

Note of the Pre-Inquest Hearing on Thursday 14 August 2008

This is a note of the decisions made at the Pre-Inquest Hearing. The note is brief so that it could be provided speedily.

The Deputy Coroner, Mr Andrew Bradley, conducted the meeting. This was on the lines of the administrative matters which he had outlined in advance. There was a detailed discussion with submissions from the legal representatives and the opportunity for relatives to comment. The Coroner emphasised that this was a private and not a public hearing. He stated that he did not wish there to be any publicity at this stage.

In attendance:-

- (i) Deputy Coroner, Mr Andrew Bradley
- (ii) John White, from Blake Lapthorn
- (iii) Anita Perry, assisting John White from Blake Lapthorn
- (iv) Barrister, Harriett Jerram, instructed by Blake Lapthorn
- (v) Mr Charles Farthing
- (vi) Mr Ian Wilson
- (vii) Mr Ian Barker, solicitor from the Medical Defence Union, on behalf of Dr Barton
- (viii) Detective Sergeant Stephenson, from the police
- (ix) Detective Sergeant Williams from the police
- (x) Mrs Packman and her daughter
- (xi) Mr and Mrs Russell
- (xii) Adele Watson, solicitor from Field Fisher Waterhouse, for the GMC

The decisions were as follows:-

1. The Inquest will proceed as one Inquest but there will be conclusions reached in respect of each and every individual death.
2. There will be a Jury.
3. The Inquest will proceed without having to wait for the outcome of the GMC Hearing.
4. The following live witnesses will attend:-
 - Dr Wilcox, expert
 - Professor Black, expert
 - Dr Barton
 - Dr Read
 - Nurse Griffin
 - Nurse Turbitt
 - Nurse Turnball
 - Sister Jones
 - Dr Logan
 - Nurse Jill Hamblyn
5. A bundle of documents from the Coroner will be circulated. At that stage it can be decided what, if any, other witnesses may be dealt with under Rule 37 i.e. evidence that is taken in writing.
6. Time estimate: It is anticipated that the Inquest will take 4 – 6 weeks. The Coroner was keen to ensure that there is no need for adjournments or rolling issues onto a subsequent hearing date, so that closure can be achieved.
7. Date of hearing: 9 March 2009, anticipated for 6 weeks.
8. Other families: Blake Lapthorn provided details to the Coroner in respect of Gillian McKenzie, Ian Williamson, Margaret Ward, Mr Stevens, Emily Yates and Lynn Sharp. It was felt best tactically not to try to force the Coroner to make a premature decision about including any other families at this stage. It

was felt that the position will become clearer when disclosure of documents is given. Also the Coroner stated that the decision in respect of the 10 deceased persons included within the Inquest was that of the Secretary of State and it was not his decision. Blake Laphorn and the barrister, Harriet Jerram, will identify the relevant Secretary of State and provide details to AvMA.

The next stage will be receipt of the disclosure bundles by the interested parties. Blake Laphorn will provide copies to the relatives of the 10 deceased who have instructed them. In relation to other families of the 10 deceased the Coroner will provide disclosure.

This means that we have a Jury Inquest, a realistic time estimate and sufficient time to prepare and address disclosure issues properly. This is an excellent outcome and a good basis on which to move forward.