

Candidate Information Pack

ASSISTANT CORONER

North West Wales

Relevant Authority:

Gwynedd Council

April 2019

**ASSISTANT CORONER FOR NORTH WEST WALES
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 North West Wales

Fee paid post, in the region of £400 per day.

Gwynedd Council is seeking to appoint a new Assistant Coroner to support the Senior Coroner across the full range of coroner duties in order to deliver a high-quality coroner service to the people of Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey.

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 Coroner(s) will be based at Gwynedd Council Offices, Caernarfon. Office opening hours are 9a.m. to 5.00p.m.

We are looking for an exceptional candidate with excellent proven organisational, management and efficiency skills, as well as experience of managing and embracing change. You will work closely with the Senior Coroner to ensure value for money, performance and financial efficiencies.

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. You will need to be forward thinking, be passionate about providing a compassionate service to bereaved people and be able to work effectively with a range of partners.

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. (Minimum of 15 days p.a.)

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 \(s.23 and Schedule 3\)](#).

If you wish to have an informal discussion or arrange a visit, please contact Mr Dewi Pritchard Jones, Senior Coroner, on 0286 672804

Suitably qualified applicants are requested to complete an Application Form, together with a detailed personal statement, (no more than two A4 pages), evidencing as appropriate, the essential and desirable requirements for the post.

Please apply on-line via the website www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru or application forms and candidate packs are also available from Support Service, Gwynedd Council, Council Offices, Caernarfon, LL55 1SH

Tel: 01286 679076

E-Mail: swyddi@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Closing date: **30 April 2019**

Interview date: **w/c 13 May 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 North West Wales Coroner Area includes an area of 1,260 square miles with a current population of around 191,625. This covers the Local Authority Areas of Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey County Council, with Gwynedd Council being the Relevant Authority.

The number of deaths registered annually averages around 2,270 with approximately 1,000 cases referred to the senior coroner. Betsi Cadwaladr University health Board has one General Hospital within the Coroner Area – Ysbyty Gwynedd, Bangor. Post mortem examinations are conducted at Ysbyty Gwynedd by pathologists employed by the Senior Coroner. In 2017 116 inquests were opened (12%) and 370 post-mortem examinations (38%). The Senior Coroner is expected to aim to keep post-mortem levels to 40% of reported deaths or below. The average time from opening an Inquest to the hearing is currently around 25 weeks.

Office and court accommodation

The service is located within Gwynedd Council Offices, Caernarfon, which is Gwynedd Council's Main Office. Inquests are held at Council Chambers within the two Local Authority Areas which make up the Coroner Area.

Staff

Seven Coroner's Officers are employed by the North Wales Police, of which two are permanently allocated to North West Wales and they are located at Divisional Headquarters in St Asaph, The Senior Coroner is supported by a dedicated Coroner's Clerk, with further assistance provided when required by administrative staff employed by Gwynedd Council Legal Services.

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 as agreed with the Senior Coroner.

3. JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title	ASSISTANT CORONER
Service Area	Legal Services
Responsible to	Senior Coroner North West Wales
Grade	Fee paid (in the region of £400 per day)

JOB PURPOSE

To provide a high-quality coroner service to the people of Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory provisions, case law, best practice Chief Coroner's Guidance and Practice Directions as applicable at the relevant time.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Provide recordings of inquests to interested persons as required, or other relevant documents in accordance with statutory requirements.
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 (on a rota basis agreed with Senior Coroner). 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 as appropriate.
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 Business Support Manager to regularly monitor expenditure and report possible risk.

ROLE REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable
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.	x	
Thorough, up to date knowledge of legislation, case law and guidance relating to coroners' duties.	x	
Knowledge of structures and procedures of the police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths.	x	
An understanding of basic medical concepts	x	
Knowledge of the extent to which cultural and religious requirements can be met within the constraints of coroner law and practice.	x	
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.	x	
An ability to drive the service and be receptive to new ideas, reforms and diverse needs.	x	
Ability to work collaboratively with staff and the relevant local authority.	x	
Excellent verbal and written communication and the ability to explain legal and medical terms to people from non-legal or non-medical backgrounds.	x	
Excellent analytical skills and a consistency of decision-making and administrative direction.	x	
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).	x	

Ability to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement.	x	
Full current driving licence (unless disability precludes this) and use of a vehicle for work purposes.		x
Experience of legal work in the coroner jurisdiction either as a currently appointed Assistant Coroner, or by representing clients at inquest if not currently an Assistant Coroner		x
Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.	x	
A commitment to public service at the highest standard	x	
Fluent in the Welsh Language	x	
<p>Other Requirements</p> <p>As a fee paid Assistant Coroner your sitting pattern will be agreed with the Senior Coroner</p> <p>You will be expected on occasion to be available out of hours on a rota basis as agreed with Senior Coroner</p> <p>You will be expected to be available to attend the office to deputise for the Senior Coroner when necessary.</p>		

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. The Assistant Coroner holds office on whatever terms are from time agreed. You will not be an employee of the Local Authority.

Fees

The post is fee paid and the current fee is expected to be in the region of £400 per day. When the Senior Coroner is satisfied that you have completed the necessary induction, training and familiarisation, he will discuss and agree with you when you sit to hear cases. We cannot though guarantee you any work on a regular basis, however, a minimum of 15 days per year will apply. Preparation time must be agreed in advance with the Senior Coroner.

An on-call allowance will be built into the Assistant Coroner's remuneration arrangement in relation to the occasions when he/she would be responsible for providing the out of hours cover in the absence of the Senior Coroner

If you hold any other Assistant Coroner appointments outside the North West Wales area you must notify Gwynedd Council of all such appointments. Where you hold Assistant Coroner appointments outside the NWW area, Gwynedd Council will only meet the daily rate with regards to your attendance at mandatory training events on a pro rata basis according to the number of Assistant Coroner appointments you hold.

Other than the Judicial College mandatory training, you are expected to keep up to date with the relevant rules, regulations, best practice and Chief Coroner's Guidance relevant to your role as Assistant Coroner during your own time and at your own expense.

Hours of work

As this is a fee paid position you will work on days and times as agreed with the Senior Coroner. You will be required to participate in an out of hour's service on a rota basis, 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 and must be agreed in advance by the Senior Coroner. Reasonable expenses for attendance at judicial 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 an application form, together with a full supporting statement of up to two A4 pages. It is important that your supporting statement fully addresses the essential and desirable requirements for the post.

Candidates who currently work as assistant coroners should provide details of:

- (a) how many days worked as coroner;
- (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 long inquests and their subject matter; and

(g) the number of Article 2 inquests conducted

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.

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 state the salary or fee payable. Applicants will also be asked in interview to declare any 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:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/publications/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 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

Closing date: **30 April 2019**

Candidates shortlisted: **3 May 2019**

Interview invitations will be sent out: **w/c 6 May 2019**

Interview date: **w/c 13 May 2019**

If you do not hear by 10 May 2019, please assume you have not been shortlisted.
The interview panel will be:

Dewi Pritchard Jones, Senior Coroner
Iwan Evans , Head of Legal Services
Siôn Huws, Senior Solicitor (Corporate)

We are aiming for the successful candidate to take up post on 1 June 2019.