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INQUEST WELCOMES CORONERS AND JUSTICE BILL

INQUEST welcomes the inclusion of a Coroners and Justice Bill in the Queen's Speech.

INQUEST has been campaigning for over 25 years for reform of the inquest system. Our work on contentious deaths and their investigation has highlighted a system in crisis and one which is currently failing bereaved families. For democratic accountability it is crucial that the inquest system works as it is usually the only public forum in which contentious deaths such as accidents, deaths at work, deaths of military personnel or deaths in custody are subjected to public scrutiny.

Helen Shaw, Co-Director of INQUEST said:

"Reform of the inquest system has been long overdue and we welcome this Bill as an opportunity to tackle some of the serious problems facing the inquest system. It is a system beset with delay, inconsistency and is currently not fit for purpose. We hope that parliament will ensure that all measures included in this Bill comply with human rights legislation and provide for families full participation in what is often the only mechanism for public scrutiny of contentious deaths."

Notes to editors:

1. A detailed briefing on the need for coroner's Reform can be found on INQUEST's website.
2. INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner's courts.

Further Information	www.inquest.org.uk
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