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DEFINITIONS

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PUBLICATIONS

DEFINITIONS — these are some of the legal and technical terms explained

Attorney General	The chief legal officer of the United Kingdom. This is a cabinet position.
Barrister	The legal practitioner who can represent you at the inquest or in any legal proceedings.
Civil proceedings	A legal claim for damages, compensation etc.
Compensation	A payment of money in recognition of certain suffering or injury.
Coroner	The legal official who orders a post mortem and who is in charge of the inquest procedure.
Coroner's officer	The person who works for the coroner and is responsible for making arrangements for the inquest.
Criminal proceedings	A prosecution which is pursued for a crime which arises for e.g. from the circumstances of the death.
Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)	The CPS is responsible for deciding whether or not there is enough police evidence to undertake a criminal prosecution for a general criminal offence e.g. manslaughter both before and in some cases after the inquest, and whether or not a prosecution is in the public interest.
Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)	The DPP is a government appointed legal officer who is the head of and responsible for the CPS.
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	The HSE is a government authority set up under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to enforce this and other occupational health and safety legislation.
High Court	The highest civil court where cases may be heard for the first time. It also hears appeals and supervises magistrates and crown courts.
Human Rights Act	An Act of Parliament that incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into UK Law.
Inquest	The formal legal inquiry into sudden, unexplained, violent or unnatural deaths.

Judicial Review	Allows people with a sufficient interest in a decision or action by a public body to ask a judge to review the lawfulness of that action or failure to act.
Legal Help	The part of the Public Funding scheme that allows a solicitor to give advice for the preparation of an inquest for no cost if the client is on income support.
Legal Services Commission	The organisation responsible for providing public funds for legal work.
Lord Chancellor	The cabinet minister responsible for the effective running of the legal system in England and Wales.
Mortuary	The place where the body is taken after its removal from the place of death.
Pathologist	The medically qualified practitioner who carries out the post mortem.
Post mortem	A medical examination to determine the cause of death.
Properly interested person	Those people defined in the Coroner's Act 1988 as having a right to ask questions at the inquest
Public Funding	Public means tested financial assistance for representation during legal proceedings. It is not available for representation at most inquests. The Lord Chancellor can grant it in 'exceptional cases'.
Solicitor	The legal practitioner, who advises on legal matters concerning a death, carries out the preparation work for the inquest and represents you at an inquest or instructs any barrister who is representing you in court. The solicitor receives her/his instructions from you.
Statement	A written account from anyone who has information and/or opinion that may be relevant to the death.
Subjudice rule	The rule provides that matters awaiting adjudication in a court of law should not be brought forward when it would make it more difficult for justice to be served.

USEFUL CONTACTS

This is a list of organisations that might be helpful. It does not mean that INQUEST endorses the organisations if they are listed here.

Voluntary Organisations

1990 Trust

Suite 12, Winchester House, 9 Cranmer Road,
London SW9 6EJ
Phone: 020 7582 1990
Fax: 0870 1277 657
E-mail: blink1990@blink.org.uk
Web: www.blink.org.uk

The 1990 Trust is the first national Black organisation set up to protect and pioneer the interest of Britain's Black Communities. Its approach is to engage in policy development and to articulate the needs of Black communities from a Black perspective.

Action for Prisoners' Families

Unit 102, Riverbank House, 1 Putney Bridge
Approach, London SW6 3JD
Phone: 020 7384 1987
Helpline: 0808 808 2003
Fax: 020 7384 1855
E-mail: info@actionpf.org.uk
Web: www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

Action for Prisoners' Families promotes the just treatment of prisoners' families by the prison system and society across the UK. It encourages the development of, and acts as a voice for, organisations providing support to these families.

Action for Victims of Medical Accidents (AVMA)

44 High Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1YB
Phone: 020 8686 8333
Fax: 020 8667 9065
E-mail: admin@avma.org.uk
Web: www.avma.org.uk

Action for Victims of Medical Accidents (AVMA) is an independent charity and the only organisation working exclusively for the victims of medical accidents. A "medical accident" is where avoidable injury has been caused as a result of medical treatment or failure to diagnose.

Centre for Corporate Accountability

4th Floor, 197-199 City Road, London EC1V 1JN
Phone: 020 7490 4494
Fax: 020 7490 7191
E-mail: info@corporateaccountability.org
Web: www.corporateaccountability.org

The Centre for Corporate Accountability is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes worker and public safety by providing advice, and undertaking research and advocacy, on matters relating to law enforcement and corporate criminal accountability.

