

PRISONERS' ADVICE SERVICE

THE INDEPENDENT LEGAL CHARITY PROVIDING INFORMATION AND
REPRESENTATION TO PRISONERS

JUSTICE BEHIND BARS

Dear Friend of PAS

As we approach the peak of a long, hot summer, PAS welcomes you to its August Newsletter.

Below, we continue to look at IPP sentences and you will find a brief update on the UN's most recent press release condemning them as, "psychological torture".

We also take a look at PAS' London Legal Walk team and publish a new case study illustrating how effective legal intervention within the prison estate can be.

As ever, if you would like to come aboard as a supporter of our work, you can make a one off donation or set up a recurring payment [here](#). All support is received with thanks.

PAS Wins Rights of Children and Reforms Resettlement Rules

Two women in prison were separately denied Childcare Resettlement Leave (CRL), a scheme that allows eligible prisoners temporary release to spend time with their children and help preserve family relationships. At the time, CRL was restricted to prisoners in open conditions who had less than two years remaining on their sentence and could demonstrate sole responsibility for a child under 16. Although both women met the parental criteria, they were excluded because they had more than two years to serve. The matter had become urgent because of the impact of separation on the women's children: one was receiving counselling and another being treated for depression.

PAS challenged the refusals, arguing that the rigid two-year rule failed to consider the welfare of the children. After sending pre-action correspondence highlighting the harm being caused, PAS instigated a Judicial Review on behalf of the two mothers. The court found the prison's decisions unlawful and ruled that CRL applications must take account of children's rights under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act and Article 3(1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The ruling transformed an inflexible policy, making children's best

interests a legal requirement in all CRL decisions and extending eligibility throughout a prisoner's sentence, benefiting thousands of families.

Government Pauses Early-Release Scheme

The Government has paused the early-release scheme for prisoners in England and Wales just weeks before it was due to take effect. The reforms, introduced under the Sentencing Act 2026, would have allowed many offenders serving standard determinate sentences to leave prison after serving one-third of their custodial term, rather than 40% or half of their sentence. Some prisoners due to be released after serving two-thirds would instead have become eligible for release at the halfway point.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham ordered an urgent review of the policy in late July, saying public safety must come first. The decision followed concerns raised by victims' groups and campaigners that serious offenders could benefit from earlier release.

Prison overcrowding remains a serious challenge and Ministers are reconsidering which categories of offenders should qualify for the scheme. A revised approach is expected before any new release measures are implemented.

UN Renews Call to End IPP "Torture" in England and Wales

In July, United Nations experts renewed calls for the UK Government to re-sentence some 2,400 prisoners still subject to Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences in England and Wales (896 prisoners who have never been released and 1,433 recalled to prison), warning that ongoing delays are causing serious human rights concerns.

IPP sentences, introduced for offenders deemed a risk to the public, were abolished in 2012 after widespread criticism. However, the change was not applied retrospectively, leaving thousands of prisoners serving indefinite terms despite completing the minimum tariffs set by the courts.

UN experts said many inmates remain trapped in a cycle of uncertainty, repeated recalls to prison and deteriorating mental health. They warned that the psychological impact of indefinite detention, including heightened risks of self-harm and suicide, could amount to psychological torture.

The concerns are illustrated by several high-profile cases. Joseph Brady has spent 18 years in custody despite receiving a four-year tariff and has been released and recalled four times. Kerry Parish-McCann has served 17 years on a three-year tariff and has repeatedly returned to prison following release. Thomas White has spent more than 12 years in custody on a two-year tariff and was diagnosed with schizophrenia during his imprisonment.

UN experts said these cases highlight systemic failures that continue to leave many IPP prisoners without certainty, hope or a clear path to freedom.



PAS Team Joins 2026 London Legal Walk to Support Access to Justice

In June, PAS staff once again joined 19,500 walkers from over 1,200 organisations for the London Legal Support Trust's annual London Legal Walk. The sponsored event brings together London's legal community to support free legal advice charities on the frontline.

Team PAS walked alongside representatives from London's law firms, chambers and charities, demonstrating the community's continuing commitment to access to justice. Funds raised through the event will help support vital legal advice services across London and beyond, including – like PAS – organisations assisting some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged individuals.

PAS staff said they were proud to participate in the walk and contribute to a cause that reflects the charity's mission of protecting the legal rights of people in prison and ensuring that access to justice is available to all.



PAS' telephone Advice Line is run by caseworkers four days a week. Our telephone number is globally cleared within all prisons throughout England and Wales. **Please note: In order to assist a prisoner, we need to be contacted by them directly before we can discuss matters with family members.**

NUMBER: 020 7253 3323

OPENING TIMES

**Monday, Wednesday and Friday
10:00-12:30 and 14:00-16:30**

Freephone Service from Women's Prisons

NUMBER: 0800 024 6205

Tuesday morning 10:00-12.30

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