone**  **PAS                                                                         Tel: 020 7253 3323**  **PO Box 46199                                                        Tel: 0845 430 8923**  **London                                                                   Fax: 020 7253 8067**  **EC1M 4XA** |