



Independent
Advisory Panel
on Deaths
in Custody

Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody

Minutes of IAPDC meeting: 6 May 2025

Attendees:

Lynn Emslie - Chair
Kate Eves
Jake Hard
Andrew Harris
Seena Fazel

Jane Urquhart, MoJ – for item 3
Adam Colby, MoJ – for item 3
Dominic Herrington, MoJ – for item 5
Steve Gill, MoJ - for item 5

Declaration of interests

1. No declarations of interest were reported.

Item 1: Minutes and actions from last meeting

2. There were no comments on minutes from the previous meeting.
3. Lynn noted that all actions were complete and highlighted that the two research reports had been received. Seena had spoken with the researcher for the modelling report and there were some final amendments such as ensuring correct tenses are used and emphasizing the stronger findings from the report – the Secretariat will review the report and update these. Lynn noted that the paper will help to offer Ministers timely advice on capacity pressures and make bold decisions. Seena noted that the report is strong on methods but weaker on the recommendations. The ligature points report is also almost complete.

Action 1 – Secretariat to update the capacity modelling report as discussed.

Item 2: IAPDC Workplan 2025-26

4. **Post police-custody suicides:** Lynn provided an update on the project and the recent working group. Kate still had some comments she wanted to provide on the guidance.
5. **Engagement with families:** Kate has arranged to observe a four-day Family Liaison Officer training at HMPPS and would like to follow up with other custodial

settings. Jake noted that the recent HO Detention Services leaflet on bereaved families seemed sensible. Kate stated that the starting point should be to look at the Panel's feedback on the prison service leaflet. The Secretariat will collate Panel member comments and feed back.

6. **Website:** Kate and Lana met to discuss next steps on the learning library. Kate suggested using feedback from the PSG on inclusion of materials and papers, and to utilise their expertise to test changes and navigation issues. The Secretariat raised the question of how deliverable the work will be. Lynn suggested holding a separate meeting to formulate a plan, and agreed to discuss at the next Panel only session in June.
7. The Secretariat suggested that Panel members may want to see the Ministerial Board workplan and direct work accordingly. The Panel should consider which priorities and objectives the work items touch on. Co-sponsors would also find it helpful to know what the Panel's key priorities are. Andrew stated that his overwhelming priority seems to be prisons. Seena noted that the Panel have done a lot of work on prisons in the past and that it would be better to highlight new work in other custody settings. Jake suggested selecting specific work from each of the custody area as priorities. Lynn noted that mental health is prevalent in all settings, and that she is keen to raise its profile and to frame the workplan around this. She also noted that HO policing officials were interested in proposed areas of focus when Lynn had a meeting with them last week. Panel members suggested some formatting changes to the layout of the workplan which the Secretariat will amend and circulate.

Action 2 – Secretariat to circulate restructured workplan.

Item 3: Deaths in Approved Premises

8. Lynn introduced Jane Urquhart and Adam Colby from the Community Accommodation Service to provide an overview of Approved Premises (AP). AP is temporary residential accommodation used for public protection purposes, staffed 24 hours a day at 104 sites across England & Wales (14 of which are Independent APs) and providing around 2340 places. The usual length of stay is 12 weeks with longer placements available at some sites for those classified as being higher risk or with more complex needs. All premises have an overnight curfew and are monitored with CCTV, and all have mandatory substance testing in place.
9. AP became a national service in 2019, operating in six areas, each led by a Head of Public Protection. This has enabled greater consistency in their approach to work, in the development of a Performance and Quality function, and has enabled the introduction of wellbeing and support approaches for staff.
10. The team discussed the reduction in deaths they have achieved, and introduction of processes that increase the ability of staff to support people who may be at risk of self-harm. They have focussed on improving approaches to substance misuse, in establishing a drug strategy team with leads for each region, and have successfully sought legislative change to enable mandatory substance testing. They have also directed significant focus on learning from deaths and serious incident near misses.

11. In response to questions, the team advised that in relation to recognising substance misuse, test sample results identify the actual drugs used, and that death rates are higher than in prisons. Seena asked about the age demographic and average length of stay; the team will report back.

Action 3 – AP team to send panel age demographic information for the overall AP population, and a figure for average length of stay.

