

PRESS RELEASE

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FAMILY DISAPPOINTED WITH VERDICT AT INQUEST INTO DEATH OF JESSICA ADAM AT HMP NEW HALL

Today, Christine Wood, mother of 22 year old Jessica Adam said:

"I am very disappointed with the verdict. The jury were invited to comment on various issues and they have chosen not to do so. I still feel that the prison failed my daughter."

Jessica, 22, was found hanging by her shoelaces, days into her sentence at HMP New Hall Prison, Wakefield. During the 3 day inquest the jury heard evidence that:

- Jessica had just completed the prisons 10 day detoxification scheme under medical care for her serious heroin and crack dependency, before transferring to a regular wing.
- She had communicated her distress at the length of her sentence, four years for theft and handling of stolen goods, to prison officers.
- Jessica's mother, Christine Wood, had warned prison officers of her daughter's previous serious act of self harm on at least one occasion.

Today, the jury returned a narrative verdict saying that "Jessica was concerned about a number of matters" and concluded that "she took her own life while the balance of her mind was disturbed but she did not intend to die."

Jessica Adam was the fifth of ten women to die a self-inflicted death at HMP New Hall since the beginning of 2002.

Helen Shaw, co-director of INQUEST said:

"The inquest heard evidence about the prison's inability to keep a vulnerable woman safe and we are not convinced, in light of this verdict, that the prison service will take any action to prevent further deaths. Once again this raises concerns about the adequacy of the inquest system to ensure that lessons are learned and further deaths are prevented."

The family were represented by barrister Colin Hutchinson of Garden Court Chambers instructed by Joanne Kearsley from Farleys Solicitors.

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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.

Deaths of women in Prison 2000-2005

Classification	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Self-Inflicted	8	6	9	14	13	4	54
Non-Self-Inflicted	1	1	2	1	7	2	14
Awaiting Classification	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Self inflicted deaths 2002-date at HMP New Hall

Name	Date of Death	Ethnicity	Age	Status	Cause
Victoria Robinson	02/02/2005	UK White	26	Remanded	Hanging
Mandy Pearson	12/10/2004	UK White	37	Sentenced	Hanging
Marie Walsh	29/07/2004	UK White	29	Awaiting Sentence	Hanging
Louise Davis	18/04/2004	White	32	Sentenced	Hanging
Petra Blanksby	24/11/2003	UK White	19	Remanded	Hanging
Jessica Adam	21/06/2003	UK White	22	Sentenced	Hanging
Helena Price	14/02/2003	White	27	Sentenced	Hanging
Jacqueline McPartline	18/08/2002	UK White	32	Sentenced	Hanging
Miranda Cox	26/01/2002	UK White	41	Remanded	Hanging
Victoria Winterburn	04/01/2002	UK White	21	Remanded	Hanging

Source: INQUEST Casework and monitoring