

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 2 October 2008

INQUEST INTO DEATH OF VULNERABLE PRISONER IN HMP SWANSEA BEGINS

10am Monday 6 October 2008

Sitting before HM Coroner Philip Rogers,

6, 7 and 9 October at The Guildhall, Swansea, SA1 4PE and

13, 14 and 15 October at Swansea Council Offices, Penllergaer, SA4

The inquest into the death of Jason Thompson, a 26 year old man who was found hanged in HMP Swansea on 1 November 2004 will start on Monday 6 October 2008 and is expected to last a total of six days. Jason's family has waited nearly four years for the inquest into his death.

On 4 October 2004 Jason was remanded to Swansea prison on charges of criminal damage. At the time of his arrest and whilst in police custody Jason exhibited disturbed and suicidal behaviour and was subsequently placed on a self harm monitoring form (F2052SH) on his arrival at the prison. Jason's behaviour remained extremely disturbed and between 5 and 18 October he made six self harm attempts, all of which involved him tying a ligature around his neck. On the morning of 1 November Jason was discovered suspended by a bed sheet from the window bars of his cell.

The family hopes the inquest will examine:

- management of the F2052SH self harm monitoring procedure including the decision to close the form on 21 October;
- the adequacy of communication between prison officers and healthcare professionals, relating to the risk Jason posed to himself;
- whether staff perceived Jason as petulant and manipulative and how this might have affected his care;
- whether Jason was provided suitable support given his evident problems;
- why the family were not notified following Jason's self harm attempts.

Dorothy Thomas, Jason's mother, commented:

"The four years since Jason's death have been a terrible ordeal for all the family. We believe that Jason needed professional help and we tried to get this help for Jason before he was remanded to Swansea. We have many questions about the care he received in prison, which we hope will be answered at the inquest."

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Mr Thompson's family will be represented at the inquest by INQUEST Lawyers Group members Hannah Chambers (Bhatt Murphy Solicitors) and barrister Adam Straw (Took's Court Chambers)

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.

CONTACTS:

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