

Statement on behalf of the family of

Maria Michelle Morris

Maria was a deeply loved mother, daughter, sister, and friend to all. She was a vibrant, intelligent, and compassionate woman who brought warmth and light into the lives of everyone around her. Her life was of immeasurable value, and her sudden death has left a profound and lasting void in the hearts of her family and all who loved her.

Maria died as a detained patient at the Bethlem Royal Hospital whilst under the care of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust ('SLAM'). She had only been at Bethlem for three days before the incident which led to her death. We are grateful to the jury for having identified that there were missed opportunities around communication, documentation and observations. As a family, the idea that more could have been done to keep her safe causes us immense pain.

We heard evidence over the course of five days, but the jury were not allowed to comment on all of the issues which we consider to have been important. We heard that the ward was 'chaotic', that Maria didn't have a care plan, and that she had disclosed serious concerns to a staff member about her treatment and the treatment of other patients on the ward. We also heard that after her death, Maria was identified as having a significant bruise on her body that remains unexplained. During the evidence we heard references to an incident which may have taken place the night before the incident which led to her death. As a family we still have questions about exactly what happened that night.

The inquest process has been difficult and painful. It is the family's sincere hope that the findings and lessons identified will help protect other vulnerable people in the future and prevent other families from enduring such a tragedy.

Importantly, SLAM has now agreed to fund and install CCTV monitoring on its mental health wards. The family welcomes this step and hopes it will serve as a vital safeguard, ensuring transparency, accountability, and improved safety for those receiving care.

The family would also like to express their gratitude to the witnesses who attended the inquest and spoke candidly about what happened to Maria. Speaking their truth has helped our family move closer to understanding the events that led to this devastating

loss and has provided some of the answers needed to begin the long process of healing.

Today, we remember Maria not only for the circumstances of her death, but for the love, laughter, kindness, and strength she shared during her life. Our focus now is on honouring her memory and continuing to support positive change in her name."

14 October 2025