

# Candidate Information Pack

## **ASSISTANT CORONER**

West Yorkshire Western Coroner Area

Relevant Authority:

Bradford Metropolitan District Council

April 2019

# **ASSISTANT CORONER FOR WEST YORKSHIRE WESTERN CORONER AREA INFORMATION PACK**

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

## 1. ADVERT

### Assistant Coroner for West Yorkshire Western Coroner Area

#### Fee paid post, in the region of £400 per day (subject to review)

Bradford Council is seeking to appoint 3 Assistant Coroners to support HM Senior Coroner across the full range of coroner duties in order to deliver a high-quality coroner service to the people of West Yorkshire.

Bradford Council is looking for exceptional candidates. You will ideally have significant and recent experience of Coroner Law and procedures, prior experience as an Assistant Coroner is highly desirable. You will be required to demonstrate knowledge and experience of coronial law, knowledge of basic medicine, have proven skills in conducting investigations and understanding of court procedure, willing to read, prepare and hear the whole range of inquests from straightforward cases to those fully engaging with Article 2 both with and without a jury.

You will have a sound knowledge of all aspects of the English legal system with particular regard to Coronial Law and the laws of evidence, the administration of the legal system and Court procedures. Equally, you should have practical experience in the conduct of Court proceedings and will demonstrate the ability to handle highly sensitive or emotionally charged situations effectively. You must have the ability to readily explain legal and medical terms to non-specialists. You will also need to demonstrate the excellent communication and interpersonal skills necessary to deal with sensitive situations involving relatives, witnesses, the police and media.

You will work closely with the Senior Coroner to ensure value for money, performance and financial efficiencies.

The successful candidate will be required to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a coroner as defined in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and associated rules and regulations and as further described in various guidance issued by the Chief Coroner.

This is a fee paid position although it is likely to involve a regular commitment, which is to be agreed between you, the senior coroner and the local authority. You must have the flexibility to accommodate such sitting dates as the Area requires and be available for designated weekend cover and bank holidays, which on occasions may be set at short notice.

It is a Coroner's personal responsibility (and not that of his/her clerk/secretary) to ensure that they sit when possible. The Chief Coroner and the Lord Chancellor would expect an assistant coroner to offer a minimum of 15 sitting days each financial year. However, it is recognised that there is a variance of workload in each area.

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 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 and Lord Chancellor prior to their 70th birthday.

The Assistant Coroners will be based in the dedicated court and coroner's office in Bradford Office. Office opening hours are 08:00 to 16:00, but court may run to 16:30 and sometimes later.

The candidate pack is available here: [\[insert link\]](#)

If you wish to have an informal discussion or arrange a visit, please contact Marian Connell, Coroner's Service Manager, on 07971 133910

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their CV to:  
marian.connell@bradford.gov.uk**

**Closing date: Thursday 2 May 2019 17:00**

**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 West Yorkshire (Western) area covers the Metropolitan Districts of Bradford, Kirklees (Huddersfield & Dewsbury) and Calderdale, with a population of over 1,000,000.

The number of deaths registered annually averages 10400 with approximately 3400 cases referred to the Senior Coroner. Post mortem examinations are conducted at the Public Mortuary Bradford by Pathologists.

The coroner area contains sections of the M606 and M62 motorway as well as several major A-roads, main rail lines to/from London.

There are 5 acute hospitals, Bradford Royal Infirmary, Calderdale Royal Infirmary, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, Airedale General Hospital and Dewsbury District Hospital as well as several community hospitals

### **Office and court accommodation**

The service is located in dedicated accommodation, including offices and a court in Bradford. The coroner's court, which is next to the coroner's offices, is available Monday-Friday allowing inquests to be opened quickly with dates set for inquest hearings, usually within the required six months. Coroners Courts are also held in Huddersfield and Halifax.

### **Staff**

Coroner's officers are employed by the West Yorkshire Police Authority as well as a Coroner's Officer Manager. The Senior Coroner and Assistant Coroners are supported by a Coroner's Services Manager along with a team of Administrative support staff employed by Bradford Council.

### **Management**

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance and support staff are managed by the Coroner's Services Manager, who is employed by the Council in the Department of Corporate Resources.

The Coroner's Services 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 Coroners office receive a high-quality service.

