# **Briefing:** Witness statement template

The Chief Coroner's guidance includes a witness statement template which you may find useful. It can be accessed here. You will also find an expanded template below.

**Statement of [ ] to assist [the Coroner] with the death of [ ]**

## 1 Personal details

1.1 Outline your full name, business address, occupation, position and name of your employer / organisation. There is no need to give your home address. Set out any relevant experience and qualifications you have obtained and how long you have worked for your employer. Explain when you qualified (if appropriate). Add any more relevant information about yourself and your experience, including any particularly relevant experience to comment on the matters in hand.

1.2 You may choose to express your condolences at the outset of your statement.

## 2 Terms of reference

2.1 Explain the purpose of the statement, why you have been asked to provide it and by whom. For example, you may have been asked by the Coroner / your solicitor / legal department / complaints manager to provide a statement about the death of a particular patient. You may be responding to a complaint. If you have been asked to consider any particular issues, you should outline them here. If it is a factual account only which you have been asked to provide, then you should say so. Outline your understanding that the statement will be provided to the Coroner or to whoever to assist with their enquiry.

## 3 Evidence and methodology

3.1 Outline the documents and other references you have referred to in preparing the statement. Have you used any medical records, other records and documents or any personal notes? Have you spoken to any staff about the event and if so, why and on what basis? Are you relying upon your memory of events? If you can actually remember events, then say so – and why. There is nothing wrong, however, in relying upon the notes you have made about a particular individual or incident; this is one reason why you might have been taught to make full and contemporaneous notes.

## 4 Factual outline

4.1 In chronological order, set out what happened when you were involved with the matter, starting from your first relevant contact and finishing with your last involvement or relevant facts you learnt afterwards. Keep your narrative short but accurate. For instance, you may include the following things:

4.1.1 Why you were involved with the deceased.

4.1.2 Any specific role you may have had with management, care or liaison with the deceased.

4.1.3 What contact did you have and why?

4.1.4 If you are a health and care professional, what treatment and care did you provide? What treatment and care did the deceased receive generally?

4.1.5 Matters you observed when interacting with the deceased.

This list is not exhaustive.

4.2 Include the date and time of events wherever possible, making reference to any contemporaneous records or notes. You may consider exhibiting such documents to your statement.

4.3 If you have been asked to provide answers to specific questions or to provide any comment or observations that are within your experience and expertise, you should set these out clearly. You should do this in a separate section.

4.4 Conclude your statement as follows:

"I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth."

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

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## Contacts

Feel free to contact our inquest specialists at any time



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