



Rory Stewart
OBE MP

We need to do much more to improve the state of our prisons. I have been in the job for six weeks and I am looking very carefully at the HMIP reports, particularly the recent ones on HMP Liverpool and HMP Nottingham. I think we should start with the basics, our prisons should be decent, clean, safe and secure. Getting that right is vital and is the foundation for all the other work that we can do together on rehabilitation, education and ultimately resettlement.

“ We have a duty towards prisoners, prison officers and society to protect people inside prisons and ultimately protect the public. ”

Keeping safe



Juliet Lyon CBE

It's a year since the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody (IAP), working with Inside Time, Prison Radio and the Samaritans, launched our Keeping Safe plan. In February 2017 we called on people in prison to say how best to prevent suicide and self-harm. Over 150 prisoners across 60 prisons wrote or phoned in and said how to keep people safe.

No one should die a bleak lonely death in prison. Everyone is worth more than that. Masses of work to prevent suicide and self-harm is being done by Samaritan listeners, peer supporters, prison staff, safer custody officials, nurses, chaplains, IMB's and charities. Now the new Minister for Justice, Rory Stewart, has written to you through the pages of Inside

Time to say that he will improve the state of our prisons and 'learn from the advice that many of you provided to the Independent Advisory Panel' which is fantastic. He is clear that there is much more to do before prisons are the decent, clean, safe and secure places they should be.

One man wrote to the IAP that 'it's the basics... There's no point in doing anything until you get the BASICS right'. Now the Minister is promising to 'start with the basics'. Some things take longer than others and, let's face it, there's a lot to put right. But I think you can expect, and be part of, change across the prison system. Self-inflicted deaths are going down thank goodness. We have to prevent self-harm and avoid many of the so-called natural deaths too. There are reasons to be hopeful: together we can keep people safe.'

Any loss of life is a terrible tragedy and the Prison Service will do all it can to prevent any such tragedies but we also need to work together with prisoners and great charities, such as Samaritan listeners, and learn from the advice many of you provided to the Independent Advisory Panel. We have a duty towards prisoners, prison officers and society to protect people inside prisons and ultimately protect the public.

Rory Stewart is the Minister of State for the Ministry of Justice

Juliet Lyon CBE is Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody (IAP)

What do you think are the best ways to prevent self-harm and suicide in prison and keep people safe? Write to: 'FREEPOST IAP' IAP must be in capital letters, no stamp and nothing else on the envelope.

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