

## ***Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody***

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Ms. Maria Eagle MP  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Selborne House  
54 Victoria Street  
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7th July 2008

Dear Minister,

### **Budgetary provision for research under the Fulton proposals**

At the last Forum meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008, the issue of whether or not there should be a dedicated research budget under the new arrangements arose. I understand that although you have not made a final decision on this, the provisional position is that there may not be a research budget for at least the first full financial year of operation. Many Forum members felt that this would be a missed opportunity.

I understand that it has been suggested that the Secretariat could link up with existing departmental research streams, particularly with regard to statistical data. I entirely accept that it would not be sensible to spend public money to replicate work already underway within existing departmental research streams.

However, there will still remain a need for longer-term specialised research, and many Forum members (from both government and non-government organisations) felt that vertical departmental research streams are unlikely to be an adequate substitute for the thematic, cross-sector approach which any research commissioned under the new arrangements would involve, and indeed which underpin the new arrangements themselves. If the theme of deaths in custody merits special, dedicated governmental machinery, most Forum members believe that it should also merit special, dedicated research.

I appreciate that there are issues around the level of any funding, and Forum members have voiced concerns that the £50,000 proposed by Mr. Fulton might be insufficient. Be that as it may, most Forum members believe that this

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would nevertheless be far better than no research budget at all. Realistically, a smaller sum might even prove sufficient while the new arrangements were still in their infancy, and would at least set the precedent of the provision of funding. If the research commissioned proved valuable, and as the body of knowledge developed over time, the question of the appropriate level of funding could be re-visited.

I therefore hope very much that you will bear these points in mind in making your decision. I would naturally be happy to meet with you or your officials to discuss the issue further if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

John Wadham  
Chair  
**Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody**

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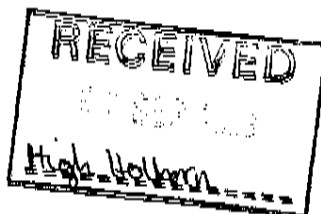
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18 SEP 2008

Dear John,

**BUDGETARY PROVISION FOR RESEARCH UNDER THE FULTON PROPOSALS**

Thank you for your letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> July. I apologise for the delay in replying. I understand that you and some Forum members are concerned about the proposed research budget for the new Independent Advisory Panel.

It is important to separate the need for research to increase our understanding about deaths in custody from the proposed £50k budget. I expect the research priorities for the Ministerial Council on Preventing Deaths in Custody to be suggested by the Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel. I intend to appoint the Chair later this year. It is likely that some research can be undertaken from existing data streams within the three government departments involved in the Council. There is also a significant body of academic research, the analysis of which will also contribute to the Council's work on preventing deaths in custody. Until the Chair of the IAP has been appointed and has appraised themselves of current research opportunities, I do not believe that it would be sensible to allocate public money to fund research that is yet to be clearly identified.

Best Wishes,

*Maria Eagle*

**MARIA EAGLE MP**

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