

of section 13 of the Coroners Act 1988, which allows for an approach to the High Court if the Attorney General gives permission.

Whilst funding for representation at inquests is outside the usual scope of the civil legal aid scheme, funding for death in custody inquests is available where certain criteria are met. Most death in custody cases meet these criteria, and the Government has delegated the authority to grant funding in these cases to the Legal Services Commission (LSC).

The LSC also has the discretion to waive financial eligibility limits for representation in these inquests. The LSC can waive the eligibility limits where, in all the circumstances, it would not be reasonable to expect the family to bear the full costs of representation at the inquest. Whether this is reasonable will depend in particular on the history of the case and the nature of the allegations to be raised, the applicant's assessed disposable income and capital, other financial resources of the family, and the estimated costs of providing representation.

I regret that I am unable to comment on the points you have made about the Independent Police Complaints Commission and the recommendations you have made in your letter about the police. I will however pass a copy of our correspondence to Nick Herbert at the Home Office, who has ministerial responsibility for the police, so that he may see it.

Finally, your letter also refers to allegations of misconduct on the part of psychiatric nurses. I am unable to comment in detail on this issue but the NHS has a comprehensive complaints procedure in place so that such allegations may be investigated. More information about the procedures may be found at:  
[www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints](http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints)

1/00 ← early  
Crispin Blunt

**CRISPIN BLUNT**