

INQUEST 

Annual Report 2006

INQUEST Charitable Trust was established in 1995 to complement and assist the work of its sister organisation INQUEST which was founded in 1981. In March 2004 the two organisations merged into a single charitable organisation known publicly as INQUEST. The INQUEST Charitable Trust is a registered charity (number 1046650) and a company limited by guarantee (number 03054853).

INQUEST is the only organisation in England and Wales that provides a specialist, comprehensive advice service on contentious deaths and their investigation to bereaved people, lawyers, other advice and support agencies, the media, MPs and the wider public. INQUEST has a free information pack available to any bereaved family which explains the whole inquest process and where to find emotional and practical support.

Our casework priorities are deaths in police and prison, in immigration detention and deaths of detained patients. Our focus on deaths in custody and the monitoring of such deaths means that we are at the forefront of uncovering patterns and trends. Arising from this we have particular concerns about the deaths of women, black people, children and young people, and people with mental health problems. This is both in terms of the treatment and care received by the deceased in custody and the experience of bereaved relatives following the death.

INQUEST develops policy proposals and undertakes research to lobby for changes to the inquest and investigation process, reduce the number of custodial deaths, and improve the treatment and care of those within the institutions where the deaths occur.

Staff

Co-directors - Deborah Coles and Helen Shaw

The Co-directors are jointly responsible for leading INQUEST and ensuring its continued credibility as a high-profile human rights organisation. They are responsible for individual staff management and supervision as well as organisational and team management and development. They devise INQUEST's strategic policy on reform of the inquest system and issues arising from casework, in particular in relation to deaths in custody, and liaise with government - frequently at Ministerial level - and other relevant organisations. The Co-directors lead specific projects and undertake research to assist the organisation in achieving meaningful change in related policy and practice. They represent the organisation both orally and in writing at external events and in the media and work on individual cases ranging from inquests to hearings in the House of Lords. The Co-directors also deliver training based on INQUEST's work to a wide variety of audiences and edit *Inquest Law* magazine.

Casework Team

Gilly Mundy – Senior Caseworker
Catherine Hayes – Caseworker
Scarlet Granville – Caseworker (from August 2006)

The Caseworkers' primary role is to advise and support bereaved families on their rights in relation to the various investigations that occur after a death. Dependent on time and resources they accompany families to meetings with lawyers and with investigators from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) as well as attend inquest hearings. The Caseworkers collate information gathered from previous deaths and from their experience of policy and practice and are a source of knowledge which is available to families and their legal teams. If appropriate they will refer or signpost families to other specialist advice agencies.

Fundraising and Development Manager - Steve Roberts (from May 2006)

The Fundraising and Development Manager is responsible for co-ordinating and updating administrative, financial and governance systems. The position is an expansion of the previous post of Office Manager. The role includes responsibility for developing and managing fundraising and

devising strategies to secure the organisation's financial and supporter base.

Policy and Parliamentary Officer – Yasmin Khan (from August 2006)

The Policy and Parliamentary Officer is responsible for ensuring that INQUEST's concerns are fully considered by government, parliament and other policy makers during the process of reform of the inquest system. The Officer tracks the legislative and policy agenda to identify opportunities for the organisation to influence public policy and practice and supports the Co-Directors by undertaking policy analysis on matters that have a direct impact on INQUEST's service users.

Information Worker – Richard Fontenoy

The Information Worker is responsible for monitoring statistics and analysis of emerging trends in deaths in custody. This post includes provision of information and statistical services to INQUEST staff, outside organisations and other interested parties, the improvement and maintenance of existing databases and overseeing the development of new systems.

Researcher, Women’s Deaths in Custody Project – Marissa Sandler (to November 2006)

A temporary position working on INQUEST’s project on women’s deaths in prison, looking at the issues arising from the individual deaths and what they highlight about the treatment and care of women in prison and the criminal justice system generally.

Research and Policy Assistants

Lucie Wibberley
 Martin Collins
 Milena Nuti

Martin worked with Deborah Coles on the child deaths in custody project.

