

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.