

# Candidate Information Pack

## **AREA CORONER**

East London

Relevant Authority:

London Borough of

Waltham Forest

19 December 2019

**AREA CORONER FOR EAST LONDON  
INFORMATION PACK**

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This recruitment pack has been drafted in accordance with the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

## 1. ADVERT

### Area Coroner for East London

#### Salary £94,000 pa - pro rata for 3 days per week

London Borough of Waltham Forest is seeking to appoint an Area Coroner. This is a new post.

The number of reported deaths pa is 2,500 plus.

As Area Coroner you will work closely with the Senior Coroner to provide judicial leadership to the coroner team as well as conducting your own coroner investigations and inquests. You will be the nominated deputy for the Senior Coroner.

This appointment of an area coroner will be made on a part-time basis (3 days per week).

The salary will include payment for out of hours availability by agreement.

The Area Coroner will be based in the dedicated court and coroner's office in Queens Road, Walthamstow. Office opening hours are 8am-4pm.

London Borough of Waltham Forest is looking for an exceptional candidate with excellent proven leadership, organisational, management and efficiency skills, as well as experience of managing and embracing change. You will work closely with the Senior Coroner and local authority manager to ensure value for money, performance and financial efficiencies. Collaborative working with the Senior Coroner, local authority, the police and other stakeholders is essential.

You will be required to demonstrate knowledge and experience of coroner law and of basic medicine have proven skills in conducting investigations and an understanding of court procedure. You will also need to demonstrate the excellent communication and interpersonal skills necessary to deal with sensitive situations.

It is desirable that the successful candidate has proven experience of running or sharing running a coroner's jurisdiction including carrying out investigations, case management, and conducting inquests.

The successful candidate will be a barrister or a solicitor or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives and satisfy the judicial-appointment eligibility condition on a 5 year basis. They will be under the age of 70, have experience of working as an assistant coroner or area coroner and be subject to the appointment and eligibility conditions within the [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(s.23 and Schedule 3\)](#).

Once a Coroner is appointed they are then a Judicial Office holder until they reach the age of 70 years (compulsory retirement age) unless they choose to resign or are removed by the Lord Chief Justice or Lord Chancellor prior to their 70th birthday.

The candidate pack is available here: [see attached]

If you wish to have an informal discussion or arrange a visit, please contact **Mark Hynes** Director of governance and Law on 07790807779

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their CV to:**  
[Kate.roberts@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.roberts@walthamforest.gov.uk)

**Closing date: 8 February 2019**

**Interview date: 22 March 2019**

#### **Notification**

The vacancy for this post has been notified to the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor (as required by statute).

## **2. CORONER SERVICE INFORMATION**

### **Area information**

The East London coroner area includes an area of 174 square miles with a current population of around 1.28 million. Bordering counties are Essex, North London and Inner North London.

The number of deaths registered annually averages 7,869 with approximately 2,500 cases (31%) referred to the senior coroner. Post mortem examinations are conducted at two public mortuaries and one hospital mortuary. In 2017, 274 inquests were held (12%) and 1,220 post-mortem examinations (52%). The Senior Coroner is expected to aim to keep post-mortem levels to 30% of reported deaths or below.

The coroner area contains sections of the M11 motorway as well as several major A-roads, main rail lines to/from London and underground lines.

There are 4 acute hospitals, [Queen's Hospital, King George Hospital, Whipps Cross and Newham University Hospital), as well as mental health hospitals and community services.

The area also includes the Olympic Park and London City Airport.

### **Office and court accommodation**

The service is located in dedicated accommodation, including offices and court in Queen's Road, Walthamstow. The coroner's court, which is next to the coroner's offices, is available Monday-Friday 0800 to 1600, allowing inquests to be opened quickly with dates set for inquest hearings, usually within the required six months. The average time from opening to hearing is currently 6 months.

### **Staff**

Nine coroner's officers are employed by the Metropolitan Police Service. In addition there is a coroner's officer manager. The Senior Coroner, coroner team and coroner's officers are supported by four administrative staff employed by London Borough of Waltham Forest.

All staff are co-located with the Senior Coroner.

## Management

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance and support staff are managed by the coroner service manager, who is employed by the Council in the Legal services team.

The coroner service manager works closely with the Senior Coroner [and the police authority responsible for coroner's officers] on the delivery of the service to ensure those affected by the work of the coroner team receive a high quality service.

## Daily operations

The Area Coroner will usually be expected to work 8 hours each working day between 8am and 4pm at the office and court accommodation at 124 Queens Road, Walthamstow. This arrangement allows the service to provide a high level of service and performance to meet the requirements of the Coroners & Justice Act 2009 and the Chief Coroner's guidance.

The Area Coroner will be expected on occasion to be available out of hours, as agreed with the Senior Coroner.

