

## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**

### **STYAL PRISON – ANOTHER PRISONER DIES 14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2003**

On August 12th 2003 at 11.40 pm Julie Bernadette Walsh was pronounced dead at HMP Styal.

Since 1990 there have been 69 deaths in women's prisons. This is the 6th death at HMP Styal in 12 months. The deaths at Styal account for more than half the number of women's deaths in prison in 2003, already 11, which is the highest number ever recorded.

INQUEST are gravely concerned about these levels of women's deaths and believe that these high numbers are reflected because of the growing population of women prisoners who should not be in prison due to mental illness, drug and alcohol problems.

INQUEST would like to draw attention to inquest verdicts in cases such as the Victoria Winterburn case where it was cited that the prison service's system for identifying those at risk of self harm were lacking. These verdicts and the lessons learnt need to be taken more seriously to prevent future deaths in prison.

Deborah Coles co director at INQUEST states:

"We are deeply concerned at yet another death in Styal Prison. It reveals a real crisis in Styal prison's ability to keep safe the women in its care. It is very frustrating to see the same patterns being repeated, the same mistakes being made but the lessons not being learnt. The seriousness of this situation warrants a fully independent inquiry into the individual deaths and the wider issues they raise. Urgent action must be taken before another woman dies."

INQUEST is also working with Pauline Campbell, mother of Sarah Campbell who died in January this year at Styal. Pauline Campbell believes that:

"There have now been 6 deaths in Styal Prison since August 2002, including my 18 year old daughter Sarah who died in January this year. This latest death at Styal prison is of grave concern and reflects the overall position in the prison service which is one of chaos. I repeat my call for an independent public inquiry which is now urgent."