

## Media Release

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### Re: Treatment of Detainees on Isolation Wing at Isle of Man Prison

- i. In April 2020 significant concerns were raised with us by a number of detainees at Isle of Man Prison in relation to their treatment on the Isolation Wing.
- ii. Such Isolation Wing had been established by Prison Authorities as a result of the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic.
- iii. The nature of the specific claims was that from *mid-April 2020* all new detainees arriving at the Prison, both male and female and convicted as well as un-convicted, were permanently locked in their cells on the same Isolation Wing. They were denied any showers, outdoor exercise and visits from/phone calls to friends and family for up to two weeks. In addition, each day food for the next 24 hours was given in a single delivery.
- iv. In response to such accusations, representatives of the Department of Home Affairs initially refuted the allegations, publicly describing the claims as wrong and inaccurate.
- v. However, on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Home Affairs Minister Mr Cregeen in written answer to a question in the House of Keys, confirmed that the substance of the particular allegations was essentially true.
- vi. The Minister stated that three regimes had been in operation at different times and that during the second (so-called "red regime") all new detainees were given washing items to allow for washing from the sink in their cells (instead of showers), exercise packs to use in cells (instead of being allowed any outdoor exercise) and allowed to pass written messages to family and writing materials were provided (instead of visits or phone calls).
- vii. We have now completed extensive preparatory work in relation to a proposed civil claim by our clients in this serious matter including liaising with several other Manx legal practices representing potential claimants in identical circumstances.
- viii. All remedies including a potential class legal action for breach of Article 3 European Convention on Human Rights (the absolute right not to be subject to inhuman or degrading treatment) are currently under active consideration as means of obtaining just redress in this important issue.
- ix. A formal pre-action letter of claim on behalf of all clients is to be served imminently.
- x. Significantly, it is a generation since the case of **Tyrrer v UK 1978**, the last occasion the Manx Authorities were held to be breach of Article 3 by the use of birching as a form of corporal punishment.

Note – this specific case relates only to inmates on the Jurby Prison Isolation Wing during the period mid-April to early May 2020. It does not relate to any other period nor any prisoners on other wings.