

**INQUEST PRESS RELEASE  
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**JURY SLATE SYSTEMS AT HMP STYAL IN DAMNING INQUEST  
VERDICT**

The jury in the inquest of Anna Baker have returned a damning verdict on the treatment and care while on remand in Styal prison. The verdict followed an eight day inquest held in Warrington Town Hall Coroners Court - in front of HM Coroner for Cheshire Nicholas Rheinberg

Anna died on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2002 after she was found hanging in her cell. Anna was the second of six women to die in a 12 month period at HMP Styal.

In returning a narrative verdict the jury recorded that they found that Anna's death by hanging was contributed to by the following :

1. Initial assessment on admission to HMP Styal was inadequate in respect of determining Anna's individual situation and needs.
2. Anna was probably withdrawing from drugs whilst on remand as a result of inappropriate and insufficient detoxification program exacerbated by a lack of staff, staff training and funding.
3. The management of the F2052SH system was extremely concerning with a lack of communication between staff and departments. No reference was made to the previous F2052SH. The decision to leave Anna, whilst on an open F2052SH, isolated in a cell with a bunk bed was totally inappropriate.
4. There appeared to be a total lack of awareness and staff training in the management of persons at risk of self harm and suicide.

Deborah Coles co-director of the advice and campaign group INQUEST said:  
"Anna's death is a harrowing example of institutional neglect and systemic failings and the jury's detailed and critical findings should be a matter of shame for Styal prison management and the Prison Service who have failed to act on previous warnings. The Chief Inspector of Prisons in her report published in October 2002 identified systemic failings particularly in the treatment and care of women withdrawing from drugs and the detoxification facilities available. That no action was taken resulted in Anna's death which is an utter disgrace for which the Prison Service must be held to account."

Frances Matthews mother of Anna said: “My daughter Anna was a bright, outgoing and spirited girl. At the time of her death she was LEGALLY INNOCENT of any crime. She presented with specific healthcare needs which HMP Styal singularly failed to address. They treated her as a discipline problem rather than as a person in need of appropriate medical care. I’m very relieved that the jury’s verdict reflects the truth of the situation around Anna’s death.”

## Notes to Editors

There is a crisis in women’s prisons highlighted by the increasing number of deaths and incidents of self-harm. Last year 14 women died in prison and already this year 13 women have died.

The family was being represented by INQUEST Lawyers Group members Richard Hermer, barrister and Carolynn Gallwey solicitor, Bhatt Murphy solicitors.

Name	Cause	Sex	Ethnicity	Age	Status	DateOfDeath	Classification	Establishment
Julie Walsh	Overdose	F	UK White	39	Unsentenced	12/08/2003	Self-Inflicted	HMP Styal
Hayley Williams	Hanging	F	UK White	41	Awaiting Sentence	04/06/2003	Self-Inflicted	HMP Styal
Jolene Willis	Hanging	F	UK White	25	Sentenced	20/04/2003	Self-Inflicted	HMP Styal
Sarah Campbell	Overdose	F	UK White	18	Sentenced	18/01/2003	Self-Inflicted	HMP Styal
Anna Baker	Hanging	F	UK Black	29	Trial	26/11/2002	Self-Inflicted	HMP Styal
Nissa Ann Smith	Hanging	F	UK White	20	Remanded	10/08/2002	Self-Inflicted	HMP Styal