



## NEWS RELEASE

### ***Doctors demand health risks to detainees be addressed***

7 September 2017, London: Recent investigations by The Guardian, BBC and others have highlighted major concerns about treatment of those detained by the state in assorted settings; these include Immigration Removal Centres (with suspension of nine employees including one nurse), and detainees within police custody. The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) of the Royal College of Physicians of London supports the media in highlighting and raising awareness of these issues which are crucial in informing the public and politicians of the need for appropriate standards of care for those detained.

The FFLM, with our clinical partners (the United Kingdom Association of Forensic Nurses and the College of Paramedics) has consistently sought to raise standards of healthcare in detention settings, by identifying appropriate minimum training, experience and qualifications for healthcare professionals. Currently there is no requirement for Police & Crime Commissioners to adopt these minimum standards for care of vulnerable individuals in police custody, and the FFLM believes this places detainees at increased risk of serious harm or death. The FFLM is disturbed that the report of the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody established by Theresa May when Home Secretary, and chaired by Dame Elish Angiolini, is yet to be published. We believe that the Review may include recommendations that will reduce the incidence of serious harm or deaths in police custody and must be published immediately.

The FFLM has also identified gaps in training and understanding of those healthcare professionals working with victims of torture in detention (including immigration removal centres) and is currently (via its Healthcare Professionals Working with Victims of Torture (HWVT) working party) developing quality standards for healthcare professionals working in detention settings. The FFLM recognises the need for multi-professional working and continues to engage with all those working to improve these care standards, and advising those responsible.

The FFLM continues to ensure and improve healthcare standards for all persons detained by the state in any setting.

#### Notes to editors

It should be noted that the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine is the appropriate body to advise on the clinical and forensic aspects and the standard of healthcare in police custody and other settings and is currently seeking medical specialty status. The Faculty has already developed examinations of equivalent stature to those of the Royal Colleges in other specialties and the establishment as a new specialty would ensure that it would be seen as the appropriate body for which guidance, advice and support on all matters of forensic and legal medicine should be sought.

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