

PRESS RELEASE AUGUST 9TH 2004
BOY OF 14 BECOMES THE YOUNGEST CHILD TO DIE IN
CUSTODY

INQUEST has been informed about the death of 14-year-old Adam Rickwood who was found hanging in his cell at the Hassockfield Centre – a privately run secure training centre – in County Durham around midnight. INQUEST’s monitoring of deaths in custody reveals that he is the youngest child ever to have died while in the custody of the state.

Adam was the second child to have died in a secure training centre this year. On April 19th 15-year-old Gareth Myatt died at Rainsbrook secure training centre while being restrained by staff.

Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST which campaigns around deaths in custody said:

“The death of a 14-year-old child while in the care and custody of the state is deeply shocking and highlights the dangerous consequences of locking up children. The Home Secretary can no longer resist the call for a public inquiry into the treatment of children by the criminal justice system as supported by the Shrewsbury Coroner following the inquest onto the death in custody of 16-year-old Joseph Scholes. He must take urgent action to address what is a serious and disturbing human rights issue- the death and suffering of children while in the custody of the state.”

Note – Following a 2 week inquest into the death of 16-year-old Joseph Scholes who died in Stoke Heath Young Offenders institution, the Coroner wrote to the Home Secretary supporting the call for a public inquiry (see further information below)

This follows calls by INQUEST, Joseph's mother Yvonne Scholes and Nacro which has received widespread support from MPs, Lords, leading QCs and penal reform and children's charities.

INQUEST is working with the families of Gareth Myatt and Joseph Scholes

Note

Since 1990 25 children have taken their own lives in prison. 2 children have died in secure training centres.