



Royal Court of Jersey
Viscount's Department

Deputy T. Binet
Minister for Health and Social Services / Deputy Chief Minister
Health and Care Jersey
Peter Crill House
Gloucester Street
St Helier
JE1 3QS

21 September 2026

Dear Minister,

Inquest: Susan Jane Brizell née Pyzer - Report to prevent future deaths

On 26 August 2026, I concluded the inquest into the death of 72-year-old Susan (Sue) Brizell. Mrs Brizell sadly died due to sepsis caused by biliary peritonitis following a common bile duct perforation, which was sustained following choledochotomy (an incision into the common bile duct to remove a stone). I enclose a copy of the inquest finding.

Post-operatively, Mrs Brizell complained of abdominal pain, likely due to the leakage of bile. Mrs Brizell's complaints of pain continued and there was a lack of clinical curiosity about the cause. Abnormal blood tests following the surgery did not trigger any professional curiosity and there was a failure to escalate concerns to senior clinicians. Communication with Mrs Brizell and her family was poor and the family's concerns about Mrs Brizell's pain and deterioration were not documented, nor listened to.

By the time sepsis was recognised, Mrs Brizell's condition had deteriorated to the point that she was not fit for surgical intervention and required admission to the intensive care unit, where she sadly died.

Coroner's legal powers and public interest

One of the grounds of public interest which the coroner's inquest should serve is to draw attention to the existence of circumstances which, if left unremedied, might lead to

further deaths. To that end, Rule 12 of the Inquest and Post-mortem Examinations (Jersey) Law 1995, permits me to report matters to the relevant person or authority with a view to preventing the recurrence of fatalities like that in question at the inquest.

Accordingly, at the conclusion of Mrs Brizell's inquest, I announced that I would be writing a report to prevent future deaths. Given the issue is regarding the family's concerns not being listened to, documented or escalated to senior clinicians, I believe you, as Minister for Health, are best placed to address this and have the power to act.

Relevant developments in the UK

In 2023, an inquest held in England into the death of 13-year-old Martha Mills, who developed sepsis after being admitted to hospital after sustaining a pancreatic injury falling off her bike, ruled that had she been admitted to intensive care sooner, she would probably have survived. Following this and similar cases, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and NHS England committed to implement 'Martha's Rule' which recognises that those who know the patient best may be the first to notice changes that could be an early sign of deterioration, and the importance of listening to and acting on the concerns of patients, families and carers.

Evidence from data collection following the implementation suggests Martha's Rule is saving lives and helping thousands of patients benefit from changes to their care.

Coroner's concerns

During the inquest the evidence revealed matters giving rise to concern. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken. In these circumstances it is my duty to report to you.

The MATTERS OF CONCERN are as follows. –

- (1) There is no formal process for patients, families and carers to escalate their concerns about possible clinical deterioration and seek a rapid review.
- (2) The lack of process to report concerns could result in a delay in identifying a clinical deterioration resulting in adverse outcomes.

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ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN

In my opinion action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe you have the power to take such action.

Acknowledgement of this letter would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deryn Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Deryn Evans
Assistant Coroner

Cc:

Mr Tom Walker, Chief Officer for Health and Care, Jersey
Mr Simon West, Medical Director, Jersey General Hospital