

June 2019

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# briefing

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## Inquests - ten top tips to help when instructing Mills & Reeve

- 1 Ensure you receive good advance notification of Inquests by making sure the local Coroner's officers have a central point of contact.
- 2 Request a copy of the post mortem report and statements provided from the Coroner. If they are relevant, he must disclose them.
- 3 When you receive notification of an inquest from the Coroner, review the notes and work out who the key witnesses are. Send relevant staff the Mills & Reeve guidance notes on inquests, writing a statement, and the template for drafting a witness statement.
- 4 Email draft statements to us electronically for checking/amending.
- 5 When instructing Mills & Reeve, send to us in one go:
  - (a) Copy relevant records (clinical notes if it is a health and care matter)
  - (b) Chronology of event (if already drafted)
  - (c) Relevant policies, procedures or protocols
    - (i) in place at the time
    - (ii) in place now
  - (d) Investigation reports, recommendations and action plans. Consider discussing with us before disclosure to the Coroner.
  - (e) Complaints file
  - (f) Details of any claims
  - (g) Details of the involvement of other agencies. For example the HSE, the police, the local authority, safeguarding.
  - (h) Information as to contact with family members and friends of the deceased.

- 6 Liaise with the Coroner's officer – are the family represented, do they have any issues, what other people or organisations are being called? What is the approach or view of the Coroner?
- 7 If we ask for additional information please provide it as soon as possible and if it is taking time let us know so we do not have to chase.
- 8 When organising meetings for us to see witnesses, try to organise them all on the one day rather than on five different days! Instructing us early will allow such a meeting to be planned rather than rushed. If we are dealing with a prison inquest for you, consider organising meetings outside the secure area.
- 9 Decide if you would like us to:
  - (a) Review the documentation and advise on risk
  - (b) Review draft statements and suggest areas for improvement to help the Coroner
  - (c) Meet with staff to prepare them for the inquest
  - (d) Represent your organisation at the inquest
  - (e) Some or all of the above

## Mills & Reeve on-line inquest support

You will find this guidance and a lot more information and guidance documents on our free on-line support page

There is also a set of videos with top tips on what to do and others tell their stories of who they got through the process. All designed to make it a little bit easier for you.

Follow the link or type in:

<https://www.mills-reeve.com/foresight/inquests/information-on-inquests>

## Recent Feedback

**“ I'm most grateful for your support during the Inquest. It was outstanding. ”**

Executive Director Forensic Services, NHS Client

**“I feel genuinely privileged to know that you are on our team and offer my heartfelt thanks”**

Dr Stephen Merron, Consultant Anaesthetist, University Hospital North Midlands NHS Trust

## Contacts

Feel free to contact our inquest specialists as any time:



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