

## Draft Charter for Bereaved People

The Coroners and Death Certification Bill is currently included in the draft legislative programme for the 2008-09 parliamentary session. Once the Bill has been enacted the Ministry of Justice have announced that there will be a Charter for Bereaved People. A draft Charter has just been published for comment (reflecting comments on the previous draft Charter that was first published in 2006).

The thrust of the Charter is to provide improvements to the inquest process for the families of the deceased. The provisions include:

- 1 Coroners or their staff are to keep in touch with families and update them on the status of the inquest procedure at least every three months, explaining any delay.
- 2 Documents will be disclosed without charge.

- 3 Families will receive reports recording any lessons learned and responses to them.
- 4 Families are to be made aware that they may report deaths if they believe a professional agency should have done so and has failed to do so.
- 5 The Chief Coroner is likely to set minimum service standards for inquests into the death of specific types of individual (eg children or military personnel) and specific types of death (eg mesothelioma).

A copy of the draft Charter is available at [www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk). Comments are invited by 10th September 2008.

**Andrew Parsons**  
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For more information on Healthcare Law contact Andrew Parsons at RadcliffesLeBrasseur on 020 7227 7282, or email: [andrew.parsons@rlb-law.com](mailto:andrew.parsons@rlb-law.com).

Out of office emergency advice available 24hrs on 07802 506 306.

Readers are advised to take specific advice before acting in reliance on the matters set out in this briefing.

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