

**RESPONSE TO A REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS
REGULATION 29 OF THE CORONERS (INVESTIGATIONS) REGULATIONS
2013**

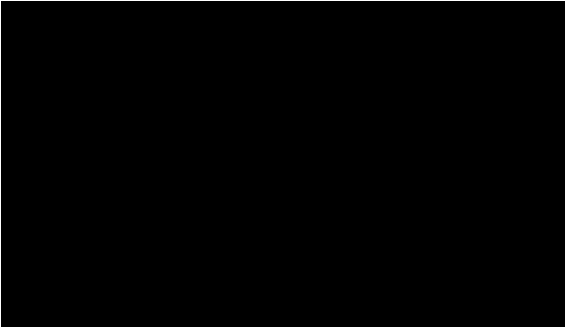
Please do not include any living persons' names in this document, in accordance with the Chief Coroner's [PFD Publication Policy \(2026\)](#).

THIS RESPONSE IS BEING SENT TO:

The Senior Coroner, Rachel Knight for the Coroner Area South Wales Central in response to a '**REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATH REGULATION 28**' following an inquest into the deaths of Helen Patching, Rachael Patching, Corey Longdon that concluded on **22 January 2026**.

1.	RESPONDENT In line with our duty under Regulation 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013, [REDACTED], Chief Officer Place of Powys County Council, provides this response within 56 days (plus any extension granted) of the date of the Report to Prevent Future Deaths. The Authority recognises the tragic circumstances surrounding these deaths and extends its sincere condolences to the families and all those affected.
2.	DATE OF RESPONSE: 9 June 2026
3.	CONFIRMATION OF CORONER'S MATTERS OF CONCERN The MATTERS OF CONCERN were identified in the report are as follows: 1. There is a high rate of accidents, including some fatal accidents, from trips and slips in the area known as Waterfall Country. 2. A previous Prevention of Future Death report has led to the erection of signage concerning the risk of drowning in the water itself. However, the current signage provision does not adequately address the significant additional risk of accidental falling. Many walkers fail to understand the official routes, closed and open paths and the significant risk they face.

	3. Serious and fatal accidents will continue to occur unless these risks are addressed; 4. Mobile telephone signal is poor to non-existent in certain more remote areas, which created delay in alerting emergency services when accidents do occur
4.	DETAILS OF ACTION TAKEN, how has the concern been addressed. [If no action is proposed please explain why here]. <i>Please note that any links to webpages included in the response will not be checked for sensitive information prior to publication, as the information is already online.</i> Powys County Council acknowledges the seriousness of the matters raised and the importance of taking proportionate action to mitigate the risk of future incidents. Our review recognises the multi-agency nature of the location and the associated responsibilities. The areas referenced are largely situated on land managed by Natural Resources Wales and/or within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority, and accordingly the Council has limited direct control over site management or infrastructure. Nevertheless, the Council recognises that effective risk mitigation requires a coordinated and collaborative approach between all relevant landowners and responsible bodies. The public rights of way at the Waterfalls Country site at Ystradfellte are managed by the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority under a formal delegation agreement. The paths have recently been legally diverted to align with managed routes, improving safe navigation for the public. Where original paths have been diverted, sufficient measures are in place to deter access to those routes where hazards exist, including the use of barriers. However, much of the site remains open access land within a naturally hazardous gorge, where it is not physically practicable or legally possible to prevent people from leaving designated paths. Whilst active management measures are in place to direct visitors along safer routes and discourage access to higher-risk areas, the nature of open access land means some visitors may choose to deviate from managed routes, and informal 'desire lines' may develop over time. These are kept under review, and further mitigation will be considered were reasonably practicable.

5.	DETAILS OF FURTHER ACTION PROPOSED <i>Please note that any links to webpages included in the response will not be checked for sensitive information prior to publication, as the information is already online.</i> Powys County Council is represented on the Waterfall Country safety working group and is contributing to ongoing efforts, including the implementation of enhanced safety signage during the current year. The Council has engaged with partner organisations, and we continue to support the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority and Natural Resources Wales, as landowner, in implementing proportionate and effective controls. We will continue to work with partners to identify any further proportionate actions within the Council's remit. Powys County Council remains committed to working collaboratively with partner organisations to support a coordinated and effective response to the concerns raised and to contribute constructively, within its remit, to reducing the risk of future incidents.
6.	SIGNATURE  Chief Officer, Place