The administrative support staff are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays from 8am to 4pm.

## The coroner team

The Area Coroner, who is an independent judicial-office holder works as part of the coroner team led by the Senior Coroner, alongside three fee paid assistant coroners. The Area Coroner is expected to be the nominated deputy in line with the Chief Coroner's guidance. The Area Coroner will provide cover when the Senior Coroner is unavailable due to leave, sickness, training etc and as additional support (by agreement with the local authority) in office and case work.

The Area Coroner will work closely with the Senior Coroner to provide judicial leadership to the coroner team as well as conducting your own coroner investigations and inquests.

## 3. JOB SUMMARY

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>AREA CORONER</b>
<b>Service Area</b>	<i>Governance &amp; Law</i>
<b>Contact point:</b>	<i>Registration &amp; Coroner Service Manager [or as applicable]</i>
<b>Location</b>	<i>Walthamstow Coroner's Court, 124 Queens Road, Walthamstow</i>

To deliver a high quality coroner service to the people of East London in accordance with statutory provisions, case law, best practice and associated guidance.

## JOB FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To support the Senior Coroner, who stands at the head of the local coroner service and statutory coroner area.

2. To work with the Senior Coroner and coroner team to provide a high quality coroner service in accordance with statutory provisions, case law and associated guidance issued by the Chief Coroner.
3. To support the Senior Coroner to work effectively with the local authority and police authority and to hold regular meetings with both and with local Registrars.
4. To conduct investigations into deaths when made aware that bodies of deceased persons lie within the coroner area and there is reason to suspect that:
  - The deceased died a violent or unnatural death;
  - The cause of death is unknown; or
  - The deceased died while in custody or otherwise in state detention.
5. To determine the identity of the deceased and how, when and where the deceased came by his or her death; decide if a post-mortem examination is necessary and give directions to a pathologist or other appropriately qualified expert medical practitioner; to establish the medical cause of death.
6. Where required, to hold an inquest, with or without a jury, in accordance with Section 7 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and as appropriate, to notify the relevant Registrar of Deaths of the findings and conclusion of the inquest, or the natural cause of death ascertained with or without a post-mortem examination or that the death reported does not require further inquiry or investigation.
7. To provide clear direction to staff on coroner investigations.
8. To be sensitive and, as far as possible, responsive to the needs and requirements of those who engage with the coroner service, including the bereaved, witnesses, medical personnel, police, the media and other stakeholders; and to manage their expectations.
9. To support the Senior Coroner, in liaison with other key stakeholders, to ensure that the coroner service has planned for and is prepared for any significant emergencies which may occur or affect the coroner area.
10. To comply with the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 for 24 hour availability. To take into account the religious and cultural requirements of faith communities.
11. In collaboration with the Senior Coroner, Judicial Conduct Investigations Office to be prepared to engage with the local community, for example giving talks and seeking feedback and views. To collaborate and engage with external agencies and stakeholders as required.
12. To work co-operatively with the local authority staff team and police employees to ensure a safe, harmonious and effective working environment.
13. To deal with claims for treasure in accordance with statutory regulations and guidance.
14. To make annual and other returns, as required, to the Chief Coroner or Lord Chancellor in connection with the investigations held and the deaths inquired into.

15. To keep an up-to-date working knowledge of coroner law, practice and guidance, and advise staff on developments as appropriate.
16. To undertake compulsory Judicial College and Chief Coroner training as appropriate.
17. To be committed to ensuring expenditure is reasonable and controlled, working closely with the Registration & Coroner's Service Manager [as applicable] to regularly monitor expenditure and report possible risk.

<b>ROLE REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
Must be a barrister or solicitor or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives and satisfy the judicial appointment eligibility condition on a 5 year basis and be under the age of 70.	<b>x</b>	
Thorough, up to date knowledge of legislation, case law and guidance relating to coroner's duties.	<b>x</b>	
Knowledge of structures and procedures of the police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths.	<b>x</b>	
Knowledge of the extent to which cultural and religious requirements can be met within the constraints of coroner law and practice.	<b>x</b>	
Knowledge of the organisational structures of local government including an understanding of the challenges facing local government, both at present and in the future.	<b>x</b>	
An ability to drive the service and be receptive to new ideas, reforms and diverse needs.	<b>x</b>	
Ability to work collaboratively with staff and their employers.	<b>x</b>	
IT literacy and excellent verbal and written communication skills and the ability to explain legal and medical terms to people from non-legal or non- medical backgrounds.	<b>x</b>	
Excellent analytical skills and a consistency of decision-making and administrative direction.	<b>x</b>	
Ability to work in sensitive situations with a wide range of stakeholders (e.g. bereaved relatives, police officers, medical personnel, mortuary staff, Registrars, witnesses and the	<b>x</b>	
Ability to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement.	<b>x</b>	
Full current driving licence (unless disability precludes this) and use of a vehicle for work purposes.		<b>x</b>

Previous experience as an area coroner or assistant coroner.		<b>x</b>
Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.	<b>x</b>	
Experience of holding inquests, including jury inquests.	<b>x</b>	

#### 4. SUMMARY OF TERMS & CONDITIONS OF THE AREA CORONER

The conditions of service applicable to the post are those set out in Schedule 3, Coroners and Justice Act 2009. The Area Coroner holds office on whatever terms are from time agreed by that coroner and the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The Area Coroner will not be an employee of the Council.