### **Daily operations**

As these are fee paid positions the Assistant Coroner will work on days and times as agreed with the Senior Coroner.

You will be expected on occasion to be available out of hours on a rota basis.

The Administrative support staff are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays from 09:00 to 16:00.

### 3. JOB SUMMARY

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CORONER</b>
<b>Service Area</b>	<i>Corporate Resources</i>
<b>Contact point:</b>	<i>Marian Connell, Coroner's Services Manager</i>
<b>Location</b>	<i>Coroner's Office, The City Courts, Bradford BD1 1LA</i>

To deliver a high-quality coroner service to the people of West Yorkshire Western Division in accordance with statutory provisions, case law, best practice and associated guidance.

### JOB FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To support the Senior Coroner to provide a high-quality coroner service in accordance with statutory provisions, case law and associated guidance issued by the Chief Coroner.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. To provide clear direction to staff on coroner investigations.
6. 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.
7. To assist the Senior Coroner to ensure that the coroner service has planned for and is prepared for any significant emergencies which may occur or affect the coroner area.
8. To comply with the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 for 24 hour availability. To take into account the religious and cultural requirements of faith communities.
9. Where necessary to assist the Senior Coroner 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.
10. To work co-operatively with the local authority staff team and police employees [where applicable] to ensure a safe, harmonious and effective working environment.
11. To deal with claims for treasure when required in accordance with statutory regulations and guidance.
12. To keep an up-to-date working knowledge of coroner law, practice and guidance, and advise staff on developments appropriately.

13. To undertake compulsory Judicial College and Chief Coroner training as appropriate.

14. To be committed to ensuring expenditure is reasonable and controlled, working closely with the Senior Coroner and Coroner's Service Manager 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 coroners' 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 and the coroner service, 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 the relevant local authority.	<b>x</b>	
Excellent verbal and written communication 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 media).	<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>
Experience of legal work in the coroner jurisdiction (e.g. representing clients at inquest)	<b>x</b>	
Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.	<b>x</b>	

We are ideally looking for candidates with proven coronial experience.

If you have experience of being a coroner it is important that any coroner experience is provided in detail. The form should therefore require the applicant to state:

- (a) how many days worked as coroner since appointment;
- (b) the nature of the work;
- (c) the division of time between office and court;
- (d) the extent of experience in completing Forms 100A and 100B;
- (e) the number and type of inquests conducted;
- (f) the number of jury inquests;
- (g) the number of long inquests and their subject matter; and
- (h) the number of Article 2 inquests conducted.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF TERMS & CONDITIONS**

The conditions of service applicable to the post are those set out in Schedule 3, Coroners and Justice Act 2009. You hold office on whatever terms are from time agreed. You will not be an employee of the Local Authority.

##### **Salary**

The post is fee paid and the current fee is expected to be in the region of £400 (subject to review) per day.

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

As this is a fee paid position you will work on days and times as agreed with the Senior Coroner.

You may be asked to participate in an out of hour's service by way of a ROTA system, by agreement with the Senior Coroner.

##### **Holiday entitlement**

None (this is a fee paid appointment).

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

Expenses will be paid in line with the Council's expenses policy. Reasonable expenses for attendance at judicial training (including travel expenses, accommodation where necessary and a normal sitting fee payable for each day of training) will be paid by the Local Authority.

##### **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.

1. Efficient management and organisation.
2. Up to date knowledge of coroner law and guidance.
3. Coroner skills in the office and in court.
4. Integrity, sound judgment and decisiveness.
5. Collaborative working, with staff, relevant authority and police.
6. Communication skills.
7. 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 complaint or disciplinary 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 may be required to undertake a short presentation as part of the interview process.

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

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**

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their CV to:  
marian.connell@bradford.gov.uk**

**Closing date: Thursday 2 May 2019 17:00**

**Interview invitations will be sent out: week commencing 13 May 2019**

**Interview dates: Monday 20 & Wednesday 22 May 2019**

If you do not hear by Friday 17 May 2019, please assume you have not been shortlisted.

The interview panel will be:

Mr Martin Fleming, HM Senior Coroner  
Marian Connell, Coroner's Services Manager  
Sandra Williams, HR Business Partner

We are aiming for the successful candidate to take up post as soon as possible.