

News story: Appointments to the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care, has appointed Deborah Coles, Professor Seena Fazel, Professor Jennifer Shaw, Jenny Talbot OBE and John Wadham as Members of the Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021.

The Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody formally commenced operation on 1 April 2009 and is jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Home Office. The Council consists of 3 tiers:

- Ministerial Board on Deaths in Custody
- Independent Advisory Panel (IAP)
- Practitioner and Stakeholder Group

IAP forms the second tier of the Ministerial Council on Deaths In Custody. The remit of the Council (and IAP) covers deaths which occur in prisons, in or following police custody, immigration detention, the deaths of residents of approved premises and the deaths of those detained under the Mental Health Act (MHA) in hospital.

The role of IAP, an arms-length body, is to provide independent advice and expertise to the Ministerial Board. It provides guidance on policy and best practice across sectors and makes recommendations to Ministers and operational services. IAP's aim is to bring about a continuing and sustained reduction in the number and rate of deaths in all forms of state custody in England and Wales.

Deborah Coles is Director of INQUEST. She is an experienced strategic thinker and lobbyist for social justice with particular expertise on the investigation of deaths in custody and detention and the treatment of bereaved people in the UK and internationally.

Seena Fazel is a Professor of Forensic Psychiatry at the University of Oxford, a Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellow in Clinical Science, and honorary consultant forensic psychiatrist for Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. He works clinically in a local prison. His main research interests are on suicidal behaviour in prisoners, mental health of prisoners, and risk assessment in criminal justice and mental health.

Jennifer Shaw is Professor of Forensic Psychiatry, University of Manchester and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. Her research interests include suicide primarily within the criminal justice system, homicide and the mental health of prisoners. She has

over thirty years experience working clinically in the NHS.

Jenny Talbot has undertaken significant research on people with learning disabilities in the criminal justice system; she works for the Prison Reform Trust

John Wadham is a human rights lawyer and currently chair of the National Preventative Mechanism set up by the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which brings together 21 statutory bodies monitoring detention in all forms of state custody in the UK.

John Wadham has stood as a Labour Party candidate – for the Uttlesford District Council 2015 and spoken at one public meeting in Saffron Walden Town Hall in 2015 as Labour Candidate.

The rest of the new members declared no political activity.

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News story: Death of Official Solicitor Alastair Pitblado

For more than a decade Alastair was dedicated to his role representing in court those who did not have the mental capacity or means to represent themselves. Alastair also took on the role of Public Trustee in October 2016.

The Ministry of Justice's Permanent Secretary, Richard Heaton, paid tribute to Alastair:

Like many colleagues, I have greatly admired Alastair's long and dedicated service as Official Solicitor and, more recently, as Public Trustee. Alastair was an ardent advocate for the rights of the vulnerable and was at the forefront of developments in that area of law. I also remember well his earlier career as a highly respected member of the Government Legal Service.

I know that he will be greatly missed by those members of the judiciary and staff who were fortunate to work with him. But I think the support provided over the years to so many vulnerable people, by Alastair himself and by his office, should be regarded as a tribute to him and a mark of his achievement.

On behalf of the department, I offer my sincere condolences to Alastair's family and friends.

The 3 Deputy Official Solicitors and the Deputy Public Trustee will be covering the Official Solicitor and Public Trustee's statutory and leadership responsibilities.

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[News story: Improving productivity for businesses: apply for funding](#)

The [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) (BEIS) has up to £2 million to invest in trials of innovative ways to improve productivity for micro, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).

The funding is part of the government's Business Basics Programme, announced as part of the modern Industrial Strategy.

The aim of the programme is to identify and test ideas that encourage SMEs to adopt existing technology and management practices that would improve their productivity.

[Find out more about the Industrial Strategy.](#)

Projects should show how to improve SME productivity

The competition will fund 2 types of project, proof of concept or feasibility studies and full-scale trials. If a proof of concept is successful, there is potential to access further funding to move the project into a full-scale trial in the future.

Projects should look at how to increase the adoption of technology and business practices to improve the productivity of SMEs. This could include:

- adopting existing technology, such as accountancy, CRM or HR software, cloud computing or payment systems
- adopting modern business practices, such as leadership and management capabilities or developing an innovation culture
- a combination of the 2 approaches above

Ideas could include increasing awareness about the benefits of technology, how to create interest in adopting new technology and business practices,

making the benefits of new technology clearer and providing advice and support.

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 4 September 2018
- projects can be led by a business, public sector, academic, charity or trade organisation working alone or with partners
- we expect projects for full trials to have costs of up to £400,000 and to last between 3 and 12 months
- we expect proof of concept projects and feasibility studies to have costs of up to £60,000 and to last between 3 and 6 months
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
- a briefing event will be held on 12 July 2018

[Find out more about the competition for proof of concept projects and apply.](#)

[Find out more about the competition for full-scale trials and apply.](#)