Milena Nuti and Lucie Wibberley worked with the Co-directors on the report on families’ experience of the investigation and inquest system following a death in custody, published as *Unlocking the Truth*. They analysed raw data and conducted interviews with practitioners; summarised reports by other bodies and organisations; and helped the Co-directors with their administration needs in relation to the project.

INQUEST Charitable Trust Board 2006

Louise Christian	(Chair)	Partner, Christian Khan Solicitors
Adam Sampson	(Deputy Chair)	Chief Executive, Shelter
Dr William Spence	(Treasurer)	Reader, Department of Physics, Queen Mary, University of London
David Bergman		Director, Centre for Corporate Accountability (until March 2006)
Prof Penny Green		School of Law, University of Westminster
Adrienne Jemmott		Customer Advisor, Planning Reception, Reading Borough Council
Rev. Arlington Trotman		Secretary, Churches Commission for Racial Justice
Dr Tony Ward		Reader in Law at the University of Hull (until October 2006)
Daniel Machover		Partner, Hickman and Rose solicitors (from April 2006)

INQUEST Advisory Group

Dr Joanna Bennett	Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health
Raju Bhatt	Partner, Bhatt Murphy Solicitors
Ruth Bunday	Partner, Harrison Bunday Solicitors
Jonathan Glasson	Barrister, Doughty Street Chambers
Prof Barry Goldson	Department of Sociology, University of Liverpool
Tony Murphy	Solicitor, Bindman & Partners
Tim Owen QC	Barrister, Matrix Chambers
Prof Mick Ryan	Department of Sociology, University Of Greenwich
Mark Scott	Partner, Bhatt Murphy Solicitors
Prof Phil Scraton	Institute of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Queen's University, Belfast
Prof Joe Sim	School of Science, Liverpool John Moore's University
Dr Richard Stone	Panel member of the David 'Rocky' Bennett Inquiry, President of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality and Vice-Chair of the Runnymede Trust
Leslie Thomas	Barrister, Garden Court Chambers
Jane Winter	Director, British Irish Rights Watch

Volunteers 2006

INQUEST's volunteers provided vital support for the staff team by donating in excess of 2,000 hours during the year. They are an important resource, assisting staff with tasks such as press monitoring, filing, mailings, research projects and note-taking at inquests. The majority of the volunteers have come to INQUEST via schemes at both the College of Law and Inns Of Court School of Law in London. INQUEST was invited to join the pro bono panel for the College of Law to help shape their volunteer scheme for their students.

Barbara Hesse
Rebecca Linacre
Sarah Loutfi
Alexandrine Pirlot de Corbion
Gavin Sullivan
Nik Wood

Policy advice

We would also like to thank members of the INQUEST Lawyers Group who have volunteered and assisted us in preparing policy documents and responses to consultations.

Staff as volunteers

Staff at INQUEST not only work in the voluntary sector but are actively encouraged to volunteer themselves and sit on a number of Boards of Trustees, including Women In Prison, the Centre for Corporate Accountability, the National Bereavement Partnership, War on Want and the Newham Monitoring Project.

Timeline 2006

January

- INQUEST Lawyer's Group meeting with Prisons and Probation Ombudsman team at the Law Society
- INQUEST witness statement submitted in 'D' case at the High Court
- Made submission to the parliamentary Procedure Committee Inquiry into the application of the *sub judice* rule of the House of Commons to proceedings in coroners' courts
- Met delegation from Brazilian government to explain and give opinion on processes likely to occur in Jean Charles de Menezes case
- Constitutional Affairs Committee launched inquiry into Reform of the Coroners System and Death Certification in England and Wales and calls for evidence

February

- Contributed to panel discussion after production of *Gladiator Games* (stage play about the murder of Zahid Mubarek)
- Made submission to the Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry into Reform of the Coroners System and Death Certification in England and Wales
- Met Sally Keeble MP on death of Gareth Myatt

March

- Attended launch of Prison Inspectorate annual report
- Met Lord Ramsbotham on Paul Day case
- Attended launch of IPCC report into the death of Christopher Alder
- Attended Ministerial Group on Prison Suicide
- Attended IPCC Advisory Group
- Spoke alongside Yvonne Scholes at Nacro conference on youth justice, Nottingham

