

PRESS RELEASE

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INQUEST TO OPEN INTO THE DEATH OF VULNERABLE PRISONER RORY KINLOCH AT HMP BRIXTON

10.00am Tuesday 20 October 2009

Sitting before HM Deputy Coroner for London (Inner South), Andrew Walker
HM Coroner's Court, Tennis Street, London SE1 1YD

Rory Kinloch was found dead in his cell in HMP Brixton in the early hours of 15 June 2006, aged 38. His cellmate had become aware that Rory was not breathing and raised the alarm. The cause of death was identified as pneumonia.

Rory, who had been remanded to the prison for failing to answer a warrant, suffered from chronic asthma and was on a Subutex detoxification programme in the community. On arrival at Brixton a week before his death, he was prescribed a methadone detoxification programme. Despite his reported history of respiratory illness Rory's chest was not examined by a doctor and there was no follow up when he later missed a doctor's appointment. Prison staff, including the substance misuse nurses who administered his methadone every day, claimed not to have noticed that he appeared unwell in the days leading up to his death. This is contradicted by reports from his family and from other prisoners; for example, on the day before he died a prisoner noted that he had seen him slumped on the floor by the medication dispensing hatch.

The inquest into Rory's death has been subject to serious delay which has caused great distress to his family and frustrated the opportunity to learn lessons. Rory's mother Madeleine commented:

At the beginning we were told we'd have the inquest in six months, which then seemed pretty awful, but we have had to wait three and a half years which has been unbearable for the family.

Rory's family hope that the inquest will answer a number of serious concerns about Rory's death and his treatment and care during his short time in HMP Brixton:

- Why Rory's chest was not examined, even though he had a history of serious asthma and had told staff he had recently had pneumonia.
- The appropriateness of prescribing methadone to Rory, given his history of respiratory problems.
- The adequacy of the health care provided to Rory in prison and whether any failings in his treatment and care contributed to his death.

Inquest

Rory Kinloch's family is represented by INQUEST Lawyers group members barrister Paula Sparks of Doughty Street Chambers, instructed by Carolynn Gallwey of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors.

Notes to editors:

INQUEST is the only organisation in England and Wales that provides a specialist, comprehensive advice service on contentious deaths and their investigation to bereaved people, lawyers, other advice and support agencies, the media, parliamentarians and the wider public. Its casework priorities are deaths in prison and in police custody, in immigration detention and in secure training centres. INQUEST develops policy proposals and undertakes research to campaign for changes to the inquest and investigation process, reduce the number of custodial deaths, and improve the treatment and care of those within the institutions where the deaths occur.

INQUEST is campaigning to ensure that the Coroners and Justice Bill 2009 results in fundamental reform of an inquest system currently hampered by delay, inconsistency of approach and lack of resources and unable to fulfil its vital function of preventing unnecessary deaths.

The government must also make changes to ensure that bereaved families can participate effectively in inquest hearings by having equal access, alongside the police and Prison Service, to non means-tested public funding for their legal representation. [INQUEST's briefing on the Coroners & Justice Bill](#)

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