

Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The review has three principal aims:

- To examine the procedures and processes surrounding deaths and serious incidents in police custody, including the lead up to such incidents, the immediate aftermath, through to the conclusion of official investigations. It should consider the extent to which ethnicity is a factor in such incidents. The review should include a particular focus on family involvement and their support experience at all stages.
- To examine and identify the reasons and obstacles as to why the current investigation system has fallen short of many families' needs and expectations, with particular reference to the importance of accountability of those involved and sustained learning following such incidents.
- To identify areas for improvement and develop recommendations seeking to ensure appropriate, humane institutional treatment when such incidents, particularly deaths in or following detention in police custody, occur. Recommendations should consider the safety and welfare of all those in the police custody environment, including detainees and police officers and staff. The aim should be to enhance the safety of the police custody setting for all.

BACKGROUND

On 23 July 2015 the Home Secretary announced a major review into deaths and serious incidents in police custody. This review is being conducted by the Rt. Hon. Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC, who has the ability to work closely with victims, families and the police alike, and with a proven track record of being willing to ask difficult questions.

She is examining the procedures and processes surrounding deaths and serious incidents in police custody, including the lead up to such incidents, the immediate aftermath, through to the conclusion of official investigations. The review is scheduled to report in the summer of 2016.

The review will not reopen and reinvestigate past cases and it will not interfere with ongoing inquests, investigations or IPCC reviews which have yet to be completed.

At its heart will be the experiences of the families of those who have died in custody and the voices of victims of other serious incidents.

INQUEST

When the Home Secretary announced her intention to hold this review she said she would ask INQUEST – an organisation that has long campaigned on these issues –

to consider a formal role in the Review to ensure that the voices of families who have lost loved ones in police custody are heard. As a result, INQUEST's Director Deborah Coles has agreed to act as a Special Advisor to the Chair.

REFERENCE GROUP

Dame Elish has convened a Reference Group to assist and advise her during the course of the Review. The Group membership is comprised of: -

- Raju Bhatt (Bhatt Murphy Solicitors)
- Deborah Coles (Director of INQUEST)
- DCC Nick Ephgrave (National Policing Lead for Custody)
- Karon Monaghan QC (Matrix Chambers)