

On behalf of Frances McKeown's husband Brian we want to put on record professional work of the prisoner ombudsmans office in delivering a hard- hitting and thorough investigation into the circumstances of this very sad case

Brian had a loving relationship with his wife that was not without its difficulties borne out of Frances' well documented mental problems

Whilst Brian accepts that the Ombudsman is right to acknowledge the efforts made by staff to give support to Frances he is still deeply distressed at some glaring failures within the prison and Trust agency at that time

The report documents those failings including serious lapses in healthcare provision at a time when she was at risk of suicide and had not even seen a psychiatrist for 6 months after her arrival in prison

The report highlights 18 areas of concern – we demand that these will be taken on board immediately by the agencies concerned

After her passing last year Brian hit out at the prison when he said Frances should never have been sent there in the first place nor was he convinced that her death would bring an end to the danger of prison suicides ever happening again

It is a matter of regret that the lessons that ought to have been learned after the inquest into the suicide of Roseanne Irvine 5 years ago were not taken on board in the intervening years

It is depressing to read about some of the concerns and issues raised in previous female suicide cases permeating this important report

A recent report by the NIHR highlighted how female prisoners were at greater risk of harm and suicide within the prison regime in NI

The time has long passed for all parties concerned about implementation of prison regimes in this jurisdiction to have to read critical reports of this nature

We say that the awful tragedy of Frances McKeown's suicide should draw a line under the threat of prison suicides ever happening again

if her death is not to be in vain then this report needs to be implemented in full and without compromise

to that end we call on the DOJ to take responsibility and insure this will happen

we have now written to the coroner asking for an immediate inquest and we will issue High court civil proceedings on behalf of Brian McKeown against the authorities for loss and damage resulting from Frances death

ends

statement Kevin R Winters and co solicitors