Child Bereavement Trust

Aston House, West Wycombe, High Wycombe,
Bucks HP14 3AG
Tel: 01494 446648
Fax: 01494 440057
E-mail: enquiries@childbereavement.org.uk
Web: www.childbereavement.org.uk

The Child Bereavement Trust is a national UK charity, which was founded to improve the support offered by professionals to grieving families.

Churches' Commission for Racial Justice

Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7SA
Phone: 020 7523 2128
E-mail: ccrj@ctbi.org.uk
Web: www.ctbi.org.uk/ccrj/

The Churches' Commission for Racial Justice monitors trends and developments in the field of racial justice in Britain and Ireland and in Europe and co-ordinates the Churches' response on key issues.

The Carbon Monoxide & Gas Safety Society (CO-Gas Safety)

Lorien, Common Lane, Claygate, Surrey KT10 0HY
Phone: 01372 466135/466112
Fax: 01372 468965
E-mail: s.trotter@uku.co.uk
Web: www.co-gassafety.co.uk

CO-Gas Safety is an independent charity committed to reducing accidents from Carbon Monoxide and other gas dangers worldwide and supporting gas related accident victims.

Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)

45/47 Donegall Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland BT1 2BR
Phone: 028 9096 1122
Fax: 028 9024 6706
E-mail: info@caj.org.uk
Web: www.caj.org.uk

The CAJ seeks to secure the highest standards in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland by ensuring that the government complies with its responsibilities in international human rights law.

The Compassionate Friends

53 North Street, Bristol BS3 1EN
Phone: 0117 966 5202
Fax: 0117 914 4368
E-mail: info@tcf.org.uk
Web: www.tcf.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is an organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering understanding, support and encouragement to others after the death of a child or children. It also offers support, advice and information to other relatives, friends and professionals who are helping the family.

Construction Safety Campaign (CSC)

21 Athenlay Road, London SE15 3EA
Phone: 0774 779 5954
E-mail: construction.safetycampaign@talk21.com

CSC is an organisation which is dedicated to health and safety issues in the workplace, including deaths on construction sites.

CRUSE Bereavement Care

Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR
Tel: 020 8939 9530
Helpline: 0870 167 1677
Fax: 020 8940 7638
E-mail: helpline@crusebereavementcare.org.uk
General Email: info@crusebereavementcare.org.uk
Web: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care offers free information and advice to anyone who has been affected by a death; provides support and counselling one to one and in groups; and offers education, support, information and publications to anyone supporting bereaved people.

SECTION 8

Howard League for Penal Reform

1 Ardleigh Road, Islington, London N1 4HS
Phone: 020 7249 7373
Fax: 020 7249 7788
E-mail: howardleague@ukonline.co.uk
Web: www.howardleague.org

The Howard League works for humane and rational reform of the penal system. It researches and comments on criminal justice policy and practice, holds conferences and debates and publishes books and reports. It also runs projects in schools and prisons.

Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO)

50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB
Phone: 020 7482 4148
Fax: 020 7482 4815
E-mail: icpolondon@hotmail.com

ICPO aims to identify and respond to the needs of Irish prisoners and their families; to research and provide relevant information to prisoners as well as to all groups caring for their welfare; focus public attention on issues affecting Irish prisoners overseas; and to seek justice and human rights for Irish migrants, refugees and prisoners at an international level.

Justice

59 Carter Lane, London EC4V 5AQ
Phone: 020 7329 5100
Fax: 020 7329 5055
E-mail: admin@justice.org.uk
Web: www.justice.org.uk

Justice is an all-party, law reform and human rights organisation working to improve the legal system and quality of justice, in particular by promoting human rights; improving the legal system and access to justice; improving criminal justice; and raising standards of EU justice and home affairs.

Liberty

21 Tabard Street, London SE1 4LA
Phone: 020 7403 3888
Fax: 020 7407 5354
E-mail: info@liberty-human-rights.org.uk
Web: www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

Liberty fight to secure equal rights for everyone by campaigning and lobbying Parliament; taking human rights cases to UK courts and the European Court of Human Rights; conducting research; and providing advice and training to lawyers and the public.

