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HIGHLY CRITICAL VERDICT RETURNED AT INQUEST INTO DEATH OF MARTIN GREEN AT HMP BLAKENHURST

The jury in the inquest into the death of 25 year old Martin Green who died in HMP Blakenhurst on 15 July 2002, today returned a highly critical narrative verdict following a four week inquest. The jury found that the medical care given to Martin was inadequate and serious failures in his treatment contributed to his death.

Martin Green was found dead in his cell in the healthcare centre at HMP Blakenhurst whilst undergoing detoxification. The cause of death was dehydration and electrolyte imbalance as a consequence of repeated vomiting. Martin, who was 188cm (6ft 2in) tall, weighed just 43kg (6st 10lbs) at the time of his death.

The jury made numerous criticisms in their verdict, including:

- an overall lack of nursing care;
- failure to accurately record or monitor any change in Mr Green's weight;
- no clear instructions to nursing staff as to treatment and continuity of care;
- inadequate record keeping which led to a breakdown in effective communication and diagnosis;
- an inadequate care plan focussed only on withdrawal and detoxification, which led to a failure to act on other symptoms;
- failure to put in place monitoring processes, such as a fluid balance chart, despite evidence of dehydration;
- staffing levels which compromised Mr Green's care and resulted in the delay in transferring him to hospital.

The jury concluded:

"There was a general lack of management support and teamwork [within the prison]... The frequency of vomiting and lack of hydration in someone with an extremely low body mass index, coupled with poor assessment, planning and communication, contributed significantly to Mr Green's death."

Pamela Green, Martin's mother commented:

"We are pleased that the jury obviously share the families concerns as to Martin's appalling treatment. However, we remain angry that none of the nurses or doctors have faced any disciplinary proceedings when the standard of care Martin received was so far below any reasonable standards."

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Deborah Coles, co-director of INQUEST said:

“The shocking circumstances of this death raise very serious questions about the quality of medical care afforded prisoners in the custody and care of the state. Martin Green was owed a particular duty of care and that duty was not met. As a result he died an inhuman and degrading death.”

Martin Green’s mother was represented at the inquest by Nighat Sahi of Christian Khan Solicitors and barrister Colin Hutchinson of Garden Court Chambers. Both are members of the INQUEST Lawyers Group.

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 on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner’s courts.

Further Information	www.inquest.org.uk
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