

**REPORT TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS  
REGULATION 28 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 \(2026\)](#).

**1. CORONER**

I am Penelope SCHOFIELD, Senior Coroner, for the coroner area of West Sussex, Brighton and Hove.

**2. DATE OF REPORT**

06 May 2026

**3. 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.

**4. THIS REPORT IS BEING SENT TO**

Secretary of State for Defence  
Ministry of Defence  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB

You are under a duty to respond to this report within 56 days of the date of this report, namely by July 01, 2026. I, the coroner, may extend the period if an appropriate application is made.

**5. YOUR RESPONSE**

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.

I have a duty to send a copy of your response to the Chief Coroner.

In accordance with the Chief Coroner's Publication Policy, you should send me any representations regarding publication of your response. These representations should be made at the same time as the response is provided. I will pass any representations received to the Chief Coroner for a decision.

Please note any links to webpages included in the response will not be checked for sensitive information prior to publication, as the information is already online.

	<p>The names of those who do not respond to PFD reports are regularly published on the Chief Coroner's webpages <a href="#">Non-responses to Prevention of Future Death (PFD) reports - Courts and Tribunals Judiciary</a>.</p>
6.	<p><b>SUMMARY OF CORONER'S CONCERN</b></p> <p>The MOD is aware that there are current concerns around the possible link between exposure to Nitrobenzene and other explosives and bladder cancer. There has been no warning provided to either active or past employees who were actively involved in dealing with explosives devices, and who have been subject to such exposure, that they should consider getting tested.</p>
7.	<p><b>ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN</b></p> <p>In my opinion unless action is taken to address the above concerns then there is a significant risk of future deaths and I believe each of you have the power to take such action.</p>
8.	<p><b>INVESTIGATION AND INQUEST</b></p> <p>On 29 September 2025 I commenced an investigation into the death of Peter Edwin Spencer GURNEY aged 93. The investigation concluded at the end of the inquest on 06 May 2026. The conclusion of the inquest was a narrative conclusion namely "Mr Gurney died of heart failure contributed to by other co-morbidities including terminal bladder cancer."</p>
9.	<p><b>CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH</b></p> <p>On the 19th September 2025 Mr Gurney had an unwitnessed fall in the garden of his home address. This fall is believed to have been from standing height and caused by heart failure. He was found by his neighbour unresponsive. Paramedics attended and Mr Gurney was sadly pronounced deceased at the scene. Mr Gurney had a known history of falls and co-morbidities, including terminal bladder cancer diagnosed in November 2024. Mr Gurney had had a distinguished career serving in the Army and the Metropolitan Police as an explosives officer. During this time he had been exposed to Nitrobenzene and other explosives. However it remains unclear as to whether or not this exposure was linked to his bladder cancer.</p>
10.	<p><b>CORONER'S CONCERNS</b></p> <p>During the course of the inquest I heard evidence 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 <b>MATTERS OF CONCERN</b> are as follows:</p> <p>The MOD is aware that there are current concerns around the possible link</p>

	<p>between exposure to Nitrobenzene and other explosives and bladder cancer. The MOD has been aware of this for some time. Evidence heard at the Inquest was that neither active nor past employees, who have been subject to this exposure through their work , have been warned to get tested. Unfortunately by the time Mr Gurney realised he had bladder cancer the disease had taken hold and it had become inoperable.</p>
11.	<p><b>COPIES AND PUBLICATION OF THIS REPORT</b></p> <p>I have a duty to send a copy of my report to every Interested Person who in my opinion should receive it.</p> <p>I also may send a copy of the report to any other person who I believe may find it useful or of interest.</p> <p>I can confirm I have sent the report to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The family of Mr Peter GURNEY</b></li><li>• <b>MOD Inquest Unit</b></li></ul> <p>I also have a duty to send a copy of the report to the Chief Coroner.</p> <p>You may make representations to me, the coroner, about the publication of the contents of this report in line with Chief Coroner’s <a href="#">PFD Publication Policy (2026)</a>. Any representations will be sent to the Chief Coroner alongside the report. Please refer to box 4 above for additional information relating to the publication of reports and responses.</p>
12.	<p><b>SIGNATURE</b></p> <div data-bbox="272 1249 703 1391" style="background-color: black; width: 270px; height: 63px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p><b>Penelope SCHOFIELD</b> <b>Senior Coroner for</b> <b>West Sussex, Brighton and Hove</b></p>