London Bereavement Network (LBN)

356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PN
Phone: 020 7700 8134
Fax: 020 7700 8146
E-mail: info@bereavement.org.uk
Web: www.bereavement.org.uk

LBN is a forum for bereavement services throughout the Greater London area. It exists to promote good working practices in bereavement care across the Capital. It provides information and support to members of the public and to other professionals. LBN offers support, training and guidance to its member services.

MIND

15-19 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 4BQ
Phone: 020 8519 2122
Fax: 020 8522 1725
E-mail: info@mind.org.uk
Web: www.mind.org.uk

Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. Mind works to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress by advancing the views, needs and ambitions of people with mental health problems; challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion; influencing policy and achieving equality through campaigning and education; inspiring the development of quality services which reflect expressed need and diversity.

National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)

169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU
Phone: 020 7582 6500
Fax: 020 7735 4666
E-mail: anyone@nacro.org.uk
Web: www.nacro.org.uk

Nacro is a crime reduction charity which aims to make society safer by finding practical solutions to reducing crime. Since 1966, Nacro has worked to give ex-offenders, disadvantaged people and deprived communities the help they need to build a better future.

National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux

Myddelton House, 115-123 Pentonville Road,
London N1 9LZ
Phone: 020 7833 2181
Fax: 020 7833 4371
Web: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

The Citizens Advice Bureau Service offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice. Citizens Advice Bureaux help solve problems which are central to people's lives; help fill out forms; write letters; negotiate with creditors; represent clients at court or tribunal; and provide specialist advice.

National Civil Rights Movement

14 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2
5AA
Phone: 0800 374618
Fax: 020 8813 9734
E-mail: admin@monitoring-group.co.uk
Web: www.monitoring-group.co.uk

The National Civil Rights Movement is a charitable organisation providing assistance and support to victims of racial harassment, and domestic violence.

Prison Reform Trust

2nd Floor, 15 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0JR
Phone: 020 7251 5070
Fax: 020 7251 5076
E-mail: prisonreform@prisonreform.demon.co.uk
Web: www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk

The work of the Prison Reform Trust is aimed at creating a just, humane and effective penal system. It does this by inquiring into the workings of the system; informing prisoners, staff, and the wider public; and by influencing Parliament, Government and officials towards reform.

Prisoners' Advice Service

Unit 210, Hatton Square, 16/16a Baldwins
Gardens, London EC1N 7RJ
Phone: 020 7405 8090
0800 018 2156
Fax: 020 7405 8045
E-mail: pas@finyworld.co.uk

A national service offering free, confidential advice and information by legal professionals to prisoners, particularly concerning prisoners' rights and the application of prison rules. It takes up prisoners' complaints about their treatment within the prison system, taking legal action where appropriate.

Rethink Severe Mental Illness

30 Tabernacle Street, London EC2A 4DD
Phone: 020 7330 9100
Fax: 020 7330 9102
E-mail: info.london@rethink.org
Web: www.rethink.org

Rethink is dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by severe mental illness, whether they have a condition themselves, care for others who do, or are professionals or volunteers working in the mental health field.

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RoadPeace

PO Box 2570, London NW10 3PW
Phone: 020 8964 1021
Fax: 020 8838 5103
E-mail: info@roadpeace.org
Web: www.roadpeace.org

RoadPeace exists to represent the interests of people injured in road crashes and the bereaved friends/relatives of road crash victims. RoadPeace help and support them and work to stop the injustices suffered by them.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

Volsolve House, 14-18 West Bar Green, Sheffield
Phone: 0114 272 5955
Helpline: 0870 241 3337 (9am -9pm)
E-mail: sobs.admin@care4free.net
Web: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

SOBS exists to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend. SOBS offers emotional and practical support and aims to provide a safe, confidential environment in which bereaved people can share their experiences and feelings, so giving and gaining support from each other.

W.I.S.H. (Women in Secure Hospitals)

18 Borough High Street, London Bridge, SE1 9QG
Phone: 020 7407 5191
Fax: 020 7407 5198
E-mail: wish@wishlondon.freemove.co.uk

W.I.S.H. supports and empowers women while being assessed for detention and disposal; monitors and evaluates private hospital, NHS and criminal justice services for women while detained; and supports women leaving the system through the Community Link Project.

