

HILLSBOROUGH DISASTER



Image courtesy of Gary and Sylvia Rogers

THE DISASTER

On 15 April 1989, a fatal crowd crush occurred during the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest at Hillsborough Stadium, Sheffield. As fans queued for the match, South Yorkshire Police attempted to ease overcrowding by opening an exit gate to pens allocated to Liverpool fans. Thousands of fans entered the already full pens, resulting in the crush. 97 people were killed and over 700 were injured.

In the aftermath, police falsely blamed Liverpool supporters, alleging they had forced the gate open and were drunk and disorderly. Newspapers, including The Sun, amplified these allegations, printing false stories of fans urinating on police and stealing from the dead.

The first inquest failed to adequately investigate the emergency response and ruled the deaths as “accidental.” In reality, police and ambulance services had failed to take notice of the crowd’s distress. In 2012, the Hillsborough Independent Panel found that 41 victims could have been saved had there been a more effective emergency response.

The second inquest (2014–2016) overturned the original verdict of “accidental death,” ruling that the victims were unlawfully killed.

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hillsboroughlawnow.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Police took blood-alcohol readings on victims, including children, to support the narrative that fans’ drunkenness had caused the disaster.

The 2012 Hillsborough Independent Panel found that 116 of 164 police statements taken after the disaster were altered to amend comments that were negative towards South Yorkshire Police. A 2025 report by the Independent Office for Police Complaints later identified 327 falsified witness statements.

Despite these findings and the overwhelming evidence of corruption and gross negligence, nobody has been held criminally liable for what happened.

WHY WE NEED HILLSBOROUGH LAW

“Their search for truth and justice has been thwarted and no-one has been held accountable... There were clear operational failures... and strenuous attempts to deflect the blame onto the fans.”

Right Reverend James Jones,
former Bishop of Liverpool

“Police officers knew who was responsible and where accountability lay, yet lie after lie was told”

Ian Byrne MP

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RIGHT REVEREND JAMES JONES, FORMER BISHOP OF LIVERPOOL