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Voicing Loss

Principles for Practice No. 2

Humanity at the heart of the coronial process:

Quality of interactions at inquest hearings



Contents

<u>Quality of interactions at inquests – at a glance</u>	i
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Principle 1: Compassion</u>	3
<u>Principle 2: Inclusion</u>	6
<u>Principle 3: Sensitivity</u>	9
<u>Sources of guidance and about Voicing Loss</u>	12

May 2024

Quality of interactions at inquests – at a glance

This good practice document is based on findings of the [Voicing Loss project](#) on the role of bereaved people in the coronial process. The project involved interviews with 89 people who had experience of the coroner service following the death of someone they were close to, as well as interviews with coronial professionals and witnesses.

This document is intended for professionals and practitioners in the coronial sector. It aims to support compassionate, inclusive and sensitive interactions with bereaved people at inquest hearings, including pre-inquest review and final hearings. The three principles of **compassion**, **inclusion** and **sensitivity** are equally relevant to in-person and remote interactions.

Compassion	Inclusion	Sensitivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Expression of condolences. ✓ Attention to non-verbal communication. ✓ Facilitation of dialogue between the bereaved and witnesses, as appropriate. ✓ Avoidance of aggressive, rude or belittling questioning. ✓ Provision of emotional, practical support. ✓ Acknowledgment of the bereaved at end of hearing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear, direct communication. ✓ Facilitation of the voice of the bereaved. ✓ Responsiveness to questions outside scope of investigation. ✓ Support understanding of the process and outcomes. ✓ Plain language and reduced formality. ✓ Inclusive layout and physical environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Respect and politeness in addressing people and referring to the deceased person. ✓ Sensitive presentation of evidence. ✓ Awareness of risks of retraumatisation and of compounding grief. ✓ Conduct in keeping with the gravity of the occasion. ✓ Sensitivity to and accommodations for vulnerabilities.

Introduction

This is one of three Principles for Practice documents based on the findings of the Voicing Loss research project, which examined the role of bereaved people in the coronial process. The research revealed wide variations in bereaved people's experiences of the process, and the far-reaching impacts of good and poor practice.

Bereaved participants in the Voicing Loss study powerfully recounted the positive effects of empathetic, kind and considerate treatment during inquest hearings. They described feeling included when professionals were respectful, spoke to and looked at them directly, acknowledged their grief, and gave them a voice. Such interactions eased anxiety and stress and made the experience of the inquest easier to bear. At best, this could even contribute to a sense that proceedings supported the grieving process and were 'healing' or 'cathartic'.

Conversely, interactions perceived to be disrespectful, inconsiderate or unkind were a source of distress for bereaved people. Many described a lack of sensitivity in how professionals spoke about the deceased, dealt with evidence, or behaved more generally. They also spoke of feeling alienated by proceedings which seemed to be oriented around legal professionals rather than their own rights, needs and expectations. Some bereaved people (as well as other witnesses) described being subjected to aggressive or belittling questioning which was not consistent with the formally inquisitorial and fact-finding character of proceedings.

Some bereaved people spoke of inquest hearings that caused suffering comparable to that caused by the death itself, or which compounded their grief. A number described having been bereaved in especially traumatic circumstances, and being retraumatised by hearings. The significance of trauma and risks of retraumatisation are today recognised across many spheres of public service provision, with widespread adoption of six principles of trauma-informed practice: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration.¹ These principles align with the good practice set out in this document, which highlights the need for coronial professionals to be aware of and responsive to the distress that involvement in an inquest can cause the bereaved. Moreover, this may apply not only to bereaved people, but sometimes also to witnesses who were professionally or otherwise closely involved with the deceased person or the death.

This good practice document is also consistent with the work of procedural justice theorists who have studied encounters between citizens and the justice system. Procedural justice theory posits that whether people view the justice system as fair and legitimate is shaped by their experiences of

¹ See, for example, HM Government's 'Working definition of trauma-informed practice', 2 November 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice>

the *process* – including the quality of the treatment they received – as much as by its *outcomes*. Increasing attention has recently been paid to the application of this theory to the courts, highlighting the value of professionals’ fair and respectful treatment of lay court users. Voice, neutrality, respect and trust are described as key features of procedural justice in court settings.²

Informed by the Voicing Loss research and the evidence base on trauma-informed practice and procedural justice, this document focuses on three principles for improving the quality of interactions at inquest hearings:

Principle 1:
Compassion

Principle 2:
Inclusion

Principle 3:
Sensitivity

These principles do not presuppose structural reform or investment of substantial additional resources by the coroner service; however, it must be acknowledged that the severe resource constraints within which coronial teams operate have repercussions for the quality of treatment of the bereaved. Enacting the principles may require some additional elements of training; provision of more support to professionals to mitigate risks of desensitisation and compassion fatigue; and a greater willingness on the part of all professionals to reflect on their own and their peers’ practice. All this, we hope, will serve the overarching purpose of putting humanity at the heart of the coronial process.

