

# REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS

Elizabeth Van Der Drift (date of death 19 March 2024)

	<p><b>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</b></p> <p>1. [REDACTED] <b>Chief Executive Sainsbury's 33 Holborn London EC1N 2HT</b></p>
1	<p><b>CORONER</b></p> <p>I am Ian Potter, assistant coroner, for the coroner area of Inner North London.</p>
2	<p><b>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</b></p> <p>I make this report under paragraph 7, Schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and Regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.</p>
3	<p><b>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST</b></p> <p>On 21 March 2024, an investigation was commenced into the death of ELIZABETH VAN DER-DRIFT, then aged 93 years. The investigation concluded at the end of inquest heard by me on 1 August 2024.</p> <p>The inquest concluded with a short-form conclusion of accidental death. The medical cause of death was:</p> <p>1a aspiration pneumonia 1b ingestion of toxic substance (laundry detergent) 1c dementia</p>
4	<p><b>CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH</b></p> <p>Ms Van Der-Drift had lived with dementia for a number of years. Her condition was such that she often could not recall when she last consumed food and she would often go in search of something to eat.</p> <p>Sometime on the night of 13/14 March 2024, she gained access to laundry detergent tablets/pods that were brightly coloured. Given the nature of the packaging and the tablets/pods, I determined that, given her cognitive impairment as a result of the dementia, Ms Van Der-Drift likely believed that they were some form of sweet or confectionary. Having gained access to the tablets/pods, she bit into at least one of them. Shortly thereafter, Ms Van Der-Drift was found complaining of stomach pain and shortness of breath.</p>

	<p>An ambulance conveyed Ms Van Der-Drift to hospital where, despite treatment, her condition deteriorated, and she died in hospital on 19 March 2024.</p>
5	<p><b><u>CORONER'S CONCERNS</u></b></p> <p>During the course of the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion, there is a risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances, it is my statutory duty to report to you.</p> <p>I have previously issued a Prevention of Future Deaths Report about industry-wide concerns, and I have attached a copy of that report for your information. However, on further reflection I am also reporting to you as the retailer of the product, which was labelled under Sainsbury's brand.</p> <p>The <b>MATTERS OF CONCERN</b> are as follows:</p> <p>(1) The product in question, Sainsbury's Tropical Escape Bio Laundry Capsules, due to its eye-catching colours, appearance, and packaging, is being confused with food and risks being accidentally ingested by those with dementia or other cognitive impairment (as well as children).</p> <p>(2) There was no safety feature observed on the packaging that made accessing the content particularly difficult, which increases the risk of accidental or inadvertent ingestion.</p>
6	<p><b>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</b></p> <p>In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe that you have the power to take such action.</p>
7	<p><b>YOUR RESPONSE</b></p> <p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of the report, namely by 10 October 2024. I, the coroner, may extend the period.</p> <p>Your response must contain details of action taken or proposed to be taken, setting out the timetable for action. Otherwise, you must explain why no action is proposed.</p>
8	<p><b>COPIES and PUBLICATION</b></p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The daughter of Elizabeth Van Der-Drift; and</li> <li>• The recipients of my original report (The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, CEO of the Office for Product Safety and Standards,</li> </ul>

	<p>and Director General of the UK Cleaning Product Industry Association).</p> <p>The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. She may send a copy of this report to any person she believes may find it useful or of interest. You may make representations to me, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.</p>
9	<p><b><i>Ian Potter</i></b> <b>Assistant Coroner</b> <b>Inner North London</b></p> <p><b>15 August 2024</b></p>