

REPORT

Prison-death demonstration - Wednesday 31 January 2007 to protest against the death of Lucy Wood, aged 28 who died on 15 January 2007 while in the 'care' of private jail HMP Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

- Around 10 protesters held a four and a half hour demonstration outside Peterborough Prison to protest against the tragic death of Lucy Wood, 28, the second woman prisoner to die this year.
- HMP Peterborough is run by private company Kalyx Ltd, the US security and services giant, recently fined over £5m for performance failures at Harmondsworth detention centre, near Heathrow. The fine was imposed following disorder breaking out at the centre in November 2006.
- Kalyx Ltd (formerly UKDS: United Kingdom Detention Services) runs a number of private prisons in the UK.
- Protesters (including representatives from "No More Prison" campaign group) had travelled from Norfolk, Yorkshire, London and Cheshire.
- The group of protesters included three ex-prisoners. Two were former women inmates of HMP Peterborough who were held at the jail at the same time as Lucy Wood. They voiced concern about the unacceptable level of care given to Ms Wood, including one occasion when she apparently had injuries that were left untreated for three weeks.
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary attended the demonstration and maintained a police presence outside the jail all afternoon, but no arrests were made.
- Peterborough MP Stewart Jackson (Conservative) was invited to attend the demonstration, but didn't attend, nor did he reply to the invitation.
- Anglia Television (ITV) covered the demonstration; also local radio stations. Reporters and photographers attended the protest during the afternoon.
- See the following BBC Cambridgeshire online news report: "Jail protest over inmate's death", dated 31.01.07:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cambridgeshire/6316965.stm>
- The Peterborough protest was the 21st demonstration to be held since 2004, and the first time a demonstration has been held outside a privately-run jail.

Comment

"Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers said earlier this week that our prisons are in 'serious crisis'. Lucy Wood's death is a terrible reminder of that fact. Her death brings the total to *thirty-four* women prisoners who have died since my daughter's death in January 2003, and I remain appalled at this tragic and needless loss of life. Prison is supposed to represent a temporary loss of freedom for the offender, but for some of the most vulnerable people in society it is akin to a death sentence.

"It is particularly troubling that Lucy Wood lost her life while locked up by profiteer Kalyx Ltd, and there is ongoing concern about the dubious ethics of private companies being allowed to make profit out of punishment.

"Nine out of ten women prisoners are convicted of non-violent offences; two thirds of women prisoners are mothers, and the majority are mentally ill. There surely has to be a more civilised way of dealing with women offenders." *[Pauline Campbell]*

Photographs

Photographs of the demonstration are available.

Pauline Campbell

[Mother of Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, 18, who died in the 'care' of HMP & YOI Styal, 2003]
Trustee of The Howard League for Penal Reform www.howardleague.org
Awarded The 2005 Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize www.emmahumphreys.org