

**Olaseni ('Seni') Lewis, deceased**

**12 October 2018**

**THE NEW 'SENI LEWIS AWARD'**

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), in partnership with South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM), have announced the new 'Seni Lewis Award' in memory of Mr Lewis and to mark his death in 2010.

The national award, which was announced on Thursday 11 October 2018 at the Positive Practice Mental Health Awards 2018 ceremony in Liverpool, will be presented for the first time at the same ceremony in 2019.

The award will recognise the best collaborative initiatives between the police and health services, to showcase the importance of providing a multi-agency response to mental health crises.

Mr Lewis was 23-years-old when he died on 3 September 2010 following a period of prolonged restraint by police officers whilst he was a patient at Bethlem Royal Hospital suffering a mental health crisis on 31 August 2010.

**Statement by Seni's parents, Aji and Conrad Lewis**

*"When Seni became ill, we took him to hospital which we thought was the best place for him. We shall always bear the cross of knowing that, instead of the help and care he needed, Seni met with his death in circumstances where he was failed by the hospital and the police alike.*

*"It took years of struggle to find out what happened to Seni: the failures at multiple levels amongst the management and staff at Bethlem Royal Hospital where, instead of looking after him, they called the police to deal with him; and the brute force with which the police held Seni in a prolonged restraint which they knew to be dangerous, a restraint that was maintained until Seni was dead for all intents and purposes.*

*"We don't want any other family to suffer as we have suffered. We don't want anyone else to go through what our son went through. That is why we took the initiative to propose this award in Seni's name, and we welcome it in his memory, in the hope that the police and health services throughout the country learn to recognise in practice that what happened to Seni is simply unacceptable."*

**Ends**

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