Item 4: Preparation for MBDC, incl. MHA investigations

12. Jake stated that he was still waiting to have meetings with the PHSO and PPO about the Panel's report and wanted these to take place before the MBDC meeting. Lynn suggested perhaps circulating the report to a few more people before finalising it but other members were keen to update v.20 and to focus on the discussion with MBDC members. Lynn explained that she would be asking the MBDC for next steps, their appetite for taking this work forward and suggested timescales. The Secretariat explained the role of the MBDC and the Panel discussed how to best approach engaging with Ministers on the report during the Board and after it.
13. Andrew suggested the Panel may want to use a statistician from time to time to help with their response to government statistics and elsewhere; Seena stated that the Panel requirements are likely to be outside the expertise of in-house statisticians and he would not recommend it.
14. Lynn noted that the Panel were also meeting with Baroness Merron ahead of the MBDC and that the top priority for discussion at the meeting will be the MHA report. Other issues to raise are the Mental Health Bill and the impact on prisons – there was still a lack of data on how many people were awaiting an assessment and/or a bed – as well as the Rapid Review and Mortality Data Working Group. Jake asked to add ending the use of remand for the individual's own safety to the list, another area where it would be interesting to see the data.

Item 5: HMPPS Enable programme update

15. Lynn introduced Dominic Herrington and Steve Gill from HMPPS, to provide an update on the HMPPS Enable programme which was designed to help create a vision of the Prison Service as an employer of choice, where people feel safe, supported, valued, confident in their skills and their ability to make a difference. Workforce and resources will be managed efficiently, providing clarity about delivery expectations, with structures and processes that support and fairly reward those that work within them. Prisons will aim to have a positive and enabling culture, supported by positive, pro-social and boundaried relationships between staff and the people in their care.
16. Enable is the vehicle HMPPS will use to deliver the prison workforce transformation through:
- **Capability** to provide prison staff with continued professional development and role-specific capability development packages.

- **Leadership** by defining what is required and expected from leaders and provide new development options to support them.
 - **Support for staff** by introducing new systems of reflective practice and specialist roles to support and develop new staff, and to create more innovative ways to progress talented colleagues in the service with clear career options and opportunities.
 - **Working Environments** by upgrading training environments, designing and implementing new specialist roles to provide development routes for prison staff to support regimes.
17. Seena suggested a priority should be enabling governors to obtain research by external and independent people, thereby creating time for them to step back and reflect. He stated that relationships with healthcare staff were probably more important than with prison staff. The team stated that underpinning all work is the offender personality disorder pathway, and that training modules for prison staff are designed for the first couple of years; however, they do not have the authority to put NHS staff through the same courses.
18. Lynn asked about releasing staff for training. This is an ongoing issue but can be managed by repurposing resources and Enable is investing in additional staffing time which will free people up to deliver and attend appropriate training.

Item 6: Practitioner and Stakeholder Group update

19. A paper providing an update on the Group's membership and engagement had been circulated. Andrew state he was keen to separate the two functions – informing the PSG of the Panel's work and disseminating their work. He and Jake both favoured using the Group for roundtable events and working groups linked to specific projects. Panel members discussed other options for utilising their expertise such as an annual social event, consultations on the workplan, inviting them to the policy forum on ligature points, and engaging them on the family liaison work. The Panel will discuss further at the next Panel only meeting.

Item 7: New commissioned work

20. **Use of force** – this could include lethal and 'less lethal' (i.e. tasers) weapons. Kate will explore what data on these is available. Seena suggested that any literature review should have an international focus, as there will be common themes particularly in Western Europe.
21. **Literature review** looking at disproportionality in policing - at the last meeting with the HO they stated that they were not sure what data they hold. Kate will review the readout of that meeting, look at what is available and report back on her findings.
22. **PFD report analysis** – Andrew has had an initial exchange with Georgia Richards and will need to consider how to engage her on taking this further.

Action 4 – Kate to report back her findings on use of force data and disproportionality.

Action 5 – Andrew and Secretariat to meet to discuss next steps on the PFD reports workstream.

Item 8: AOB

23. The Secretariat provided an update on staffing and funding.

Next Meeting: 26 June 2025

Actions:

- Secretariat to update the capacity modelling report as discussed
- Secretariat to circulate restructured workplan
- AP team to send panel age demographic information for the overall AP population, and a figure for average length of stay
- Kate to report back her findings on use of force data and disproportionality
- Andrew and Secretariat to meet to discuss next steps on the PFD reports workstream.