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| https://gallery.mailchimp.com/be42e7dbf4d9e3f7c70aadf24/images/afc2b90c-8eb7-417e-aa23-901216dfb90d.jpg**Welcome to our December 2014 Update. If you would like further information, please go to our**[website](http://www.prisonersadvice.org.uk/)**or contact us at**admin@prisonersadvice.org.uk ****Prisoners’ Advice Service Update****https://gallery.mailchimp.com/be42e7dbf4d9e3f7c70aadf24/images/f785e640-cd60-418f-9522-8d744ff663f9.jpg**Christmas greetings and appeal**We would like to thank all our subscribers and donors for your kind support over the last 12 months. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!Mindful of your previous support, we ask you to consider donating to our Christmas Appeal please by:* texting: PRIS01£10 to 70070 - to support our work in general, or:
* donating online: via our [Global Giving page](http://www.globalgiving.co.uk/projects/legal-advice-for-women-and-disabled-prisoners/) - to support our work with women prisoners and disabled prisoners specifically.

After the legal aid cuts, we are increasingly reliant on donations to enable our much-needed services to continue.  Thank you for your support of our work. **Success Stories****Restoring normal visits**A prisoner contacted us who had been put on ‘closed visits’.  This means that there was a glass screen between him and his visitors - to prevent all physical contact. This followed an incident in which the dogs which are used to see if visitors are bringing in contraband had indicated some suspicion, but nothing had been found.  According to Prison Service guidelines, closed visits should be imposed for a period of three months, but reviewed monthly to see if they are still appropriate. However, in this case, the prison said that three months was the minimum period.  We wrote and complained about this on the prisoner's behalf.  As a result, the prison reviewed this case and put our client back on normal visits.  It also revised its whole way of conducting reviews in such circumstances, so that prisoners only remain subject to closed visits if considered strictly necessary.     **Ensuring a hospital appointment took place**A prisoner had waited four months for a hospital appointment.  His hearing aid was blocked and he could barely hear.  Prison officers thought he was ignoring them when spoken to.  He was also due to be reviewed for re-categorisation to Category D conditions.  But he was then informed that he was going to be moved imminently to another prison.  This would mean that he could potentially lose his hospital appointment and suffer delays to his re-categorisation review.  Thanks to our intervention, the prison agreed to delay the prison transfer until his hospital appointment and re-categorisation review had taken place. **Temporary transfer to be nearer elderly relatives**A prisoner contacted us from a prison in the North of England where he had been incarcerated for a year and a half.  He had been trying unsuccessfully to get transferred temporarily to a London prison for accumulated visits by elderly relatives who could no longer travel long distances to see him.  We corresponded with prisons in London and eventually sent a letter to the Directorate of High Security.  Following our involvement, the prisoner was temporarily moved to a London prison to enable his accumulated visits from elderly relatives to take place.  **News**https://gallery.mailchimp.com/be42e7dbf4d9e3f7c70aadf24/images/ca160947-3bcf-4c64-a262-3d8964be2d2e.jpg**PAS Peer Advisor awarded ‘Champion of Justice’ Award.**Congratulations toNim Ong!  She was granted an award as ‘Champion ofJustice’  at the London Legal Support Trust’s Tenth Anniversary celebrations in October.  This award celebrates people who are crucial to delivering essential free legal services as “Unsung Heroes".   Nim was one of the first group of prisoner Peer Advisers whom PAS trained in conjunction with St Giles Trust, to establish our prisoner-led prison law advice clinic at HMP Send five years ago. Since then, Nim has naturally assumed the role of clinic co-ordinator due to her unfailing dedication to the task of promoting and running the PAS advice clinic.  The award was collected from Dominic Grieve QC on Nim’s behalf by Naomi Lumsdaine, our Women Prisoners’ Caseworker.   Naomi subsequently presented the award to Nim herself in HMP Send.**Liberty Human Rights Awards**PAS was shortlisted for  the 2014 Liberty Human Rights 'Close to Home' Award in December.  Our citation concluded: “*With so many left without access to legal advice because of the removal of legal aid, PAS’ work is more important than ever.  The organisation is also challenging legal aid cuts, recently obtaining permission to have its case against the Ministry of Justice heard in the court of appeal.*”  We were delighted to be shortlisted for this award.  https://gallery.mailchimp.com/be42e7dbf4d9e3f7c70aadf24/images/f978dee1-f5ed-46f6-9ceb-0746ab4062cb.jpg**PAS Lecture by Lord Ramsbotham**Lord Ramsbotham delivered the annual PAS Lecture in November.  His speech,  entitled “What Price Imprisonment?”, explored many interesting and thought provoking aspects of the prison system.  A media report on the evening can be found on the [Justice Gap website](http://thejusticegap.com/2014/11/lord-ramsbotham-speaks-grayling-prison-suicide-crisis/).  The event was introduced by The High Sheriff of Greater London, Kevin McGrath.  Our Chair, Martine Lignon, introduced the work of PAS. Laura Orger, our Community Care Caseworker closed the event by giving some examples of our work with disabled prisoners.  We would like to thank the McGrath Charitable Trust and Herbert Smith Freehills for their generous support of this event.**Justice Select Committee, Prisons: Planning and Policies Inquiry**Deborah Russo, PAS’s Joint Managing Solicitor, gave oral evidence at the Justice Select Committee’s Inquiry into Prisons: Planning and Policies in September.  This Inquiry is addressing the Government's programme of prison reforms and efficiency savings.  A PDF of the session is available [here](http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/justice-committee/prisons-planning-and-policies/oral/12519.html). The Committee is still taking written evidence online through the [Parliament website.](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/justice-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/prisons-planning-and-policies/)https://gallery.mailchimp.com/be42e7dbf4d9e3f7c70aadf24/images/dcd1f175-6ff0-450d-9a89-0ea94e22e8b7.jpg**“Does Life Mean Life?” – University of Essex**Deborah Russo also spoke at a human rights event at the University of Essex in October.  The topic was ‘Does Life Mean Life?’.  The speakers considered the legality of the whole life tariff.  Deborah was joined on the panel by Simon Creighton, Partner at Bhatt Murphy Solicitors, and Nicola Padfield, barrister and member of the University of Cambridge Faculty of Law. Audio of the event can be found [here](https://www.dropbox.com/s/k6vo11nk0roxrxu/WLT.mp3?dl=0).**New legal advice outreach clinic in HMP New Hall**We have set up a new regular outreach legal advice clinic at HMP New Hall, a women's prison in West Yorkshire. We now run outreach clinics at eight prisons as follows: HMPs Belmarsh, East Sutton Park, Holloway, New Hall, Pentonville, Send, Thameside and Wandsworth.  |

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