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TWO WOMEN DIE IN PRISON WITHIN TEN DAYS

INQUEST is seriously alarmed by the fact that already this year two women have taken their own lives in prison. Caroline Powell died on 5 January aged 26 while on remand at HMP Eastwood Park, and 28-year old Lucy Wood died on 15 January at HMP Peterborough. The latter privately-run establishment opened in early 2005 as a Category B prison and is the first purpose-built establishment to hold both male and female prisoners. Many of the women prisoners were transferred to Peterborough after HMP Bullwood Hall was re-roled as a men's prison in May 2006.

There were three self-inflicted deaths of women in prison in 2006 and a number of verdicts were returned at inquests which were highly critical of the prison regimes and of the care afforded to vulnerable women. See the press section of the INQUEST website for further details.

Deborah Coles, Co-director of INQUEST, said in response to the deaths:

"We are saddened and angered by these deaths that remind us of the tragic consequences of criminal justice policies that use prison as a dumping ground for some of the most vulnerable people in society. The government must publish and respond as a matter of urgency to the report of Baroness Corston's review of women in the criminal justice system set up last year in response to parliamentary and public disquiet about deaths of women in prison."

Notes to editors:

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 and conducts policy, research and parliamentary work on the issues arising from the deaths and their investigation.

INQUEST is currently undertaking research into women's deaths in prison custody. A report on the research will be published in Spring 2007.

Deaths of women in prison in the last 5 years							
Classification	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Self-Inflicted	9	14	13	4	3	2	45
Other Non-natural causes	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Non-Self-Inflicted	2	1	7	2	3	0	15

Source: INQUEST Casework and monitoring

Further information	www.inquest.org.uk
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