

## Inquests in Health and Social Care



**An inquest can be an acutely stressful environment. The professionals involved may be afraid, the bereaved family may be distraught or angry, regulators may be anxious and the press may be looking for an easy scare-story.**

This can all mean that health and social care professionals and executives can now face a much more challenging interrogation played out in front of the media. It is vital that you engage properly with this process while supporting staff and ensuring appropriate protection of reputation.

Coroners have wide powers to make formal reports that require changes to an organisation's systems. Such reports may be sent to the Lord Chancellor and may be subject to public scrutiny.

By working with you to prepare for an inquest, we can minimise the risk of such a report being made. Our inquest team is able to offer levels of support for an inquest tailored to its complexity. We have vast experience in representing a range of organisations for inquests, including NHS, local authorities, independent health and social care providers, fire authorities, housing providers, prisons, regulators, schools and individual professionals.

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### Screening

It can sometimes be difficult to know whether legal representation is necessary. Therefore we provide a screening service for inquests where we review the preliminary papers, check reports and statements for onward submission to the Coroner and provide preliminary advice. This is also an opportunity for us to transfer skills to your staff in categorising difficult inquests.

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### Witness support

We can support witnesses through the process to ensure that they are properly prepared and to enable them to deliver their evidence confidently and competently.

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### Advocacy

Where legal representation is required an experienced advocate will be provided. Our inquest team includes a barrister and lawyers with Higher Rights. Only in rare cases do we advise or require the use of external Counsel.

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### Related issues

We can also deal with other issues which may be linked to inquests such as the police or multi-agency investigations and we can help you manage an internal inquiry or incident investigation.

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### Industry-leading advice

We have a nationally recognised expertise. We have strong links with the Coroners in London and the South East, the Midlands and the South West, the Treasury Solicitors who represent the Prison Service and the Prison & Probation Ombudsman (PPO). These relationships enable us to ensure a smooth and efficient process for our clients. Inquests can be a very daunting experience for staff involved and we provide inquest training to staff.

# The Inquest Team

We would be delighted to speak to you about support for inquests.



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Bevan Brittan stand out from other firms because of their extensive knowledge of the sector, responsive nature and consistency of advice. They're also always happy to go above and beyond when delivering their service.

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