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## **‘STAGGERING’ TOTAL OF MORE THAN 110,000 PEOPLE DETAINED ACROSS THE UK, SAYS TORTURE PREVENTION BODY**

### **FIGURES ALSO SHOW 70 DEATHS A MONTH IN OR AFTER RELEASE FROM DETENTION**

More than 110,000 people were detained in the UK across prisons, immigration centres, secure settings for children and young adults and psychiatric hospitals, according to a snapshot of the detained population last year.

The figure, for 31 March 2017, has emerged in new analysis by the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – the prevention of torture and ill-treatment body established to strengthen the protection of people in detention through independent monitoring in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Chair of the NPM, John Wadham, said the true figure may be higher, as not all government and other official agencies provided complete and comparable data. The figure did not include those held in police custody on 31 March 2017.

Mr Wadham said: “The figures we’ve been able to collate show staggering numbers of people are being detained across all four nations of the UK. However, because of gaps in

official data, there is still a lot we don't know about precisely how many people are held in all the different places of detention.”

The NPM's analysis found that on 31 March 2017:

- An estimated 87,499 adults over the age of 21 were detained in prisons in England, Wales and Scotland;
- 5,872 people aged 20 or under were detained in youth custody in England, Wales and Scotland;
- There were 3,389 adults held in residential immigration detention in the UK;
- More than 15,000 individuals were detained under mental health legislation in England and Wales alone.

The numbers of people detained on 31 March 2017 do not include those in police custody (because of difficulties sourcing the data). However, the NPM found that between 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 there were at least 840,607 “detention events” in police custody across the UK.

The NPM also found an average of 70 deaths per month, with at least 841 people dying in or following detention in prisons, secure settings for children and young adults, police custody, immigration centres and psychiatric hospitals, including those detained under the Mental Health Act.

The deaths included some of the most vulnerable people held in detention:

- two children, both aged 17 years old, who died in Secure Children's Homes in England and Wales;
- eight young adults aged 18-20 years old who died in prisons or YOIs in England, Wales and Scotland;
- six adults who died in or following immigration detention; and one apparently self-inflicted death of a person detained in prison for immigration purposes.

Mr Wadham said “Worryingly, we do know from our research that an average of 70 people per month have died in or shortly after being held in detention.”

“When people are detained behind closed doors the risk of ill-treatment is, unfortunately, always present and, as highlighted in recent inspection and monitoring reports from members of the NPM, they often experience very poor conditions in detention.

“To prevent ill-treatment and make sure detainees are safe and well-cared for it is vital we have a clear picture of the numbers and needs of people who are held in the different settings across the UK.”

Overall, Mr Wadham said:

“The figures on the large numbers of people who are detained across the UK underline the scale of the task for members of the NPM in checking how people are being treated. Through regular, independent monitoring of places of detention – conducted through thousands of visits every year by the 21 independent bodies that make up the NPM – our members play a key role in preventing ill-treatment of people in detention. It is essential that, in the next year, the NPM and our members are given the necessary tools and resources to perform this vital work effectively.”

- ENDS -

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The NPM's *Detention Population Data Mapping Project 2016-17* will be available after 9.30am on 24<sup>th</sup> January at <http://www.nationalpreventivemechanism.org.uk> The data mapping uses a range of sources, including regularly published official population data and official data on deaths in detention, data produced by NPM members as part of the monitoring process and data requested directly from detaining authorities and government departments.
2. The numbers of people detained on 31 March 2017 do not include those in police custody (because of difficulties sourcing the data). However, the NPM research did find that between 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 there were at least 840,607 detention events in police custody across the UK.
3. The NPM found that more than 841 people died between the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Due to different reporting periods for differing settings and jurisdictions, the average of 70.08 deaths per month over a 12 month period was calculated from different 12 month periods (that overlap for a 9 month period). Figures for deaths in adult prisons, deaths of 18-20 year olds and deaths of immigration detainees in prison relate to the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 to 31 December 2016 in England and Wales. All other figures for deaths relate to the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Data was not sourced on causes of death and there will be a range of causes for the 841 deaths (including natural causes, self-inflicted, homicide, drug and/or alcohol related and other causes)
4. The NPM found that more than 110,490 people were detained on 31 March 2017 across: adult prisons and secure settings for children and young adults in the four jurisdictions of the UK; residential immigration detention in the UK; and, mental health settings in England and Wales. Due to variations in the data sets and the way information is collected and recorded

across settings and jurisdictions, the actual figure of people detained across all settings and jurisdictions will be much higher. The 110,490 figure does not include: detention in police custody; non-residential immigration detention; military or service detention; customs detention; or those detained under deprivation of liberty safeguards across all four jurisdictions. It also does not include those detained under mental health legislation in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

5. The NPM's eighth annual report, which gives an overview of its work monitoring detention across the UK from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, will be published shortly and a copy of the report will be available at <http://www.nationalpreventivemechanism.org.uk>
6. The NPM was established in March 2009 under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). A United Nations treaty, OPCAT was ratified by the UK in 2003. OPCAT requires the UK to have in place a 'national preventive mechanism' to visit all places of detention and monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees.
7. The NPM consists of 21 independent bodies throughout the UK, which have powers to regularly inspect or monitor places of detention and share the aim of preventing ill-treatment of anyone deprived of their liberty. It is coordinated by HM Inspectorate of Prisons.
8. The 21 bodies who make up the NPM are:
  - England and Wales*
  - Care Inspectorate Wales
  - Care Quality Commission
  - The Children's Commissioner for England
  - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
  - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
  - Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
  - Independent Monitoring Boards
  - Independent Custody Visiting Association
  - Lay Observers
  - Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Service and Skills)
  - Northern Ireland*
  - Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
  - Independent Monitoring Boards (Northern Ireland)
  - Northern Ireland Policing Board Independent Custody Visiting Scheme
  - The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
  - Scotland*
  - Care Inspectorate
  - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland
  - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland
  - Independent Custody Visitors Scotland
  - Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland
  - Scottish Human Rights Commission
  - United Kingdom*
  - Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation
9. Please contact John Steele in HMI Prisons press office on 020 33340357 or 07880 787452 if you would like more information or to request an interview with John Wadham.