“ The whole thing was dignified, sensitive, inclusive – beautifully managed by the coroner... It was transformational in terms of both the outcome but also the experience of how it was conducted. She was very clear. She was very courteous. She was very unofficious. She made sure I was able to ask my question. She asked me if I had any other questions. It was just dignified. It wasn’t frightening... She just made it a very professional, safe environment.”

– Bereaved partner

“ So yes, it’s just the worst – other than my sister dying, the inquest was the worst experience ever... It’s just so simple: it literally is just compassion – that’s all it would take. That’s literally the one word, that’s just all it would take, to make me and other families feel better about it. And be able to accept the whole process and go through it much more easily, really.” – Sister

² For a short review of the research evidence on the application of procedural justice theory to court settings, see Kirby, A. and Jacobson, J. (2022) *Procedural justice and the courts*, Clinks Evidence Library.

Principle 1:

Compassion

Coronial professionals are compassionate when they convey, through their interactions with bereaved people, their sense of human connection and feeling for others' distress or suffering. This can be achieved both through their words and the *manner* in which they interact.

"[The coroner] was really, really good. Very compassionate. Looked at me all the time, gave eye contact, listened to me, listened to everyone else, and you just came out feeling you'd really been supported." - Mother

"The coroner was really kind and encouraging, recognising our grief, our distress and that this was a hard process, but actually, we had a voice in this and we were an active part... I think the actual process was really healing for us as a family." - Mother

On the other hand, uncaring conduct expresses a lack of connection.

"This is why the process, the inquest process, was such a disaster. Because this essential relationship that's so important, for respect and sympathy and empathy and understanding, for everybody, was completely missing. And that is appalling." - Husband

"Very, very arrogant was the attitude I got from the coroner. He's above everybody else in the room... I shouldn't have to stand up when that man walks in a room when he

won't even look me in the eye to discuss my daughter." - Mother

A simple yet important way in which fellow-feeling can be expressed is by offering condolences for the loss suffered by the bereaved – but only where this appears sincere:

"[The coroner] kept on saying, 'Sorry for your loss,' and she had the biggest grin... I just kept on thinking, 'Why do you keep saying that and your face isn't saying it?' You just realise they're just doing their job. It's personal to you, but they're just totally detached from the whole thing." - Mother

Condolences offered by witnesses from public or other bodies can also be meaningful for bereaved people; and an inquest hearing may provide opportunities for constructive informal dialogue – potentially including apologies – outside the courtroom. However, some interactions between the bereaved and witnesses are fraught with difficulty and require careful management.

"A number of people said ... when they were questioned, 'I'd just like to start by acknowledging [the loss].' That meant a lot. You can tell when someone means it... [The psychiatrist] asked if he would be allowed to speak with the family afterwards. We were in the little waiting room area. He asked if he could come to us to apologise... He came to

us and just said, 'I am so sorry. This has had a huge impact on me and my team, and I am so sorry this happened to your family.'" - Aunt

"During the entire inquest, there was nothing but praise, nothing but praise, and it came from the coroner, and it came from the people who were questioned. Yes, that helped me a lot... 'You've never seen a mother's love like it,' was one that the social worker said... [It] was very cathartic for me, that, having [the denial of care and support] exposed, how much I did and things." - Mother

"I asked my legal team to tell all of their legal teams to not dare offer their condolences. I had no interest in hearing them. I would not accept them..." - Mother

Acknowledging and responding appropriately to the emotions in the courtroom demands empathy and awareness on the part of the coroner and others. This is all the more challenging when the bereaved person is attending the hearing remotely.

