

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

January 14<sup>th</sup> 2004

### 2 Womens' Deaths in 9 Days at HMP Edmunds Hill

In light of the high press interest surrounding the death of Harold Shipman INQUEST would like to draw attention to the death of April Sherman who died in prison on Tuesday night at 20.00 hours. April is the second woman to have died in HMP Edmunds Hill in the last nine days. The first, Tina Bromley was serving a four month sentence.

April Sherman had been on remand since January 5th 2004 and was found hanging from cell bars. Deborah Coles co-director of INQUEST said:

"INQUEST is absolutely horrified to hear of this latest death, the 16th woman to have died in prison since January 2003. This is a shocking indictment of a criminal justice system that continues to send women, many of whom are vulnerable through mental health, drug and alcohol problems, to prisons that cannot keep them safe. It also exposes failings in the system of investigation of prison deaths. There is a crisis within womens' prisons that warrants the setting up of a wide-ranging independent inquiry that examines *all* the recent deaths, any systemic and individual failings and importantly involves bereaved families and women prisoners. Will this death receive the high level of public scrutiny and concern it deserves?"

**Since January 2003 16 women have taken their own lives in prison .**

#### Deaths of Women in Prison 1999 - 2004

Classification	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Self-Inflicted	5	8	6	9	14	2	44
Non-Self-Inflicted	4	1	1	2	1		9