**Name:**

**Address:**

**Email address:**

**Date:**

Dear **{MP NAME}**,

My name is **{YOUR NAME}**, I am one of your constituents and I am writing to you today asking that you help me and my family. We have been and continue to be directly affected by the Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP), which I have enclosed some information about.

**I would like you to take forward my concerns, set out below, by signing EDM 591**, tabled here:

https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60301/imprisonment-for-public-protection-sentences-justice-committee-report

**Give details of your loved ones/your own situation (e.g. My brother was given an IPP sentence in 2004…I was given an IPP in 2004…)**

* **Their relationship to you (son/daughter/partner)**
* **Tariff, years post tariff**
* **Impact the sentence has had on them**
* **Impact it has had on you and your family (including children)**

I am aware that the Justice Select Committee has recently published a report into the IPP sentence. The report gives a damning indictment of a regime of indefinite detention that has caused widely documented harm, and departed from public notions of justice, fairness and proportionality.

The Committee stated that: IPP sentences are “irredeemably flawed” and call for a comprehensive re-sentencing programme.

The Committee concluded that even though there are ways to improve how the IPP sentence works, there is no way to truly fix it, and it is “irredeemably flawed”. Their main recommendation is a resentencing exercise. That means that everybody serving IPP would be individually resentenced by a judge, to a sentence available under current sentencing law, following the principle of balancing public protection with justice, judicial independence, and the appointment of an independent panel to implement the exercise.

Resentencing was the Committee’s main recommendation, but it also made 21 other recommendations, which you can read here:

https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/102/justice-committee/news/173280/justice-ipp-sentences-report-published-22-23/

In the coming months. It would mean so much to me and my family if you would speak to the Secretary of State for Justice, the Rt. Hon. Brandon Lewis, and request that he considers the changes that have been recommended, and to advocate for them yourself in whatever way you can, ideally in a cross-party effort.

The Justice Select Committee inquiry is a window of opportunity to fix something that is causing so much harm and pain, and that has already been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights, the Prison Reform Trust, the Howard League, Liberty, Amnesty International, and the Minister who introduced the sentence, David Blunkett, who has called it “the greatest single stain on our justice system”.

Your help in addressing this is crucial. I hope to hear back from you soon**.** If you are unable to address this personally, I would like to request that you escalate my letter to the relevant Minister or department.

Please do keep me informed of any progress made.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

**{YOUR NAME}**

**What is an IPP sentence?**

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 introduced the Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection, known as the IPP sentence.

The IPP was a life sentence that could be given for any of 153 crimes, including affray and criminal damage. Many of these crimes had never previously been given a life sentence.

Before 2005, life sentences were reserved for murder, and the most serious cases of manslaughter, GBH, robbery with violence, and perpetrators of sexual violence.

Between 2005 and 2013, 8,711 people in England & Wales were given the IPP sentence. Prior to its implementation, it was predicted that only 900 people would receive this type of sentence, as it was intended for only the most serious offences.

In 2012, following a ruling against the IPP sentence by the European Court of Human Rights for breaching Article 5(1), it was abolished by the Government. But it was not abolished retrospectively. In December 2020, 3,187 people were still serving an IPP sentence in prison.

Until recently there was little precedent for retrospective changes to law. However, the introduction of the Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Act 2020 indicates that, where there is political will, retrospective changes will be enacted.

Apart from a handful of successful appeals, all people released on an IPP continue to serve their sentence in the community, for life.

**How does the IPP sentence work?**

The IPP is divided into two parts. The judge decides how many years a person must spend in prison as punishment for their crime (known as a ‘tariff’). Once that time is served, they may apply to the Parole Board for release. If they achieve release, they must then serve a licence for the rest of their life. The licence includes restrictions on where they live, who they see, and what they do.

Tariffs were set based on how many years imprisonment a person would receive before the IPP sentence was introduced. Because it covered so many crimes – many not serious - tariffs were often very short. The shortest was 28 days. The tariff was then followed by indefinite confinement in the interests of public protection, and, if release was achieved, recall on a public protection basis. It is the ongoing, indeterminate nature of the sentence which has caused today’s problems.

**Today’s picture**

[1,492 people serving an IPP sentence in prison have never been released.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly) 97% are now over tariff. 41% have served between 10 and 16 years beyond their tariff. That’s 10-16 years longer than the judge thought they deserved for their crime.

[1,434 of the people currently serving an IPP in prison were recalled.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly) In 2021, 81% of IPP recalls were for non-compliance, not further offending. The Government has forecast that [the recalled IPP population will double in the next six years.](https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2020-12-07.125975.h)

[The self-harm incident rate for IPP prisoners is more than double that of determinately sentenced prisoners.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)  So far, 74 people serving an IPP sentence have killed themselves in prison, and [the Prison and Probation Ombudsman has warned of the role of the IPP sentence in suicides.](https://www.ppo.gov.uk/blog/investigating-the-deaths-of-ipp-prisoners/)