"The coroner was fantastic throughout. He was very professional but quite human. In so much as he was just very good at explaining, 'This is just to come to a conclusion as to cause of death but, obviously, hearing these things will be very emotional.'" - Sister

"If I had been in the court in person, [the coroner] would have seen my perplexity, my distress. It's easy to look away from a screen." - Husband

Questioning of witnesses (bereaved people and others) which is aggressive or belittling undermines the inquisitorial, fact-finding nature of inquest proceedings and also betrays a lack of compassion.

"A couple of the lawyers really went for the jugular... I remember thinking at the time, 'That's not an appropriate way to treat a grieving family.'" - Mother

"One by one, they asked me questions and I was basically criticised... I was nearly in tears at the time. I said, 'No, I stand by what I did'... The family's lawyer was pushing, pushing and pushing. It wasn't until I saw him turn around – I know now it was the [deceased's] wife, she shook her head, obviously to say: 'Enough, stop –' and the lawyer said, 'No more questions.'" - Police witness

Walking into a coroner's court to attend an inquest can feel overwhelming and frightening. In this situation, kindness and support from coroners' officers and staff and the Coroners' Courts Support Service (CCSS) can ease anxiety and make individuals feel more comfortable. Small gestures, like the offer of a cup of tea, can make a big difference. The end of the hearing is a time when compassion and consideration is also needed, including for those attending remotely, for whom the ending might otherwise feel especially abrupt.

"The volunteers were absolutely lovely. They explained the process, but they also gave us cups of tea... and kept inviting us: did we want to talk, did we not want to talk, what did we need, did we want to go for a walk. You know, just held us through the whole process." - Aunt

"It concluded ... everybody started to disappear off the call. The father was still on the call and I could clearly see that he didn't really know what happened next. I don't think he knew that the court was over, so I stayed on at the end of the call and said, 'Do you realise that the court process has finished now? ... This poor man was just left on the call.'" - Prison witness

"How a coroner ends a case is really quite important... I try and vary the ending of my inquests. So I might say, 'I'm very sad that we've had to meet in these circumstances'... You don't want that sincerity to be challenged or to become routine." - Senior coroner

Good practice points:

Compassion

- **Condolences:** Sincere and direct expression of condolences for the loss is an important way in which coroners, coronial professionals and others can show compassion.
- **Non-verbal communication:** Compassion and a sense of human connection is conveyed through non-verbal as well as verbal communication; for example, by direct eye contact.
- **Responsiveness to distress and grief:** Distress should be acknowledged, not ignored – by expressing sympathy, suggesting short breaks, or simply recognising that the process is difficult. Alertness to distress is especially important when bereaved people are attending the hearing remotely.
- **Dialogue and apologies:** Hearings may provide opportunities for constructive dialogue between bereaved people and professionals who were involved in care or treatment of the deceased. This can include expression of apologies, and may require careful management by legal representatives.
- **Questioning of witnesses:** Witnesses – including bereaved people and others – should be questioned in a manner that is consistent with the inquisitorial, fact-finding character of inquest proceedings. Rude, aggressive, belittling or overly repetitive questioning should be avoided.
- **Support:** Emotional and practical support offered by coroners' officers and staff and CCSS volunteers – before, during and after a hearing – can make a significant difference to bereaved people and witnesses who feel frightened, distressed or overwhelmed by proceedings.
- **End of hearing:** Compassion should be shown by acknowledging and checking on the welfare of attendees at the end of inquest hearings, which can otherwise be experienced as abrupt.

Principle 2:

Inclusion

Inclusive inquest proceedings are those in which the engagement, participation and voice of bereaved people and others are actively supported. Vital aspects of inclusion include being able to speak and pose questions; having those questions heard and (where possible) addressed; and being supported to make a statement about the deceased person. (The issue of 'pen portraits' is further considered in [Voicing Loss Principles for Practice No. 3.](#))

"I was so dreading the inquest and it was such a relief. The coroner was ever so mindful. It was a really good experience, I must say, for what it was... I felt like in the centre of the process because he included our opinions and our concerns." - Partner

"They gave everybody an opportunity to talk... All the points that I had put forward that I could ask the coroner were answered; so, on the whole, yes, I think it was handled very well." - Mother

"I read my own personal statement. I really wanted to do that and she allowed me to. It felt really good to do it because I felt as if I put my anger where it belonged and I felt I had at last been [my daughter's] voice." - Mother

Many aspects of inquest proceedings potentially militate against the inclusion of the bereaved and, to some extent, other witnesses. A sense of exclusion can result from the experience of

not being directly addressed by the coroner, or of being denied the opportunity to speak for oneself. While bereaved people who are represented are generally better placed than the unrepresented to ensure their concerns are addressed by the coroner, they may nevertheless find it difficult to make their own voices heard.

