

For immediate release 29 November 2007

15 YEAR OLD BOY DIES IN CUSTODY

This morning 15 year old Liam McManus was found hanging from a bed sheet tied to the window bars in a single cell on normal location in HMYOI Lancaster Farms. He was serving a sentence of 1 month and 14 days for breach of licence.

Deborah Coles, co-director of INQUEST said:

“The responsibility for this death rests with a criminal justice system that sends a child to prison for 1 month and 14 days. This death raises issues that go beyond the prison walls and to the heart of society’s collective responsibility for tolerating a system that sends children into institutions that cannot keep them safe.”

Liam McManus is the 30th child to die in penal custody since 1990 and the fifth 15 year old to die. INQUEST remains convinced that the only way to prevent the suffering of children in custody and to ensure that more children do not die or are not injured is to conduct a holistic inquiry in public of the juvenile justice system. Such an inquiry should take place with the proper involvement of families, children and those working within the system. Successive governments have resisted this inquiry call.

Notes to editors:

INQUEST is currently supporting the family of 16 year old Gareth Price found hanging in Lancaster Farms in January 2005. The inquest into his death opened on 5 November 2007 and continues before HM Coroner for Preston, North and South West Lancashire District, Dr James Adeley Sitting at Lancaster Shire Hall, Castle Parade, Lancaster, LA1 1YJ.

INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody.

Further Information	
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