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JURY RETURN VERDICT IN INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF BLACK PRISONER WESLEY MCGOLDRICK AT HMP BRIXTON

The jury in the inquest into the death of Wesley McGoldrick, a 24 year old man who was found hanged in HMP Brixton on 19 April 2005 today returned a narrative verdict. The verdict included the following comment from the jury;

Between his detention at the police station and his arrival at Brixton prison there seems to have been a loss of some information which may have been of some use in making a more thorough mental health assessment of Wesley.

Wesley died less than 24 hours after being remanded into the custody of the prison.

Over the course of the inquest the jury heard how Wesley, who was identified as very vulnerable, gave information to police and prison staff on three separate occasions that should have given rise to very serious concerns about his state of mind and well-being, and indeed about the risk he posed to himself. An appalling catalogue of communication failures within the police station and between the prison and the police meant that when Wesley was assessed by healthcare staff on arrival to HMP Brixton they did not have the benefit of any information he had given previously. Having once again disclosed his suicidal history, nursing staff seemingly failed to refer him for a mental health assessment and he was not placed on a self harm/suicide watch.

Gina Webb, mother of Wesley McGoldrick said:

We are left with the feeling that Wesley's death could have been avoided. We hope that following the inquest the police and prison service will want to act quickly to prevent another man dying needlessly.

Deborah Coles, co-director of INQUEST, said

This is another death where poor communication of vital information has played a part in the death of a prisoner. As a local prison, Brixton should have suicide prevention uppermost in mind and the recent inquests into the deaths there have exposed system failures where basic suicide prevention procedures have clearly not been a priority.

The McGoldrick family were represented at the inquest by INQUEST Lawyers Group membersCarolynn Gallwey (Bhatt Murphy Solicitors) and barrister Alison Macdonald (Matrix Chambers)

Notes to editors:

INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner's courts.

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