

# UNGRIPP

## Inquiry into the IPP Sentence by the Justice Select Committee

### **A Guide to the Inquiry and How to Write Your Response If You Are in Prison.**

#### **Who are UNGRIPP?**

UNGRIPP raise awareness of the IPP sentence, campaign for change, and keep the plight of people affected by the sentence visible. We are led by families of people serving the IPP sentence. We help people affected by IPP to have their say.

#### **Who are the Justice Select Committee (JSC) and what are they doing?**

The JSC is a group of MPs from several political parties. They look at what the Ministry of Justice does and hold it to account. They hold inquiries on topics they are concerned about. On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021, they launched an inquiry into the IPP sentence.

#### **What is an inquiry and how do they work?**

An inquiry starts with a problem, and a list of questions about that problem (called 'Terms of Reference'). The Committee invites people to answer their questions in writing. Then they invite some people to give spoken evidence. Finally, they consider the evidence and publish a report. The report describes what they found, and what they think should happen.

#### **What's the point? Will they actually listen to anything we say?**

We think that the JSC is really interested in the IPP sentence, and that this is the most attention the IPP sentence has had since it was banned. We don't know what they will say, or if the Government will listen. Even though there is no guarantee of success, we think it is a good opportunity. The more people that give evidence, the stronger the message will be.

#### **How can I give evidence?**

You can give evidence by:

- Writing to the Justice Select Committee at: *Justice Select Committee, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.*
- Asking a loved one to submit evidence for you online. They need to go here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/588/>

### **When is the deadline for giving evidence?**

The deadline for people in prison is **30<sup>th</sup> November 2021**. The deadline for everybody else is 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

### **What happens to my evidence?**

The JSC will read all the evidence and use it to understand the problem, then write their report. They publish all the evidence they receive online. For people in prison, they remove names, locations, and other things that could identify them. If you want a piece of your evidence to be kept private, make sure you mention it in your response.

### **How can I find out the results of the inquiry?**

The JSC will publish their report on their website and tell the media about the main things they found. We will put their findings on our website and social media channels, and Inside Time are also very likely to write about the findings. We suggest allowing 6 months and if you have not seen anything about the inquiry, get in touch with us and we will update you.

### **Will the inquiry get rid of the IPP sentence for people still serving it?**

Not by itself. Only the Government can do that. The inquiry might recommend that option to the Government. Or it might recommend changing other bits of the sentence (like the licence). It is not possible to say what will happen. But we think it is good that the JSC has invited views on what would happen if the sentence was gotten rid of.

### **If I give evidence, will it affect my chances of getting Parole?**

It shouldn't. Prisoners are allowed to give evidence to inquiries, and the JSC has specifically asked for prisoners to give evidence to this inquiry. Legally, it should make no difference to you. But we understand the huge fear that people serving the IPP sentence experience about how their actions may be judged. If you're worried, we suggest submitting evidence without your name, or asking a loved one on the outside to submit evidence for you.

### **How long should my response be?**

No more than 10 pages. Don't worry if it's shorter – that's the maximum limit. If you write a lot more, the Committee might not accept your evidence, so try and keep to 10 pages.

### **Do I need to explain what the IPP sentence is, and give general facts and figures?**

No. The Committee already knows the history of the IPP sentence. Focus on giving your views, opinions, and experiences on the areas that the Committee has asked about.

### **What should I say?**

We recommend starting with some details about your sentence. **But** this is very personal information. Don't give it if you don't feel comfortable. The reason we suggest giving it is so

that the Committee can understand the experiences of particular groups of IPP sentenced prisoners. Things you could tell them are:

- The crime you got the IPP sentence for, and your tariff length.
- How old you were when you got the sentence, and how old you are now.
- How long you have been in prison.
- How many Parole hearings you have had.
- Whether you've been recalled, how many times, and what for.

The Committee has asked about seven areas of the IPP sentence. We've broken down their questions below. We recommend answering them, and then adding anything else you want to say at the end.

- What things could help to reduce the number of IPPs in prison?
- What do you think is the best option for doing this?
- What stops people getting released?
- How could getting released be made easier?
- What would happen if the IPP sentence was gotten rid of for everybody?
- What do people on an IPP sentence experience in prison?
- How does the IPP sentence affect people's mental health?
- How are release and resettlement planned and managed for IPPs?
- What impact does not having a release date have on resettlement?
- How are IPPs managed once they get released?
- Why are IPPs recalled?
- If they are recalled, what support do IPPs get to prepare them for re-release?

### **I'm worried that I'll miss something, or not explain myself very well.**

Don't worry about how 'good' it sounds. There are no rules about how to write your evidence, except the 10 page limit. If you miss something, the chances are that other people will say it in their responses. It does help the Committee if you make a few clear points for each question, so you might want to plan those out first, or talk through what you want to say with someone you trust, who can help you plan your answers.

### **Where can I get more information on the Inquiry?**

We've written this guide to help as many people as possible understand the inquiry and write a response. But we understand that many IPP sentenced prisoners are politically engaged, and find it frustrating to rely on secondhand information. If you would like to see the full text of the JSC's call for evidence and terms of reference, contact us and we will send you a copy.

### **How can I get in touch with UNGRIPP?**

Please **don't send your evidence to us**. But if you want an update on the inquiry or to see its full call for evidence, write to us with your name, location and prison number at UNGRIPP, Unit 76570, PO Box 6945, London, W1A 6US, and we will write back to you or email you via the Email a Prisoner service.