



# INQUEST

**TRUTH, JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY**

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**POLICY . ADVICE . CAMPAIGNS**

# Introducing INQUEST

- Independent NGO formed in 1981
- Free specialist casework service to bereaved people following deaths in custody, detention and other contentious deaths such as Grenfell Tower.
- Evidence based policy, research and legal work; primarily informed by the collective experience of the bereaved people we work with.
- Coordinates INQUEST Lawyers Group, a national pool of lawyers who represent bereaved families and share values and aims of INQUEST.
- Regularly publishes journal INQUEST Law, including relevant articles, case notes and case law updates.





**Gareth Myatt, 15,** died in a child prison, Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre, after being restrained in his cell by two prison officers in 2004.



**Jimmy Mubenga, 46,** died on a flight after being restrained by G4S security guards, privately contracted to deport him by the UK Home Office.



**David 'Rocky' Bennett, 38,** died whilst a detained mental health patient, following restraint by four nurses in 1998.



**Sarah Reed, 32,** died of a self-inflicted death in Holloway Prison whilst awaiting delayed results of a mental health assessment in 2016.

# Deaths in UK detention

- **In prisons in England and Wales:**
  - In 2016 there were 345 total deaths, 120 of which were self inflicted, **the highest numbers on record.**
  - The rate of self-inflicted deaths more than doubled since 2013, and the number of incidents of **self-harm continues to reach record highs.**
  - 11% of prison deaths since 1990 were of BAME people (disproportionately fewer than the BAME population), though many of the deaths of BAME people have been particularly concerning.
- **In UK immigration detention:**
  - So far in 2017 there have been 9 deaths of immigration detainees in prisons and immigration detention centres, **the highest number on record.**
  - A third of all deaths in immigration detention since 2000 have been of African or Caribbean people.



**Sean Rigg, 40**, died in Brixton Police station whilst suffering mental ill health, following restraint by police in August 2008.



**Olaseni Lewis, 23**, died whilst a voluntary inpatient in a mental health hospital after restraint by police in September 2010.



**Mark Duggan, 29**, was fatally shot by police in London in 2011. Community unrest following his death led to the London Riots.



**Sheku Bayoh, 31**, died after being arrested & restrained by up to nine police officers in Kirkcaldy, Scotland in 2015.

# Deaths of BAME people in police contact (England & Wales)

- Since 1990 there have been a total of **1633 deaths** in custody or contact with police, but **0 murder or manslaughter prosecutions**.
  - 14% of these deaths (1990-2016) were of people from Black, Asian & minority ethnic groups (BAME); proportionate to the UK population.
  - However **the proportion of BAME deaths in custody where use-of-force or restraint is a feature is over two times greater** than it is in white deaths in custody.
  - **38% of police deaths involving mental health are of BAME people** (11 out of 14 of whom were Black African or Black British)

- *INQUEST casework and monitoring 1990-2016*

**Police officers on their involvement in the restraint related death of Kingsley Burrell:**

*"...he's extremely strong he has no pain threshold whatsoever and he'll go from being a nice guy to wanting to kill you"*

*"he was pumped up you could see the veins in his arms and neck"*

*"he was aggressive, he will fight his strength was something that I've never seen before"*

*"very very strong, strongest person I've ever had to deal with"*



**Police officers on their involvement in the restraint related death of Olaseni Lewis:**

*"The sound and tone didn't suggest he had difficulty in breathing, more something on the inside of him, an aggression and a ferociousness that couldn't be controlled."*

*"I had to use all my strength to get him into a position that was safe for him. He seemed intent ongoing on his front. He was hyperventilating, incoherent."*

*"We didn't immediately call a doctor [when he became unresponsive] because we weren't 100 per cent sure if he was definitely unconscious or not breathing. We left the room in case he was feigning, passing out as a ploy to escape."*

# Disproportionate use of force

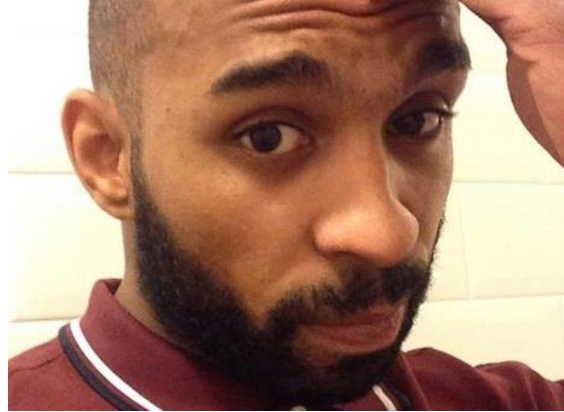
During 3 months (April and June 2017) the Metropolitan Police, London recorded **nearly 13,000 incidents of force used by individual officers, over half of which on BAME people** (36% on black people, 10% on Asian people, the majority on men).

During a 3 month trial on the use of spit hoods in London, **23% of uses of spit hoods on men were on black men, and out of the 11 women it was used against, 8 were black women.**





# In just five weeks this summer:



- **Edson Da Costa**, 25, died in East London following restraint by police six days earlier. - 21 June
- **Darren Cumberbatch**, 32, died in Warwickshire following restraint by police. - 19 July
- **Shane Bryant**, 29, died in Leicestershire following restraint by members of public and police two days earlier. - 15 July
- **Rashan Charles**, 20, died in East London following restraint by police officers and a member of public. - 23 July

*Pictured left to right*



*The persistent use of unacceptable levels of restraint is of particular concern. Situations where a young unarmed man, often black, not suspected of any serious offence and in a reasonable state of health is confronted by a group of police officers, dies in an ensuing struggle and **yet no-one at an individual or corporate level is found to be at fault**, have resulted in untold anger and mistrust directed towards the criminal justice system.*



- INQUEST report

# Recommendations:

- Access to legal resources and independent support for families after a death.
- Critical independent voices.
- A robust independent and effective investigatory body.
- Use of force data and deaths in custody disaggregated by ethnicity.
- Tackling discrimination, through recognition of racial disproportionalities, within investigations, legal processes and police training.
- Accountability for those responsible; at individual and corporate level.
- An oversight framework on learning from deaths.





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