

REB 23/2016	The Board requests clarification of the bereavement services and support for families.
REB 24/2016	The Board requests clarification on opportunities for the voluntary sector to support the Surrey Coroner Service.

**Surrey Coroner Service – voluntary sector support**

The Surrey Coroner Service is supported by the Coroners Court Support Service (CCSS) which won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2010. The CCSS is a registered charity whose volunteers give emotional and practical support to families and other witnesses attending inquests. They have a presence in over 30 coroner areas across England and Wales and its mission statement is:

- To support practically and emotionally the family and other witnesses attending the Coroner's Courts
- To liaise with other parties appearing before the court to ensure their understanding of its role and the procedures, in order to facilitate its smooth and effective administration
- To refer families and witnesses to other agencies if so requested, for ongoing help with coming to terms with their bereavement.

The Surrey CCSS commenced in 2013 and there are currently 6 volunteers. This is an invaluable service and both SCC and the coroner hold it in high regard, and feedback to the CCSS from families is overwhelming in its support. There does not appear to be any other areas of activity within the coroner service where volunteer support would be helpful or necessary.

**Bereavement services and support to families**

There are no specific bereavement services or support provided by SCC to families who are involved in coroner's cases and inquests. We do know, is that bereaved families tell us that clear and concise information about the coroner process is paramount to them in terms of understanding what happens once a death is referred to the coroner, and the timelines for each step of the process.

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has published a very helpful short guide to coroner investigations. It is available in leaflet form and is published on its website. It provides important information to help those who have been bereaved where the death has been reported to the coroner. It doesn't go into too much detail but explains where you can get more information. It is supported by a more detailed Guide to Coroner Services also published by MOJ. The short guide leaflet is given to all families where a bereavement has been referred to the Surrey coroner.

There are also many voluntary sector bodies who provide bereavement support and advice. However the Surrey Coroner's Service does not specifically signpost to these services but we have now compiled the attached list (which is not exhaustive) and which we plan to make available on request from the coroner's office and to place it on the coroner pages of the council's website.

## **List of Voluntary Sector Bereavement Support and Advice Organisations**

### **Bereavement Advice Centre**

Bereavement Advice Centre is a free helpline and web-based information service provided by Simplify Channel Ltd (a specialist probate provider).

### **Bereavement UK**

Offers information about death, dying, bereavement, funerals and self-help counselling.

### **Brake – The Road Safety Charity**

Brake is a charity and campaigns to stop motorcycle accidents carnage and supports victims.

### **Child Bereavement UK**

The charity's mission is to make a real difference to bereaved families through providing accessible quality support and information to all affected by the death of a child or when children are bereaved, and accessible quality training for the professionals who work with these families and children.

### **Child Death Helpline**

The Child Death Helpline aims to provide a quality Freephone service to anyone affected by the death of a child of any age. Callers to the Helpline might be parents, grandparents, siblings, other family members, friends or involved professionals.

### **Citizens Advice Bureau**

The Citizens Advice service aims to provide the advice people need for the problems they face. To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

### **Counselling Directory**

Counselling Directory is a confidential service that encourages those in distress to seek help. The directory contains information on many different types of distress, as well as articles, news and events.

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Cruse Bereavement Care promotes the well-being of bereaved people and enables anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. As well providing free care to all bereaved people, the charity also offers information, support and training services to those who are looking after them.

### **Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID)**

Offering support to families, professionals and friends bereaved by the sudden and unexpected death of an infant.

### **INQUEST (Advice after a death in custody)**

INQUEST was founded in 1981 and provides a specialist, comprehensive advice service to bereaved people, lawyers, other advice and support agencies, the media, MPs and the wider public on contentious deaths and their investigation.

### **RoadPeace**

RoadPeace is the national charity for road crash victims and is an independently funded, membership organisation. Members include those who have been bereaved or injured in road crashes and also those who are concerned about road danger.

### **SADS UK (Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome)**

The Ashley Jolly SAD Trust, is a charity that helps to prevent premature loss of life and to improve the lives of those adversely affected by cardiac arrhythmia.

### **Samaritans**

Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

### **Sands (Still and Neonatal Death Society)**

Sands is a national charity, established by bereaved parents in 1981. Its 3 core aims which are to: Support anyone affected by the death of a baby; To work in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families; and To promote research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives.

### **SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide)**

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide exists to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend. It is a self-help organisation and many of its volunteers have themselves been bereaved by suicide.

### **SSAFA Forces Help**

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) Forces Help aims to help and support those who serve in our Armed Forces and those who used to serve.

### **The Compassionate Friends**

TCF is a charitable organisation of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents dedicated to the support and care of other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child/children.

### **WAY Widowed and Young**

WAY is a national charity in the UK for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died. It's a peer-to-peer support group run by a network of volunteers who have been bereaved at a young age themselves, so they understand exactly what other members are going through.

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