



Miss K J Gomersal LLB | Senior Coroner | Cumbria

HM Coroner's Courts, Allerdale House, Workington, Cumbria CA14 3JY



12 February 2026

REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS

THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO: National Highways

1) CORONER

I am Robert Cohen, HM Assistant Coroner for Cumbria

2) CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS

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.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/25/schedule/5/paragraph/7>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1629/part/7/made>

3) INVESTIGATION and INQUEST

On 1 October 2024 an investigation commenced into the deaths of Rita Margaret Thomas and Christine Dale. The investigations concluded at the end of the inquests. The conclusion of the inquest in each case was 'Road Traffic Collision'. In each case the medical cause of death was associated with multiple traumatic injuries.

4) CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH

On 19th September 2024 Rita Thomas was driving, and Christine Dale was a passenger, in a vehicle being driven northbound up the exit ramp of the M6 at Junction 37. A bus was being driven along the A684. The car collided with the bus causing both Mrs Thomas and Mrs Dale to sustain life-ending injuries.

5) CORONER'S CONCERNS

During the course of the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken. In the circumstances it is my statutory duty to report to you.

The **MATTERS OF CONCERN** are as follows. –

(1) The exit ramps at Junction 37 of the M6 are recognised to be 'high harm' spots. Several very serious collisions have occurred at the same location. Significant efforts have been made to address this, including by placing stop signs, increasing the visibility of signs, and improving driver awareness. However, the A684 remains the subject of the National Speed Limit. I was informed that no speed limit was imposed because previous investigation 'did not highlight a speeding problem'. The evidence I heard included an observation by the driver of the bus that: *"At the point where I first saw the car, I was only a few metres away from the top of the slip road. The dark car was travelling up the slip road from my left-hand side. I must have only been aware of its presence for a matter of one or two seconds...I did not have any time to react or take any evasive action. As far as I recall I did not have time to brake or steer to try and avoid the collision."*

For the avoidance of doubt, the evidence indicates that the bus was being driven at less than the national speed limit.

I am concerned that this indicates that the speed at which vehicles are permitted to drive on the A684, taken with the design of the junction, gives drivers insufficient time to react in the event that a vehicle crosses into their path.

6) ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN

In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe you, National Highways have the power to take such action.

7) YOUR RESPONSE

You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by 11th April 2024 I, the coroner, may extend the period.

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.

8) COPIES and PUBLICATION

I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to the Interested Persons.

I am also under a duty to send the Chief Coroner a copy of your response.

The Chief Coroner may publish either or both in a complete or redacted or summary form. He may send a copy of this report to any person who he 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 the publication of your response by the Chief Coroner.

12 February 2026

Signature

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Robert Cohen.

Robert Cohen HM Assistant Coroner for Cumbria