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## INQUEST OPENS INTO DEATH OF 18-YEAR OLD WOMAN IN WORKPLACE BULLYING CASE

Rochdale Coroner's Court sitting at  
Oldham Magistrates Court  
St Domingo Place West St  
Oldham, OL1 1QE

**Inquest into death of Hannah Kirkham aged 18 opens at Rochdale Coroner's Court sitting at Oldham Magistrates Court at 10 am on Tuesday 6 December 2005**

When she was 18 years old Hannah Kirkham took an overdose of her medication. She died on 26 December 2003. Hannah and her family – her mother and father and two sisters – had lived happily in Manchester.

But for the six months before she died Hannah had been off work from her job at KFC Northenden Branch certified sick with depression. The last letter Hannah wrote was on 4 December. It was a complaint to KFC about sexual harassment and bullying throughout the previous year at work. The information Hannah gave included details of two of her male colleagues' torments about rape and death, a cigarette lighter flame being held against her, stabbing her with sticks KFC use to hold corn, and verbally abusing her. KFC management did not open that letter until February, 6 weeks after Hannah had died.

The Coroner and Jury will determine the circumstances of Hannah's death and the Coroner will consider whether to make recommendations aimed at preventing young women dying for the reasons she did again.

Hannah's parents Marie and Steve Kirkham said:

*"We hope that all the circumstances leading to our daughter's death are fully explored at the inquest. Hopefully the inquest will make the public aware of the devastating impact of bullying in the workplace. No other family should have to go through what we are still having to go through as a result of the result of our dearest daughter's death."*

The Inquest is expected to last two days.

Notes to editors:

INQUEST is the only non-governmental organisation in England and Wales that works directly with the families of those who die in custody. It provides an independent free legal and advice service to bereaved people on inquest procedures and their rights in the coroner's courts.

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| Further Information | <a href="http://www.inquest.org.uk">www.inquest.org.uk</a> |
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