

PRESS RELEASE 22 AUGUST 2005

PAUL COKER – ANOTHER BLACK DEATH IN METROPOLITAN POLICE CUSTODY

32-year-old Paul Coker died on 5 August in a police cell in Plumstead, south-east London. It was reported to the family that he was restrained by police officers and arrested for causing a breach of the peace. He died within two hours of his arrival at the station.

The initial post mortem results were inconclusive and the family has instructed an independent pathologist to conduct a second examination. The IPCC are carrying out an investigation into his death.

Helen Shaw co-director of INQUEST said:

“Despite numerous deaths documented by INQUEST over the last 10 years involving dangerous restraint techniques, yet another young black man has died following arrest by the Metropolitan Police. Inquest after inquest has examined and highlighted concerns about the use restraint and the associated dangers of such techniques. But it appears yet again that lessons have not been learned.

Paul’s death also raises other concerns about the level of care, checks and medical intervention he received in Plumstead Police Station and whether he should have been taken straight to hospital.

The Coker family has lost a loved son and brother. The Metropolitan police have yet another addition to their shameful long list of black deaths which have resulted from the use of force.”

INQUEST is working with the Coker family and their lawyers, Deighton Guedella solicitors. INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner’s courts.

Black & Minority Ethnic deaths in Police Custody 1995-2005

Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Custody	3	9	11	8	11	4	6	8	11	1	3	75
Shooting	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4

Source: INQUEST monitoring