



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

**Deputy Director, Head of
Strategy and Network
Department, Consular and
Crisis Directorate**
Foreign, Commonwealth &
Development Office
King Charles Street
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Coroner's Court
1 Mount Tabor Street
Stockport
SK1 3AG

Friday, 01 December 2023

Dear Coroner,

I am writing in response to your report dated 9 October 2023, following the investigation, concluded on the 5th June 2023, into the death of Sandra Curran on 4 July 2022 in Malta. I am replying as the Head of Strategy & Network Department, Consular and Crisis Directorate at the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

We welcome the opportunity to inform you of action we have taken in response to your report, and of our ongoing work supporting efforts to prevent similar tragedies. In doing so we again express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mrs Curran.

In your report, you note the following area of concern:

The inquest heard the Mrs Curran had booked her holiday through a UK Tour operator. Mrs Curran was not a strong swimmer and that she was unaware of the risks that swimming/snorkelling in the sea off the coast of Malta could present. No warnings were given in the welcome information/briefing about the challenge the sea around the coast in Malta could present to a weak swimmer. Previously when she had snorkelled it had been in far easier conditions where the risks of strong currents had not been present. The evidence given by her family at the inquest was that had her tour operator highlighted the need for caution Mrs Curran would not have snorkelled alone in the area where she drowned. A more proactive approach by UK tour operators highlighting the risk of getting

into difficulties and how to mitigate them would reduce the risk of further deaths in circumstances such as Mrs Curran's.

Action Taken

1. FCDO Travel Advice

FCDO Travel Advice aims to provide objective information and advice to help British nationals make informed decisions about travelling abroad. We keep our Travel Advice under regular review to ensure it reflects our up-to-date assessment of risks and contains information relevant to British nationals. We encourage British nationals to read our Travel Advice and sign up for alerts to see when the advice changes.

In light of your report, we have considered further our advice on water risks in Malta:

In July 2022, the Travel Advice read:

Swimming

During the summer, many beaches are patrolled by lifeguards and operate flag safety systems. You should make sure you understand the system and follow any warnings; red flags indicate dangerous or hazardous conditions. You should swim within designated swimming zones and take extra care if there are no life-guards, flags or signs. Follow local advice if jellyfish are present.

You can find more information and a general code of conduct for beaches in Malta on the [Malta Tourism Authority website](#)

In response to the report, the Travel Advice on swimming safety has been enhanced to include a link to the Royal Life Saving Society's (RLSS) "Water Safety on Holiday" page in the "Swimming safety" section of the "[Safety and Security](#)" page.

The FCDO's established public-facing Travel Aware communications campaign will continue to prompt British nationals who are planning to travel abroad to read the latest FCDO travel advice for their destination and to sign up for e-mail alerts.

2. External Engagement

We work closely with foreign governments, partners in the travel industry and others to reduce the risks to British people when they travel abroad. This year we enhanced our cooperation with the Royal Life Saving Society and worked with them on the water safety information appearing on their website during the summer holiday season. We will continue to work with ABTA and the travel industry and fully endorse efforts to make their customers aware of the risks they may face during travel.

I hope this offers assurance of our commitment to helping prevent future deaths of the kind tragically suffered by Mrs Curran.

Yours sincerely,

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Deputy Director, Head of Strategy and Network Department, Consular and Crisis Directorate.