April

- Sat on judging panel for the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards
- Attended meeting of independent panel advising Baroness Corston's review of women's imprisonment
- Appointed Fundraising and Development Manager
- Attended Zahid Mubarek memorial lecture
- Attended evidence sessions of Constitutional Affairs Committee on coroner reform

May

- Trial of police officers involved in death of Mikey Powell began
- Fundraising and Development Manager started in post
- Contributed to debate "That this House would shoot to kill" at Cambridge Union – motion defeated
- Presented paper at coroner's training session in Preston

- Attended Corston Review meeting
- Met Prison Inspectorate on women's deaths

June

- The government's draft Bill on coroner reform published
- Met Baroness Stern in House of Lords about deaths in custody
- Attended meeting of the Forum for Preventing Custodial Deaths
- Attended meeting of the IPCC Advisory Group
- Attended Women In Prison magazine launch
- Attended launch of Zahid Mubarek Inquiry report which mentions a Standing Commission
- Family Forum for relatives of women who died in prison attended by Baroness Corston
- Spoke at Howard League conference on women in prison
- Attended Corston Review meeting
- Interviewed candidates for a Policy and Parliamentary Officer

July

- Published and distributed briefing *Why are Children Dying in Custody?*
- Parliamentary meeting on deaths of children in custody
- Interviewed candidates for new Caseworker
- Met Minister of State at Department for Constitutional

Affairs, Harriet Harman QC MP, about draft Coroners Bill to give initial response and raise existing concerns

- Attended Ministerial Group on Prison Suicides
- Policy and Parliamentary Officer started in post
- Attended meeting with magistrates and judges as part of the Corston Review
- Attended Joseph Scholes hearing in Court of Appeal

August

- New Caseworker started in post

September

- Attended Corston Review meeting and joined delegation to Scotland to visit Cornton Vale prison and the 218 Project
- Attended Jean Charles de Menezes pre-inquest review
- Met Jeremy Dear from National Union of Journalists about supporting INQUEST and their concerns about the Coroners Bill
- Met Liberty to discuss joint work on Coroners Bill and Corporate Manslaughter Bill
- Attended Trades Union Congress to discuss Coroners Bill, support for INQUEST and the Corporate Manslaughter Bill
- Spoke on work of INQUEST at training session for Metropolitan Police Family Liaison Officers
- Attended Inns of Court Pro Bono Fair to promote volunteering opportunities at INQUEST

- Attended IPCC Advisory Group
- Met officials from the Coroners Section at the Department for Constitutional Affairs
- Made written response on Coroners Bill

October

- Contributed to Centre for Crime and Justice Studies Roundtable meeting on young people in custody
- Attended Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody
- Met Harriet Harman and officials from DCA with members of the INQUEST Lawyers Group re draft Coroners Bill
- Joint meeting between INQUEST and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman
- Spoke at public event of the Corston Review
- Hosted delegation from Tokyo Three Bars Association
- Newsletter published
- Attended Crime and Society Foundation debate – “Does criminal justice work? Right for the Wrong Reasons” – at the Royal Society

November

- Government published response to the Constitutional Affairs Committee’s report on reform of the coroners system.
- Attended and spoke at CCA conference on Corporate Manslaughter Bill

- Met Prisons and Probation Ombudsman Family Liaison Officers
- Attended Nacro AGM
- Met Simon Hughes MP re Coroners Bill
- Spoke at Capita conference on deaths in police care
- Attended reception of Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody
- Held INQUEST Family Forum
- Contributed to seminar on investigating deaths in custody at Garden Court Chambers
- Met officials from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner about deaths of children in penal custody
- Met Public and Commercial Services Union about deaths in custody, support for INQUEST and Coroners Bill

December

- Circulated Briefing on Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill to parliamentarians
- Attended Children’s Society reception in parliament
- Attended Corston Review meeting
- Attended IPCC Advisory Group Meeting
- Attended Project Hibiscus annual reception at City Hall, London
- Spoke at Crime and Society Foundation seminar on youth justice
- *BBC Newsnight* broadcast a ten minute piece on the deaths of children in custody

Co-Directors' overview

We remained focussed on the main aims of the organisation – to provide our casework service to bereaved families, to continue our campaigning work on deaths of children in custody, and on deaths in custody in general and for better post death mechanisms including reform of the inquest system in general with a specific focus on contentious deaths, improving the investigation systems into deaths in custody and for greater accountability

Child deaths project

In 2006 we continued our campaigning work on child deaths in custody, part of a project funded by the Diana Memorial Fund. This consisted of working on a wide range of activities including organising events, publishing literature, conducting media work, raising the issue with parliamentarians and other NGOs and continuing our unique casework service with families who have been bereaved through the death of a child in custody.

