**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.

**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 a new sentencing bill (outlined in the White Paper, ‘A Smarter Approach to Sentencing’) will return to Parliament 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, Mr. Robert Buckland and request that he considers including some of the following changes to the IPP sentence, and to advocate for them yourself in whatever way you can, ideally in a cross-party effort.

**Resentencing**

* To resentence every person currently still serving an IPP sentence, to a determinate sentence that is proportional to the crime they committed, and legal under current sentencing law (a life sentence could be reserved for the most serious crimes). This would restore a sense of just and proportionate punishment.

**Licence conditions**

* Once a person serving an IPP sentence is released from prison, adjust their licence conditions by either:
  + Making the licence length proportionate to the index offence.

or

* + Allow the Parole Board discretion to set licence lengths.

or

* + Reducing the amount of time people must wait to apply to have their licence removed, from 10 years to 5 years.

or

* + Removing the IPP sentence upon release from prison and replace it with a time-limited supervision order, to aid resettlement.
* Restrict the use of indeterminate recall to prison for minor breaches.
* Involve a third party in recall decisions (e.g. the Parole Board).
* Give those recalled to prison a right to an annual Parole hearing, rather than every two years.

**Support**

* Allocate funding to offer holistic support to all those affected by the IPP sentence. There is a wealth of evidence documenting the harm that the IPP sentence has caused to those serving it, and to their families.

The Sentencing Bill 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**

* [1,849 people serving an IPP sentence in prison have never been released.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly) 95% are now over tariff. 26% have served between 10 and 16 years beyond their tariff.
* [1,338 of the people currently serving an IPP in prison were recalled.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly) Between October 2019 and September 2020, 59% 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, 65 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/)