

Annex I

Participant Information Sheet for the PhD Research of Jo Easton

September 2012

Please read the following information carefully before reading the consent form below. You may want to save this document or print it out to keep.

Project title: Impact of bereaved families participating in the inquest system following a death in custody.

Principal researcher: Jo Easton, PhD candidate at the Human Rights Centre of Essex University.

Supervisors: Professor Maurice Sunkin and Ms Lorna McGregor.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. It is important that you understand what the aim of the project is and what your participation may involve, so please read the following information carefully. Your participation in this project must be your own choice – there will be no negative consequences if you decide not to take part. If anything in this document is not clear or you have any questions regarding my research, please contact me at jeeast@essex.ac.uk.

What Is the Purpose of This Study?

This aim of this research is to gather information from varied stakeholders involved in the inquest system in relation to deaths in custody. I would like to investigate the perceptions of fairness within the process – both whether participants feel the current procedures allow for fair treatment of all those involved and how important participants feel fairness is within the process. An inquest is an inquisitorial process that stands apart from both civil and criminal justice procedures; however, in relation to deaths in custody, cases can raise issues of conflict between parties. I would like to consider how important procedural fairness as a principle may be to an inquest that is investigating a death in custody. The issues I am interested in include equity of parties, respectful treatment and any other aspects to the process that participants feel are important in ensuring effective participation and fairness for all interested parties.

Why Have I Been Invited?

You have been invited as a stakeholder in the inquest process. I will be speaking with a variety of people who have been involved in inquests following a death in custody – including interested parties, lawyers who have represented parties and coroners themselves. You may choose to remain anonymous, in which case no one other than myself and my two supervisors will know your name or that you have participated in the project: we will ensure your details remain confidential. In this case, some details may have to be edited to ensure you cannot be identified through the information you give me.

What Do I Do if I Decide to Take Part?

You can contact me at jeeast@essex.ac.uk to discuss your participation. I have a questionnaire prepared and preferably we will set up a time that is convenient to you so that I can interview you (either in person or over the phone). I can send you a summary of some of the issues I would like to discuss so you can prepare your thoughts. The interviews will be recorded to ensure the information is accurately recorded. I will be carrying out the transcription of these recordings myself, so no one else will have access to the information. If an interview is either inconvenient or otherwise not possible, I may agree to send you a copy of the questionnaire to complete in your own time. At any point, if you decide you no longer wish to take part, you may withdraw from the process without giving a reason.

What Are the Possible Benefits of Taking Part?

I hope that the opportunity to express your views on the inquest process may be a positive experience.

What Are the Possible Risks of Taking Part?

The questions may involve issues or memories that are painful or distressing; you are under no obligation to answer any questions that you are not comfortable with.

Confidentiality

All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that all of the personal information that you give for this survey will be treated as confidential. It will only be used for the purposes of my PhD and will not be available to anyone other than myself and my two

supervisors. The data will also be stored on a secure computer and hardcopies will be held in a locked cabinet.

Giving Informed Consent

If you are still interested in participating in the research – please read the Informed Consent Form below and sign it if you agree with the statements.

If you have any queries in regard to your participation, please contact me at jeeast@essex.ac.uk or either of my supervisors Professor Maurice Sunkin at sunkm@essex.ac.uk or Lorna McGregor at lmcgreg@essex.ac.uk.

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Before you agree to take part, you must be clear about what the project involves. If you have any queries, please contact the researcher Jo Easton at jeeast@essex.ac.uk.

If you complete this form, you are giving your consent to take part in a survey on your perceptions of the inquest system.

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and understand what my participation in the research would involve.
- I understand that if I ask for my name or contact details to remain anonymous, the information I give will only be available to the researcher and her supervisors and if referenced, this information will not be able to identify me.
- I may choose for my name to be published, in which case details of particular cases that I discuss may be referenced and I may be identified alongside the information I give.
- I agree to any interviews between myself and the researcher, Jo Easton, as part of the project to be recorded to ensure the information is accurate.
- I understand that the information I give will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I understand that I can choose whether to participate or not and that I can withdraw at any time prior to the interview being completed without having to give a reason and without any adverse consequences
- I understand that the information I have divulged will be used to produce a PhD research project and may be published.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please tick one.

- I would like to remain anonymous and for it to be assured that it will not be possible to identify me from any publications ☐

OR

- I give my permission for my name to be used in relation to the information given within this questionnaire in any publications resulting from this project ☐