One of the main focal points of our work continued to be on gathering support for the Joseph Scholes public inquiry call. We held meetings with parliamentarians in the House of Commons and the Lords to discuss Joseph's case and express our concerns relating to the number of child deaths in custody and the fact that there has never been a public inquiry into any of these deaths. Early Day Motion 2410 was laid down in June 2006 by the Scholes family's constituency MP, Chris Ruane and attracted 76 signatories. In July, INQUEST held a highly successful meeting in

parliament on the issue of child deaths in custody hosted by Chris Ruane MP and chaired by the former Chief Inspector of Prisons, Lord Ramsbotham GCB, CBE. The meeting was addressed by Joseph's mother Yvonne, Deborah Coles and Baroness Stern. The meeting also launched the publication of a joint briefing INQUEST produced with NACRO - *Why are children dying in custody?*

Our work on the Joseph Scholes public inquiry call won the support of all the major penal reform, child welfare and human rights groups and gained high profile media coverage including a *Newsnight* special on child deaths in custody in December.

Throughout the year we worked with and briefed other NGOs on the issue of child deaths in custody, including organising briefing sessions in our offices. We were regularly invited to speak at sector conferences and meetings and worked diligently to bring the issue to the forefront of penal reform and child welfare groups' agenda. Organisations we were in contact with about child deaths in custody included the Office of the Children's Commissioner, the Prison Reform Trust, the Howard League for Penal Reform, Liberty, JUSTICE, NACRO, the Child Rights Alliance for England, Smart Justice, the National Association of Youth Justice, UNLOCK, the Children's Society, MIND and the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies to name just a few.

Women's Deaths in Prison

Deaths of women in prison continue to be one of INQUEST's priority areas of monitoring and policy work.

In 2006, INQUEST continued with its research project on women's deaths in prison. The project, begun in April 2005, was prompted by serious concerns at the disturbing rate of women's deaths in prison and the issues emerging at the inquests into these deaths.

The research-based project draws on INQUEST's involvement with the families of women who have died in prison and aims to prevent further deaths. It is funded by a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies.

In 2006, the project's researcher Marissa Sandler interviewed a number of relatives, partners and friends of women who died in prison, analysed INQUEST case files and interviewed other key stakeholders including policy makers.

A final report, drawing together cases and extracting relevant policy issues both on the treatment of women in the criminal justice system and of bereaved people after the deaths, is due to be published in early 2008.

We hope that the report will raise public awareness about the damaging and often tragic consequences of imprisoning women. The report also makes a series of recommendations which INQUEST believes will prevent further deaths if implemented.

During 2006, Deborah Coles was invited to sit on Baroness Corston's review panel which looked at women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system. INQUEST had initially called for a public inquiry into deaths of women in prison, but gave its support to the review on the basis that the views and experiences of those most affected by the deaths, the families, would be central to the review.

INQUEST also continued to work with many of the families of women who died in prison and attended a number of inquests that returned highly critical narrative verdicts. The verdicts highlighted that no fundamental changes have been made to practice, despite repeated identification of the same systemic failings during post death investigations and at inquests. INQUEST believes this places women in prison at continued risk of dying and shows an ongoing failure to learn lessons from past deaths.

“Coroners’ recommendations on the lessons learnt from deaths in custody are taken up only randomly by the body to whom the recommendation is made because there is no formal system for ensuring that they are taken up. INQUEST, for example, reminds us that an inquest held in 2001 into the death of a woman in Styal prison resulted in a coroner’s recommendation that a methadone programme be implemented. This did not happen”

Baroness Stern

House of Lords (December 2006) source: Hansard

Policy and Parliamentary work

Our policy and parliamentary work grew from strength to strength in 2006. We were able to take considerable steps forward towards our long term goal of reform of the inquest system, documented families' experiences of the post death investigations process, campaigned on the scandal of child and women's deaths in custody and lobbied hard for improved corporate accountability legislation.

