

Unjust Deaths: Archive Research Volunteer Information Pack

About INQUEST

INQUEST is the only charity in England and Wales providing expertise on state-related deaths, particularly those involving police, prisons, mental health settings, and other forms of detention. For over 40 years, we have worked alongside bereaved families, campaigners, and legal professionals to advocate for accountability and meaningful change. Our work contributes to raising the awareness of investigation and oversight bodies and policy makers in order to effect significant systemic and cultural change, which is crucial to our long-term goal of reducing, and eventually eliminating, state related deaths. It also situates contentious deaths in their broader social and political contexts thus providing an evidence base on which to expose and challenge structural racism and all other forms of structural oppression.

Our public archive at the [Bishopsgate Institute](#) preserves the history of this work and the struggles of those affected.

Unjust Deaths Project

Unjust Deaths is a project by INQUEST, helping communities bereaved by state violence to memorialise the people who have died and encouraging the public to meaningfully engage with this difficult and ongoing history. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this project seeks to memorialise death and resistance by unlocking the [INQUEST archive](#) at the Bishopsgate Institute. These records document deaths connected to police, prisons, and mental health care in England and Wales since 1980. There is also a small amount of material about deaths in custody in Scotland. Our goal is to highlight this important but often overlooked part of our history by using creative methods such as crafting, artist's workshops, a podcast, and a research volunteer training scheme. The project will bring together families bereaved by state violence, artists, activists, students and academics and it includes events, exhibitions, workshops, and online guides, all focused on remembering and continuing the fight against state violence.

Unjust Deaths will engage volunteers in researching and raising awareness of deaths in detention since 1980. Using INQUEST's archive and connected collections (e.g. Women in Prison, Bernie Grant, Clean Break, Hackney Community Defence Association) volunteers will uncover stories, develop digital resources, and contribute to public engagement activities.

Volunteer Roles

We are recruiting six volunteers to support the project through archival research and the creation of research guides. Each volunteer will receive training and mentoring support throughout their involvement.

- Conduct in-depth research using the INQUEST archive at Bishopsgate Institute.
- Develop thematic digital archive guides on key topics (e.g., racism, women in prison, deaths of children and young people, community organising).
- Summarise key case studies, thematic areas, and historical events for public engagement.

What We Offer

- **Specialist Training:** Volunteers will receive guidance in archival research and creating research guides.
- **Mentoring & Wellbeing Support:** Regular check-ins and support from INQUEST staff.
- **Expenses Covered:** Travel expenses and lunch (£10/day) reimbursed.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Engage with INQUEST staff, families, campaigners, community organisers, archivists and curators.
- **Skill Development:** Gain experience in research, archives, writing, public engagement.

Expected Commitment

- We ask volunteers to commit to 6 months and contribute at least half a day a week e.g. one morning/afternoon each week or one day a fortnight.
- Some sessions will be guided by Bishopsgate Institute staff, the Heritage Project Manager and/or Heritage Project Assistant, but this project will include a significant amount of independent research to allow for flexibility.
- Attend key sessions: induction, training, reflective workshops.
- Please note that this opportunity requires you to be at the Bishopsgate Institute in person: 230 Bishopsgate, City of London, London EC2M 4QH.

Knowledge and Experience

- Experience of research whether through study or work. (Essential)
- Experience using a computer e.g. creating and sharing documents and spreadsheets. (Essential)
- Photographing and using a scanner. (Desirable)
- Experience of using physical and/or digital archives. (Desirable)
- Access to a laptop *INQUEST will be able to provide one laptop*. (Desirable)

Impact of Your Work

Your contributions will directly support:

- The development of six thematic digital archive guides.
- Public engagement with the INQUEST archive and Bishopsgate Institute's collections more broadly.
- A strengthened community of activists, researchers, and bereaved families.
- Greater recognition of deaths in detention as part of our national heritage.

How to Apply

If you are passionate about social justice, history and archives, we'd love to hear from you. To apply, please send your CV and cover letter detailing your interest and relevant experience (referring to the **Knowledge and Experience** points listed above) alfieneill@inquest.org.uk with 'Archive Volunteer role' the subject.

Application Deadline: Monday 31 March midday

Join us in remembering, resisting and reshaping the narrative.