##### **Salary**

The annual salary for the post is £94,000 (pro rata for 3 days per week), together with the provision of an out of hours service ~~adjust accordingly if a part-time appointment~~.

##### **Pension Scheme**

You may join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) in accordance with any provisions relating to coroner appointments as applied to that scheme.

##### **Hours of work**

You will be required to work the hours necessary to meet the requirements of the post.

You will be expected, after discussion with the Senior Coroner, to be available out of hours, as agreed with the Senior Coroner.

You are normally expected to live within one hour's travelling distance of the office.

##### **Holiday entitlement**

You will be expected to take an annual leave entitlement of 30 days (to be pro rata for 3 day a week position).

##### **Payment of expenses**

Expenses will be paid in line with the Council's expenses policy.

##### **Indemnity**

The Council will indemnify you for costs or damages in relation to legal proceedings in accordance with Regulation 17 of The Coroners Allowances, Fees and Expenses Regulations 2013.

##### **Notice period**

You may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the relevant authority, however the resignation does not take effect unless and until it is accepted by the authority.

#### **Politically restricted post**

This post is politically restricted under the terms of Schedule 3, paragraph 4 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

#### **The Guide to Judicial Conduct**

You will comply with the standards as set out in the Guide to Judicial Conduct and other associated guidance.

### **5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS**

#### **Applications**

You are required to submit a CV and full supporting statement of up to two A4 pages. It is important that your supporting statement fully addresses the following criteria as well as the essential criteria in the job summary

1. Leadership and authority.
2. Efficient management and organisation.
3. Up to date knowledge of coroner law and guidance.
4. Coroner skills in the office and in court.
5. Integrity, sound judgment and decisiveness.
6. Collaborative working, with staff, relevant authority and police.
7. Communication skills.
8. Sensitivity to diversity and cultural requirements.

If you do not complete a full supporting statement, your application will be rejected. Please ensure you include your work, home and mobile contact numbers, home address and e-mail addresses where applicable. Please note that correspondence will be via e-mail unless otherwise stated. All correspondence and details provided will remain confidential.

#### **Employment references**

Please include the name, address and contact details for two references. Candidates should also state their relationship to the referee and at least one should be your current/most recent employer/head of chambers/relevant authority. References will be taken up for short-listed candidates.

#### **Evidence of qualifications**

Candidates will be required to bring evidence of their qualifications to the interview.

### **Employment checks**

The successful candidate will be required to undergo the Council's pre-appointment medical screening.

### **Disciplinary proceedings and criminal convictions check**

Due to the nature of the post, it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore any conviction, whether spent or unspent, must be declared. Applicants invited to interview will be required to complete a declaration form. The successful candidate will be required to undergo a DBS check

Applicants must specify in their application if they are subject of any disciplinary or complaint proceedings by any professional body to which they belong and clearly the outcome.

The candidate should declare any other matters which they believe should be brought to the attention of the Local Authority, particularly bearing in mind the basic set of guiding principles in the Guide to Judicial Conduct

### **Eligibility to work in the UK**

Candidates must be eligible to work in the UK. The successful candidate will be required to provide original evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK.

### **Interview**

You will be given a scenario setting out a problem drawn from a likely issue that will arise in post. You will be expected to present your approach to the problem.

### **Chief Coroner's role in the process**

The Chief Coroner or his nominee will be providing advice to the Council throughout the recruitment process, in particular so as to ensure that the process is fully transparent and fair. Although the Chief Coroner or his nominee may be at the interviews they are not a member of the panel and as such have no role in scoring candidates or voting for a candidate.

No appointment may be made unless the Chief Coroner and the Lord Chancellor consent to it.

Local authorities appoint coroners but do not employ them. Once appointed a Coroner becomes and remains an independent judicial officer holder.

## **6. RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE**

Closing date: 8 February 2019  
Candidates shortlisted: 1 March 2019  
Interview invitations will be sent out: w/c 4 March 2019  
Interview date: 22 March 2019

If you do not hear by 8 March 2019, please assume you have not been shortlisted.

The interview panel will be:

Mark Hynes (Director of Governance & Law)

Nadia Persaud (Senior Coroner)

Chief Coroner or nominee

We are aiming for the successful candidate to take up post on 29 April 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.