Coroners Reform

Coronial reform was central to our parliamentary work in 2006 and reform in this area has been a long term priority for INQUEST. We took the chance to be part of this unique opportunity for reform by maintaining a high profile lobbying presence on the issue with relevant government departments and civil servants and were able to influence the scope and nature of the proposed changes successfully. We submitted evidence to the Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry into Reform of the Coroners System and Death Certification in England and Wales in February which contributed in turn to the Government's proposals for a draft Bill.

In July the Government published its draft Coroners Reform Bill for consultation. On its publication INQUEST met with the Minister for Justice, Harriet Harman QC MP and civil servants from the Department of Constitutional Affairs to express our

hopes for a reformed system. During the consultation period we held meetings with other NGOs such as Amnesty International, British Irish Rights Watch and Liberty and several national Trade Unions on the pertinent issues in the Bill.

We produced a policy submission based on our general concerns which we circulated to parliamentarians. With the help of the INQUEST Lawyers Group (ILG) we also put together a detailed legal submission and in October facilitated a meeting between Harriet Harman MP and members of the ILG to discuss some of these issues in more detail.

Disappointingly, the draft Bill was not introduced in Queen's Speech as expected, apparently due to the criticisms from a wide range of stakeholders that it did not go far in enough in its proposed reforms. The Department for Constitutional Affairs has indicated its intention to re-introduce the Bill in the 2007-08 parliamentary session and it appears as if some of INQUEST's concerns have been taken on board and the draft Bill will return to the house in an improved form in 2007.

"We were particularly impressed with the scope of the activities INQUEST is involved in given its voluntary nature and its resources."

Head of Current Coroner Policy,
Department for Constitutional Affairs (September 2006)

Corporate Accountability

INQUEST has long supported reform in the area of corporate accountability and has worked with families who have lost loved ones in disasters and in deaths at work. In 2006 we lobbied to ensure that juries were not lost in deaths at work inquests and have continued our support of Centre for Corporate Accountability and the work of the Families Against Corporate Killers coalition through providing them with advice, attending their conferences and parliamentary briefings and supporting their lobbying work. We have closely followed the parliamentary stages of the Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Bill 2006 as it passed through both Houses of Parliament and produced briefings for each stage of progression outlining our objections to the 'deaths in custody' exemptions in the Bill. Towards the end of the year INQUEST joined forces with Liberty, JUSTICE and the Prison Reform Trust to form a coalition against this exclusion. Our work on the issue was raised in both Houses of Parliament.

Policy Advice and External Links

INQUEST has continued to sit on official external groups such as the IPCC Advisory Board, Ministerial Group on Prison Suicides and the Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody. We have provided policy submissions to relevant consultations and forums such as the Parliamentary Welsh Affairs Committee's inquiry into Welsh Prisoners in the Prison Estate and the

Procedure Committee inquiry into the application of the sub judice rule of the House of Commons to proceedings in coroners' courts

Getting the message across

Media work

In 2006 we issued 44 press releases informing the media and wider contacts about key cases (where the family wanted media coverage) and policy issues. The majority were on individual cases, either inquests or hearings in the High Court but we also issued press releases on coronial reform, deaths of children in custody, corporate manslaughter and conditions of detention in women's prisons.

In addition to issuing press releases we regularly brief the media on the underlying issues relating to cases and the inquest system. We are also often able to provide more extensive briefing documents to assist with articles and programmes. Both broadcast and print media have covered many of the issues raised by our cases and we were quoted extensively in both the local and national newspapers.

Broadcast media

We give regular radio and television interviews ranging from being interviewed on BBC Radio Four's PM news programme on

the issues raised by police shootings to short soundbites for local radio after a death in prison. In December *Newsnight* broadcast a ten minute piece on the deaths of children in custody which included interviews with a number of the families we have been working with and one of our co-directors. INQUEST played a crucial role in the months before the piece was broadcast in briefing the journalists, putting them in contact with families and suggesting other interviewees. The piece was widely praised and helped our campaign for a public inquiry into children's deaths in penal custody.

