



CHIEF CORONER

PREVENTION OF FUTURE DEATHS REPORTS PUBLICATION POLICY

Introduction

1. If during an investigation, a coroner becomes concerned about circumstances that create a risk of future deaths, the coroner must make a report to the person or organisation that the coroner believes should take preventative action. That report is called a Prevention of Future Deaths Report (PFD report).
2. Anyone sent a PFD report must send the coroner a response. The reports and responses must be also be sent to the Chief Coroner.
3. This policy sets out the Chief Coroner's approach to the publication and redaction of PFD reports and responses, and the process for raising concerns in a particular case.
4. This policy may be amended from time to time. Any amendments will be published on www.judiciary.uk.

Publication

5. The decision to issue a PFD report is a judicial one. To comply with the principle of open justice, the public must be able to access PFD reports and responses, unless there is a compelling reason to restrict access. The scrutiny of PFD reports and responses is also vitally important to society, to enable themes to be recognised, any necessary systemic changes to be put in place, and any promises of change to be enforced. There is therefore a presumption that PFD reports and responses will be published by the Chief Coroner.
6. Published PFD reports and responses can be accessed via the following link: [Reports to Prevent Future Deaths | Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#), and can be filtered by subject and/or date.
7. The Chief Coroner recognises that the internet has made information easily and widely accessible, and that there must be a balance between openness, and the need to respect individuals' privacy and protect the public from harm. Some PFD reports and responses will therefore be redacted, or summarised, prior to publication. In exceptional cases, the Chief Coroner may decide against publication in any form.

Approach to redaction

8. The following information will usually be redacted from PFD reports and responses prior to publication, to remove information on how death can be caused, and to protect the privacy of individuals:
 - a) Any names, initials and signatures of individuals, except for those of the deceased;
 - b) Email addresses of individuals;
 - c) Personal address details;
 - d) Direct telephone numbers of individuals;
 - e) Case reference numbers; and
 - f) Information that could help someone to cause a death, including:
 - i) the name of any products or substances that were used to cause a death,
 - ii) information on how such products or substances were obtained;
 - iii) the amount of any substance that caused a death;
 - iv) websites that were used to plan a death;
 - v) the locations of suicide spots;
 - vi) details of how any secure areas used for suicide were accessed.
9. Other information may also be redacted if the Chief Coroner considers that redaction to be in the public interest and/or necessary to protect specific individuals.
10. The Chief Coroner may decide not to make a particular redaction if he considers it would significantly inhibit the public's understanding of the learning in a report or response.

Summary

11. If the Chief Coroner decides that a redacted version of a PFD report or response would be difficult to understand, he may choose to publish a summary of the report or response, instead of a redacted version.

Representations about publication

12. Interested persons in a case that results in a PFD report, and any organisation providing a response to a PFD report (collectively referred to herein as 'IPs'), may make representations to the Chief Coroner directly about:
 - a) the decision to publish;
 - b) the form of the publication (i.e. as a full version or as a summary);
 - c) whether redactions are needed;
 - d) any specific redactions the IP would like the Chief Coroner to make; and
 - e) any other matter that the IP considers to be relevant to the Chief Coroner's publication decision.
13. Representations should be sent to chiefcoronersoffice@judiciary.uk.
14. If a person or organisation providing a response to a PFD report wishes to make representations about the publication of their response, they may choose to send their

representations to the coroner who made the report, rather than to the Chief Coroner directly. The coroner will pass any representations on publication to the Chief Coroner.

15. Before making any representations, IPs should note:

- a) The Chief Coroner will not consider representations about whether a PFD report ought to have been issued, or what information it should have included. Coroners are independent judicial office holders, and the Chief Coroner cannot interfere with their decisions. Representations will only be considered by the Chief Coroner if they relate to the publication of PFD reports or responses;
- b) All representations should include clear details of what the Chief Coroner is being asked to do and the reasons why the IP thinks that action is necessary; and
- c) As there is a presumption that PFD reports and responses will be published, IPs should consider whether a decision not to publish is necessary in their case, or whether a summary or redacted publication would be sufficient to alleviate their concerns.

16. When representations are received by the Chief Coroner:

- a) If the PFD report and/or response have already been published, the documents will usually remain on the website until the Chief Coroner has considered the representations. If the Chief Coroner decides to remove or amend the documents, the changes will be made as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- b) If the PFD report and/or response have not yet been published, publication will not take place until the representations have been considered.

17. When making publication decisions following representations by IPs, the Chief Coroner will consider the following factors:

- a) The need for open justice;
- b) The importance of the information to the public interest; and
- c) The harm that might be caused by publication of the information.

HH JUDGE THOMAS TEAGUE QC

CHIEF CORONER

9 November 2021