



REGULATION 28: REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS (1)

AFTER INQUEST

	<p>REGULATION 28 REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS</p> <p>THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO:</p> <p>1. [REDACTED], Chief Executive – Durham County Council</p>
1	<p>CORONER</p> <p>I am Mr Jeremy Chipperfield, Senior Coroner for the coroner area of County Durham and Darlington.</p>
2	<p>CORONER'S LEGAL POWERS</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>INVESTIGATION and INQUEST</p> <p>On 7th January 2026, I commenced an investigation into the death of Kay Wilson, aged 78 years. The investigation concluded at the end of the inquest on 6th March 2026. The conclusion of the inquest was Accidental Death (by drowning).</p>
4	<p>CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DEATH</p> <p>The deceased drowned shortly after 23:30 hrs on 6 December 2025 when, having been in a public area above the east bank of the River Tees near "County Bridge" in Barnard Castle, she accidentally passed through a gap in a protective stone wall and fell about 9 metres onto rocks and then passed into the river. The river, heightened by recent rainfall, swept her away.</p>
5	<p><u>CORONER'S CONCERNS</u></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>The MATTERS OF CONCERN are as follows:</p> <p>A breach in the stone wall running north above the riverside from the east side of "County Bridge", Barnard Castle, provides unrestricted and unguarded access from a public area to a vertical drop of approximately 9 metres onto rocks and the River Tees below. (Location approximately 54.54288 N, 1.92693 W)</p>
6	<p>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</p> <p>In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe your organisation has the power to take such action.</p>
7	<p>YOUR RESPONSE</p>



	<p>You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by 1st May 2026. 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>COPIES and PUBLICATION</p> <p>I have sent a copy of my report to the Chief Coroner and to the following Interested Persons</p> <p>██████████</p> <p>I am also under a duty to send a copy of your response to the Chief Coroner and all interested persons who in my opinion should receive it.</p> <p>I may also send a copy of your response to any other person who I believe may find it useful or of interest.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>You may make representations to me, the coroner, at the time of your response, about the release or the publication of your response.</p>
9	<p>Dated: 6th March 2026</p> <p>██</p> <p>Mr Jeremy Chipperfield Senior Coroner for Durham and Darlington</p>