"[The coroner was] sticking his face in his paperwork, muddling his words up. And he's not speaking loudly or clearly; he's just mumbling into the microphone... I felt really small. He was sitting up there on his pedestal while we were sitting down there, tears in our eyes." - Son

"The coroner never spoke directly to me...it just felt like a process was happening. I was present, but I wasn't really part of it." - Daughter

"[The coroner] kind of looked at me at the end, but it was almost as if I wasn't there. I was like a bit player... I think it's partly that you can't speak to the coroner except through your barrister, and that feels a bit antiquated... I would have liked to have been able to speak up a bit more." - Mother

"I would have liked to ask [the witness] questions with my own voice ... directly to that person so they have to look me in the eye and give me those answers – rather than writing them down and asking the lawyer to ask them." - Sister

Inquest proceedings can feel confusing and intimidating, especially when large numbers of public bodies, all legally represented, are involved. Understanding the people and process can be particularly challenging for those who are unrepresented or are attending remotely.

"There was also their agencies and we didn't know who the hell they were. They were on screens and they grinned all the way through, which was really upsetting." - **Friend**

"The hybrid hearings I think worked okay. It was quite disturbing to realise there were a whole load of people listening in, and you didn't necessarily know who they were, so we had to keep asking." - **Mother**

"We sat there [at the pre-hearing] watching people come in and we were like, 'Who are these people?' It was barrister after barrister, and solicitor after solicitor. Suddenly we'd gone from having 6 people in the room to 20." - **Mother**

Adding to the experience of proceedings as confusing and intimidating are the language, ritual and formality of the courtroom, all of which can combine to make the bereaved feel as if they are on the periphery of a process oriented around the legal practitioners.

"There was a sense of playing a game you didn't fully understand, by their rules." - **Father**

"There are certain bits about it that are very, very regimented, very austere. Very, very easy to intimidate, even if you know what you're going in for." - **NHS consultant and witness**

"Occasionally you'll get barristers standing up and thumping the desk and addressing the public gallery at the back and grandstanding, Perry Mason style. That's fine. You've just got to say something: 'I'm sorry, I'm sat here, this way. Were you

addressing someone at the back of court? Can I just remind you, this is an inquest, an inquiry. It isn't litigation.'" - **Senior coroner**

There is an interplay between the physical space and lay-out of the courtroom and the social dimensions of proceedings; this can work to add to the sense of intimidation and exclusion or, conversely, to support inclusion and engagement.

"It's all set out in rows, and you have to get up and walk right across in front of everybody... It's austere, it's not a friendly place." - **Mother**

"Well, we were there, in these incredibly uncomfortable seats, behind all the legal team. The court building is not set up, talking about it architecturally, to put families as the heart of it. We weren't allowed to sit with our legal team... So we were scribbling notes to [them], on Post-it notes, and somebody had to run round and give them to our legal team." - **Mother**

"He re-arranged the courtroom.... [The coroner] was on the same level as everybody else... We were in a semicircle... It was just egalitarian." - **Mother and Father**

"We were going to be sitting at the back. The court official said, 'Well, that's where family sits.' I'm going, 'No, I want to sit at the table'... So, the coroner said, 'Well, if Mrs [name] would like sit at the table, that's fine.'" - **Mother**

Good practice points:**Inclusion**

- **Direct contact:** Coroners and others should address bereaved people directly and clearly during hearings – including, for example, when expressing condolences, identifying those who are present, checking understanding, and inviting questions.
- **Voice:** Bereaved people should be supported to make their own direct contribution to proceedings, where they wish to do so; for example, by allowing them sufficient time to formulate and ask questions, assisting with wording and framing of questions, and supporting pen portrait statements. Where bereaved people have legal representation, they may nevertheless want to pose questions directly.
- **Management of expectations:** Careful and considered explanations should be provided where questions raised by bereaved people are outside the scope of the inquest.
- **Understanding:** It should not be assumed that bereaved people (and all witnesses) understand the inquest process and roles of all involved. Explanations and introductions should be provided and (as required) reiterated, with particular care taken for remote attendees.
- **Language and formality:** Inclusion in inquest hearings is supported by use of plain language as much as possible, providing explanations for unavoidable legal and technical terms, and reduction of ritual and excessive formality.
- **Lay-out and environment:** The lay-out and physical environment of the courtroom has an impact on feelings of inclusion or exclusion. Where resourcing, security and other practical considerations allow, adjustments should be made to enhance engagement, accessibility and physical comfort.