Baroness Stern CBE said of the piece:

*“This was a very moving programme which was highly effective in getting situations in the public domain through families... Very professional. INQUEST is very honourable when dealing with the media and will not sink to sensationalism.”*¹

Articles

During the year a number of articles by team members were published including:

- Black deaths in custody – Churches Commission for Racial Justice (May)
- “Justice Denied? Coroners Reform, the Case for Urgent Action” - *Open Mind* (August)
- Letter to editor on women's deaths in prison - *Guardian* (September)
- “Deaths in custody - state violence denied” - *Criminal Justice Matters* (December)
- “Deaths in Custody – Truth, Justice and Accountability?” - *Social Justice* (December)

Networking and attendance at conferences

We contributed to a range of training events and conferences and attended events where we raised issues arising from casework with policy makers. They included:

- Metropolitan Police Family Liaison Officers training
- Capita Deaths in Police Care conference
- The Children's Society 125th Anniversary Parliamentary Reception
- Seminar for IPCC South East Region staff on working with bereaved families

We continued our work within the trade union movement and attended the Trades Union Congress in September.

¹ *Case Study of INQUEST*, Centris December 2006

Eleven members of the Tokyo Three Bar Associations' Committee on Prison Affairs regarding an investigation of deaths in prison visited our offices during a working visit to London.

Organisational Development

The year began with a reduced staff team working to recruit a new Fundraising and Development Manager. At the end of 2005 two staff members moved on – the Office Manager, Melanie Lowe and Communications Officer Marcie Shaoul. As the latter post was only funded until March 2006 it was not possible to recruit a permanent replacement and the role was filled by a temporary member of staff. Recruitment to replace the Office Manager proved difficult and was only resolved in 2006 by redefining the post as the Fundraising and Development Manager which added emphasis on fundraising and organisational development. Both these vacancies affected the organisation and placed additional strain on the small staff team who all shouldered additional responsibility.

However, 2006 saw positive growth in the staff team and in the roles of staff at INQUEST. The staff team has expanded and roles have been redefined. In May 2006 we appointed a Fundraising and Development Manager to replace the Office Manager. This is a much more senior position and the post holder takes responsibility for the finances, development and internal management of the organisation. A Policy and Parliamentary Officer post was created and the role of the Information Worker was changed and upgraded

to take on more responsibility for communications. The casework team expanded to three which increased the capacity of the organisation to work in depth on more cases.

The organisation has grown considerably in size and stature over the last three years. This requires a period of consolidation with internal changes and planning to ensure that the systems and procedures are up to date and fit for enabling the organisation to deliver its objectives.

Board members also changed during the year with Dr Tony Ward leaving the Board to join the Advisory Group after over twenty five years of active involvement in the organisation. Tony was one of the original co-ordinators of INQUEST when it first employed staff in the early 1980s. Tony is now lecturer in law at Hull University and the difficult journey to London for Board meetings meant he felt the best contribution he could make to the work is through the Advisory Group which means responding to emails and phone calls but not attending any regular meetings.

“...of the cases of deaths in custody known to INQUEST from 1991 to August 2006, there was not once conviction for manslaughter in relation to a death in custody, following an inquest verdict of unlawful killing”

Andrew Dismore MP

House of Commons (December 2006) source: Hansard

External Evaluation

Our work on child deaths in custody was evaluated externally for the Diana Memorial Fund. Of the 54% who responded to the survey, 87% were very satisfied with the overall service that INQUEST provided. Responses included: *“They helped me deal with all the matters leading up to the inquest in a coherent and constructive manner”* and *“Answered all concerns quickly and pleasantly without being intrusive”*. Some respondents suggested more funding is required to enable INQUEST to employ more staff and use the answer-phone less, produce more written material and in some cases respondents suggested that regional offices could be established.