Women in Prison (WIP)

Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2EA
Phone: 020 7226 5879
Fax: 020 7354 8005
E-mail: admin@womeninprison.org.uk
Web: www.womeninprison.org.uk

WIP is a support and campaigning group for women prisoners. WIP visits women in prison and offers practical help and advice. Where appropriate WIP liaises with other voluntary and statutory agencies and responds to events, addresses issues and informs debate on all aspects of women's imprisonment.

United Families and Friends Campaign

c/o INQUEST, 89-93 Fonthill Rd, London N4 3JH
Phone: 0845 330 7927/07770 432 439
E-mail: info@uffc.org
Web: www.uffc.org

The UFFC's aims and objectives are to ensure that basic human rights are upheld and to stop deaths in custody. It is to ensure that when deaths do occur, that the whole truth as to how they were killed, by whom and why, emerges.

Government and professional organisations

Coroners Section

Department for Constitutional Affairs
Selborne House, 54–60 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QW
Phone: 020 7210 8614
E-mail: general.queries@dca.gsi.gov.uk
Web: www.dca.gov.uk

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has assumed responsibility from the Home Office for developing policy and practice for coroners, facilitating their training and for leading a programme of coroner reform. The DCA also deals with enquiries from the general public about coroners and inquests.

Your MP

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Phone: 020 7219 3000
E-mail: hcinfo@parliament.uk
Web: www.parliament.uk

Your MP is there to represent you as a constituent and may be able to assist you. To find out who your MP is, visit www.locata.co.uk/commons or call 020 7219 3000.

Coroners' Society of England and Wales

44 Ormond Avenue, Hampton, Middlesex
TW12 2RX

The objects of the society include the promotion of the usefulness of the office of the coroner to the public; ascertaining the difficulties of coroners' duties; recommending appropriate law reform; and protecting the rights and interests of coroners.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

First Floor, Ashley House, 2 Monck Street, London
SW1P 2BQ
Phone: 0870 267 4298
Fax: 020 7035 2141/2142
Web: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

HM Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent Body which was established in 1980 to inspect prisons and make recommendations to the Home Secretary.

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

68 Lombard Street, London EC3V 9LJ
Phone: 020 7868 2578
Web: www.ipcc.gov.uk

The IPCC has overall responsibility for the system for complaints against the police and the investigation of deaths in police custody.

Press Complaints Commission

1 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JB
Help Line: 020 7353 3732
Fax: 020 7353 8355
E-mail: pcc@pcc.org.uk
Welsh Help Line: 029 2039 5570
Web: www.pcc.org.uk

The Press Complaints Commission is an independent body which deals with complaints from members of the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines.

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Prisons & Probation Ombudsman

Ashley House, 2 Monck Street, London SW1P 2BQ

Phone: 020 7035 2876

Fax: 020 7035 2860

E-mail: mail@ppo.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.ppo.gov.uk

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman is appointed by the Home Secretary and investigates complaints from prisoners and those subject to probation supervision, or those upon whom reports have been written. The Ombudsman is completely independent of both the Prison Service and the National Probation Service.

Safer Custody Group

Prison Service, Abell House, John Islip Street,
London SW1P 4LH

Phone: 020 7217 3000

Fax: 020 7217 2000

E-mail: scg@prisons-safer.demon.co.uk

Web: www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk

The Safer Custody Group is a multi-disciplinary group dedicated to reducing suicide, self-harm and violence in prisons and is responsible for monitoring and producing policy on this issue.

Other information on inquests

Relevant Acts of Parliament

Coroner's Act 1988

Coroner's Rules 1984

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Human Rights Act 1998

Books

'Inquests – a practitioners guide' - Thomas, Friedman and Christian 2002 published by Legal Action Group

'Jervis on Coroners' – Paul Matthews 2002 published by Sweet and Maxwell

'Levine on Coroners' Courts' – Sir Montague Levine and James Pyke 1999 published by Sweet and Maxwell

'Coroner's Courts – a guide to law and practice' Christopher Dorries 1999 published by Wiley

Reports

'How the Inquest system fails bereaved people' – Deborah Coles and Helen Shaw 2003 published by INQUEST

Death Certification and Investigation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland – The Report of a Fundamental Review 2003 – published by The Stationery Office

The Shipman Inquiry – Death Certification and the Investigation of Deaths by Coroner – Third Report by Dame Janet Smith, DBE 2003