Principle 3:

Sensitivity

Sensitivity during inquest hearings centres on the demonstration of respect for the individuality and circumstances of the bereaved, those who died, witnesses, the specific issues under scrutiny, and the implications for everyone involved of the process itself. Respect and lack of respect, alike, can be conveyed in a variety of ways.

"What the Coroner did was, he took each [written statement submitted by my son's friends], and he sort of went, 'dah-dah-dah' and then he'd go, 'blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah.' Then he'd say a few more words, and then, 'dah-dah-dah'. I just found that insulting. They were young people who had made the statement about their friend, and he wasn't even dignified enough to read out the words in court." - **Father**

For bereaved people who may be feeling intimidated and anxious in the alien setting of the coroner's court, being addressed in an appropriate and respectful manner is important. Further, the name of the deceased can carry great emotional weight. Where the wrong name is used, or no name is used at all, this can be hurtful and distressing. At the other end of the spectrum, use of the name can offer comfort and meaning. (Voicing Loss Principles for Practice No. 3 addresses the theme of respect for the deceased in detail.)

"When [my daughter] died, people stopped

saying her name....so it felt that we hadn't used her name for many months... [At the inquest] her name is being used almost every other sentence... It's heart-breaking, but it was wonderful" - **Mother**

The presentation of certain forms of evidence, such as photographs and the detail of post-mortem reports, can be a cause of distress.

"They read out the literal post-mortem results. They read out, 'brain weight'. And as soon as I heard that my fingers went in my ears." - **Mother**

"The coroner told [the pathologist] exactly which page to look at and which part to read out. She told him to read out all these fine details of what had happened to [my husband] ... and I had to get up and walk out because I couldn't bear it." - **Wife**

Sensitivity in the presentation of such evidence includes acknowledging the possible emotional impact, giving the bereaved the opportunity to leave the courtroom and, where possible, opting not to have certain portions of the evidence read out or shown in open court.

"[The coroner] looked directly across at my son and said, 'Do you want to leave? Do you want to leave the room for this?'... And I thought that was impressive." - **Mother-in-law**

"We were nervous [that the coroner] was

going to read out ... the personal bits in [my brother's suicide] letter to his wife about his unhappiness at her leaving him, but luckily she didn't; she was very sensible. And she read out the bits of his letter which made it quite clear that he was intentionally killing himself because that's all she needed to do." - Sister

Many of the deaths investigated by coroners are those that have occurred in highly traumatic circumstances. For the bereaved – and some witnesses – exposure to evidence and the inquest proceedings more generally can cause them to relive the trauma that surrounded the death. Coronial professionals' awareness of and responsiveness to the risks of re-traumatisation thus have a part to play in reducing distress and any longer-term harms that involvement in an inquest can cause.

"Afterwards I cried for such a long time, because it was a soul-destroying experience... I think we were highly inexperienced, and we lacked the knowledge and understanding of the whole process... I think we were totally intimidated by the coroner, by the lawyers, by the whole process... I still say, to this day, apart from [our son] dying, I think it's the most traumatic experience we've gone through." - Mother

"I can't fully explain how awful it truly was to hear all those things; to hear every minute my brother was in hospital what happened to him... When you lose someone like that, it already takes its toll, and when you have to go through these processes, whatever is left of you is diluted even more." - Sister

"The more traumatic [inquests] stick with you forever... But you can remember them all." - Witness from social care NGO

It can add significantly to bereaved people's feelings of hurt and marginalisation if professionals attending the inquest, such as witnesses, behave in ways that are not fitting with the gravity of occasion.

"Why did all the [health] trust staff stand in the corridor chatting as though they were at a nightclub? ... It was chilling, it was terrible. They were on a day out; they were having a great day out." - Mother

"[The lawyers and witnesses were laughing at an error in a transcript] and they were all smiling and then [the coroner] looked across and then he was like, 'Actually, I don't think this is appropriate.' But you were laughing as well. It's not funny. My child died. So, what are you laughing at autocorrect for? We don't need to bring any lightness to this proceeding, thank you... Oh, it was just the worst thing." - Mother

Bereaved people's situational and personal vulnerabilities, independent of their bereavement, can also have repercussions for their engagement with inquest proceedings. Sensitivity on the part of coronial professionals encompasses awareness of and empathy towards such vulnerabilities, and preparedness to make accommodations where needed – including to support more effective remote engagement.