CENTRIS carried out research to consider how best to respond to the changing funding needs of the voluntary and community sector. The research was funded by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Carnegie UK Trust, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, City Parochial Foundation, and the Northern Rock Foundation. The overall aims of the research were to:

- describe the distinctly valuable contribution of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) both in service delivery and in non service delivery.
- assess the extent to which the contribution of the (VCS) depends on its relationships with different parties

INQUEST was one of 14 organisations chosen as case studies because they are regarded by their funders as exemplary in their field. The report was very positive about the way in which INQUEST works with families and ensures that their concerns are taken up at a policy level. Baroness Stern CBE told researchers:

“INQUEST has played a large part in getting prisons to examine the issue of suicide. They highlighted that segregation policies should be examined. They then produced a doable solution based on facts”.

Casework

1) Casework Service

The aim of our casework service is to advise families and empower them through the provision of information and advice about their rights. Because of the length of time from the death to the conclusion of the investigation and inquest process our support can last for a number of years.

In 2006 the casework team dealt with a total of 398 cases, with 156 of these brought forward from previous years. This workload generated close to 2,500 casework-related telephone calls.

a) General Advice

In August 2006 the casework team expanded to three full-time dedicated caseworkers which enabled us to attend more inquests and to make contact with and provide advice to a greater number of families. Although we were still unable to provide the in-depth service described below in anything but a relatively small number of cases.

We operate a telephone-based service offering free support, advice and information to all bereaved people facing an inquest and their basic rights in the coroner's court. There is no other organisation in England and Wales with such specialist knowledge about the inquest system. People contacting our informed casework team have access to our comprehensive Information Pack and leaflets concerning specific details of both deaths in prison and police custody. INQUEST also provides information to bereaved people about how to access other services and in many non-custody related deaths we will provide both advice and referrals to other organisations. For example, road traffic related deaths are referred to RoadPeace, work related deaths to the Centre for Corporate Accountability and deaths in hospital to Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) for specialist advice and support. We also monitor legal issues arising from these cases that concern the inquest system.

b) Deaths in Custody

INQUEST provides an in-depth casework service when an inquiry falls within one of our priority areas - prison and police custody and psychiatric or immigration detention. Our service involves arranging legal representation for a family and/or other bereaved people and then working as an integral part of the legal team, advising and supporting lawyers and providing detailed background information on similar cases. We ensure that families have access to experienced lawyers who we are in regular dialogue with and brief us on any issues arising from the death and its investigation. In a proportion of cases we arrange meetings with MPs, carry out press and media work, attend the inquest and follow up on the issues that emerge. The latter can include verbal and written submissions to parliamentary inquiries and the production of briefing papers as well as supporting individual family campaigns. However, because of the high number of prison deaths in particular during 2006 it was not possible to provide this level of service in all cases due to the small size of our staff team.

In August 2006, we employed our third full time caseworker as part of our Big Lottery Funded project *Responding To Bereaved Families – Improving The Inquest And Investigation System*.

“How can one possibly convince a mother whose child has been killed due to gross negligence on the part of the state that she should not receive justice? The argument has no logical, legal or moral basis. The organisation INQUEST argues that it brings the law into disrepute because equality before the law is a key element of the rule of law”

Baroness D’Souza

House of Lords (December 2006) source: Hansard

INQUEST Cases 2006

Type	New	Brought Forward	Total
Prison	52	115	167
Police	19	28	47
Other	171	13	184
All	242	156	398

Cases brought forward from previous years form a significant part of our caseload. Sometimes a case can involve work by inquest with families and their legal teams for many years before, during and after the actual inquest proceedings themselves.

INQUEST service users 2006

New Clients	Brought Forward	Total
297	405	702

INQUEST’s service users include bereaved people and their legal representatives.

c) INQUEST Lawyers Group

We work in partnership with the INQUEST Lawyers Group (ILG) to provide our high-quality casework service, working together on procedural and tactical matters. The ILG is a national pool of committed, experienced barristers, solicitors and law students - including the leading inquest and human rights practitioners in the country - who provide preparation and legal representation for bereaved families at inquests.

ILG members have access to an email group in which ideas and questions are discussed and information on developments in inquest law is exchanged. Members receive *INQUEST Law*, the only specialist journal of its kind, published three times a year and also available to non-member subscribers. The journal is edited by the INQUEST staff team and is written by members of the ILG and other invited parties. A number of coroners have subscribed, and the magazine has received praise for its coverage of significant cases, inquests and judgments.

