

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 5 May 2006

INQUEST OPENS INTO THE DEATH OF REBECCA TURNER AT HMP LOW NEWTON

10am Tuesday 9 May 2006 before HM Coroner Mr Tweddle
Sitting at Chester-le-Street Magistrates Court
Newcastle Road
Chester-le-Street
Co Durham
DH3 3UA

The Inquest into the death of 22 year old Rebecca Turner is due to start on 9 May 2006. The hearing is expected to last three days.

Rebecca, a mother of two young children, was found hanging in her cell on the Induction Wing at HMP Low Newton on 28 July 2004. She died within two days of arriving at the prison. Rebecca had a history of heroin use but at the time of being sentenced was on a methadone treatment programme.

Rebecca's family have a number of areas of concern which they hope the inquest will examine. They are:

- How Rebecca's detoxification was managed on arrival at HMP Low Newton and before her death;
- the apparent failure of the prison to abide by the National Prison Service Detoxification Policy;
- management of bullying of Rebecca;
- the decision to place her in cellular confinement which essentially meant that an extremely vulnerable young woman was isolated whilst attempting to withdraw from heroin.

Janet Wade, Rebecca's mother, commented:

"It is nearly two years since my daughter died. The long wait for the inquest into her death has been an ordeal for all the family. I have many questions about the circumstances surrounding Rebecca's death in prison and I hope to get some answers."

Deborah Coles, Co-Director of INQUEST said:

“The death of this young woman shows the continued failure of prisons to keep the women in their care safe and their failure to learn lessons from previous deaths.”

The family are being represented by INQUEST Lawyers Group members barrister Nick Stanage from Garden Court Chambers, Manchester, instructed by Fiona Borrill of Lester Morrill Solicitors, Leeds.

Notes to editors:

Self inflicted deaths of women in prison England & Wales 2000-date

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
8	6	9	14	13	4	1

Source: INQUEST monitoring

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.

Further Information	www.inquest.org.uk
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