"We were absolutely shocked [that the barrister] stood up and accused my father of being angry at the witnesses. My dad had made three separate attempts during the course of those days for the coroner's court to acknowledge the hearing loop wasn't working and he was deaf. The accusation that my dad was not liking the information he was retrieving – it was destroying him." - Sister

"The coroner [at the pre-inquest review] just matter-of-factly said, 'Oh yes, somebody has lost somebody else, I've heard.' So I put my hand up and I just said, 'My father has passed away.'... 'Sorry to hear about that. Right, so, whatever.' There was just no compassion... It wasn't like, 'Are you OK? Would you like a moment to compose yourself?'" - Sister-in-law

Good practice points:

Sensitivity

- **Respectful and polite interactions:** Bereaved people should be addressed in a polite, respectful manner, and the deceased person should be referred to in a respectful way.
- **Presentation of evidence:** Sensitivity in the presentation of evidence includes acknowledgement of the potential impact of the evidence on the bereaved; offering bereaved people the opportunity to leave the courtroom; and the exercise of careful discretion with respect to which details of written evidence are read out in court. There should also be awareness of the potential impact on the bereaved of media reporting on evidence presented in court.
- **Risks of retraumatisation and compounding grief:** Coronial professionals should be aware of the ongoing impacts of traumatic bereavement. They should be alert to the risks of retraumatising and compounding the grief of the bereaved through disrespectful, insensitive or clumsy interactions.
- **Courtroom behaviours:** Conduct by professionals should be respectful at all times, reflecting the gravity of proceedings. This includes behaviour in spaces outside the courtroom such as corridors and waiting areas.
- **Circumstances and vulnerabilities:** It is important to recognise the impact of bereaved people's situational and personal vulnerabilities on their experience of hearings and capacity to participate. Support and appropriate accommodations should be offered, where possible, to ensure effective (in-person or remote) engagement.

Sources of guidance and about Voicing Loss

This Principles for Practice document should be read in conjunction with the following practice guidance:

- Chief Coroner's Guidance, Advice and Law Sheets, which are intended to assist coroners with the law and their legal duties, and to provide commentary and advice on policy and practice
- Equal Treatment Bench Book which aims to increase awareness and understanding – among all members of the judiciary – of the different circumstances of people appearing in courts and tribunals
- The Statement of Expected Behaviour, setting out the standards of behaviour expected from all judicial office holders – in relation to each other, staff and court users
- The Advocate's Gateway's practical, evidence-based guidance for legal practitioners on communicating with vulnerable court users
- Resources produced by the Bar Standards Board, Solicitors Regulation Authority and CILEx Regulation for legal practitioners practising in coroners' courts, which include a statement of competencies.
- The practitioner's guide on Achieving Racial Justice at Inquests, produced by JUSTICE in association with INQUEST.



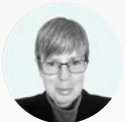
Voicing Loss



- The Voicing Loss project was conducted by the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research (ICPR) at Birkbeck, University of London, and the Centre for Death and Society (CDAS) at the University of Bath. It ran from May 2021 to May 2024.
- The study involved interviews with 89 bereaved people with experience of the coronial process; 82 coronial professionals (including coroners, coroners' officers, lawyers and others); and 19 individuals who had given evidence to an inquest in a professional capacity and/or supported colleagues who were witnesses. This constitutes the largest ever empirical investigation of lay and professional experiences of the coronial process in England and Wales.
- The project examined the role of bereaved people in the coronial process, as defined in law and policy and as experienced in practice; and explored ways in which the inclusion and participation of bereaved people in the process can be better supported.
- As a qualitative study, Voicing Loss does not seek to provide an exhaustive or representative portrayal of the coronial process. The self-selected sample of bereaved people is likely to be skewed towards those who had been bereaved in contentious circumstances. However, this does not detract from the value of their detailed, reflective accounts of direct experiences.

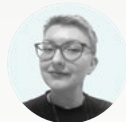
Further information on the study, including research, practice, policy and other outputs, is available on the [project website](#)

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Artwork by [Tyla Scott Owen](#).