

# THE ASSOCIATION OF PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS

## MINUTES

### Child Injury Special Interest Group Meeting

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004 6 pm – 8 pm at Regent's College Conference Centre, London

#### Speakers

Dr Peter Ellis of Lamb Chambers (Barrister and Deputy Coroner) who gave a presentation on child death inquests.

Ann Davis Chief Executive of Jigsaw a charity assisting the bereaved.

Dr Ellis has kindly provided his detailed lecture notes on practice and procedure which are reproduced here by kind permission.

#### Child Death Inquests by Dr Peter Ellis – (Powerpoint Presentation)

[APIL INQ.pps](#)

Dr Ellis provided details of further reading. None of the leading inquest reference texts are up to date in terms of recent developments for House of Lords. They include:

- \* Jervis on Coroners (12<sup>th</sup> edition 2002, Thomson Sweet & Maxwell)
- \* Inquests: A Practitioners' Guide (2002 Legal Action Group)
- \* Sources of Coroners Law (1999 Barry Rose)

#### Useful Websites

- \* King's College Coroner's Law Resource (edited by the author of Jervis, Paul Matthews). This provides very useful information on legal developments, including a noter-up service for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Jervis: [www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/coroner's /contents](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/law/research/coroner's/content)
- \* The Home Office website contains updates on coroner's law reform, including recent inquiry reports in pdf format: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)
- \* Inquest, a charity supporting bereaved families, which also provides regular legal updates, particularly on human rights and death in custody cases: <http://inquest.gn.apc.org>
- \* Royal College of Pathologists: [www.rcpath.org](http://www.rcpath.org)
- \* NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- \* Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths: [www.sids.org](http://www.sids.org)
- \* Road Peace: [www.roadpeace.org](http://www.roadpeace.org)

Detailed lecture notes on practice and procedure can be obtained by the SIG members by searches on email to:

[peterellis@lambchambers.co.uk](mailto:peterellis@lambchambers.co.uk)

## Presentation

This was given by Ann Davis of Jigsaw (see attached notes)

Ms Davies is Chief Executive of the charity Jigsaw which provides support for the bereaved, in particular, parents and children helping them to cope when someone dies.

Jigsaw4u provides a unique child centred approach that enables children and young people to deal with situations of loss and trauma in all its guises and promotes their active participation in decision making in their own lives, the development of Jigsaw4u and in local, regional and national services.

### Facts about grief support

- Every 30 minutes in the UK, a child under 18 is bereaved of a parent ie. 53 children a day almost 20,000 per year.
- 3% of 5 to 15 year olds have experienced the death of a parent or sibling ie. 255,000 young people in the UK.
- 71% of children and young people supported by Jigsaw4u in 2003-04 had experienced the death of a parent

Jigsaw4u provides support to families where a parent or child has died as a result of illness, accident, suicide or murder.

### **Helping parents and children to cope when someone close to them dies**

It can be very difficult to tell a child about the death of a parent, brother or sister, close relative or friend. You may want to protect the child, or feel it is better they do not know the truth. Children are quick to notice when things are not right – silence will just bewilder and frighten them more. They need to be told about the death in simple terms, so that they can begin to grapple with the implications. They will then continue to trust you as someone they can turn to.

It is important for a child to feel that there are adults, who are strong enough to bear whatever they wish to talk about and to answer their questions.

### **Children's responses to death**

Children have different responses to death and dying depending on their age and experience. There are no clear cut stages, no correct order, no set time for grief, so try not to think about a "right way to grieve". It is important that children are allowed to grieve in their own way and in their own time. They may switch between laughter and tears very quickly, they may become very insecure and need a lot of reassurance, and they may start acting like a much younger child. Adolescents may seek out the support of their friends, whilst younger children are more likely to turn to their parent, grandparents, family friend or other significant people in their lives.

They can be contacted on 0208 687 1384

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Meeting concluded 8pm