“INQUEST [is] an organisation I have a great deal of admiration for and am particularly privileged to have based in my constituency. The work carried out by INQUEST on deaths of young people in custody clearly plays a vital role in bringing these issues to public attention. Please be assured of my continued support and respect, not least as the Vice Chair of the All Party Group on Human Rights, for the extremely valuable role played by INQUEST over many years.”

Jeremy Corbyn MP (October 2006)

Treasurer’s Report for the year ended 31 March 2006

2006 was another successful year for INQUEST. Income for the year was £355,078 a decrease from £384,632 in 2005. Careful management of our resources with support from the staff team enabled us to end the year with a small surplus of £3,087 on Unrestricted Funds taking Unrestricted Reserves from £47,000 to £50,087.

We are grateful to our funders whose generous donations provided the principal funding source for the organisation during the year. We received funding from The Association of London Government, The Atlantic Philanthropies, The Baring Foundation, The Nuffield Foundation, The Department of Health, The Diana Memorial Fund, The City Parochial Foundation, Lloyds TSB Foundation, Unison, The Tudor Trust, The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, The Law Society Trustees and Action for Prisoners Families. We also would like to recognise the significant contributions made by our subscribers and well-wishers.

Through the year, our staff team has been ably supported by a number of volunteers whose kind assistance has been invaluable to the service that we have been able to provide in 2006. Between them our volunteers donated a total of 2,100 hours in helping us to continue supporting bereaved families.

INQUEST Charitable Trust

1) Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2006

Income and Expenditure Summary

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds 2006	Total Funds 2005
	£	£	£	£
<i>Incoming Resources</i>				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income				
Grants and donations	56,000	15,907	71,907	83,423
Investment income	-	4,252	4,252	3,974
Incoming resources from charitable activities				
Grants and contracts	266,205	-	266,205	293,412
Sales of publications	-	4,381	4,381	1,719
Other income	-	8,333	8,333	2,104
Total incoming resources	<u>322,205</u>	<u>32,873</u>	<u>355,078</u>	<u>384,632</u>
<i>Resources Expended</i>				
Charitable activities	329,861	23,686	353,547	296,063
Governance costs	-	6,100	6,100	5,971
Total resources expended	<u>329,861</u>	<u>29,786</u>	<u>359,647</u>	<u>302,034</u>
Net Incoming/Outgoing Resources for the Year	(7,656)	3,087	(4,569)	82,598
Total funds brought forward	<u>90,839</u>	<u>47,000</u>	<u>137,839</u>	<u>55,241</u>
Total funds carried forward	<u>83,183</u>	<u>50,087</u>	<u>133,270</u>	<u>137,839</u>

Continuing Operations

All of the Company's operations are classed as continuing.

Statement of Other Recognised Gains and Losses

The Company had no recognised gains or losses other than the deficit for the year as shown above.

2) Balance sheet as at 31 March 2006

	2006	2005
	£	£
<i>Fixed Assets</i>	4,899	6,090
<i>Current Assets</i>		
Debtors and Prepayments	9,399	18,597
Cash at Bank and in Hand	142,299	134,939
	<u>151,698</u>	<u>153,536</u>
<i>Creditors:</i>		
Amounts falling due within one year	(23,327)	(21,787)
<i>Net Current Assets</i>	<u>128,371</u>	<u>131,749</u>
<i>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</i>	<u>133,270</u>	<u>137,839</u>
<i>Reserves</i>		
Restricted Funds	83,183	90,839
Unrestricted Funds	50,087	47,000
	<u>133,270</u>	<u>137,839</u>

Statement by the Board of Trustees:

These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information of the full annual financial statements, the Auditors' report of those financial statements and the Board of Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted. Copies of these can be obtained from INQUEST.

The full annual statements from which these summary financial statements are derived, and on which the auditors gave unqualified opinion, were approved on 25 January 2007 and have been submitted to the Register of Companies.

Auditors' Statement to the Board of Trustees of INQUEST Charitable Trust

We have carried out the procedures necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statement from which they have been prepared.

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2006.

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