

# Candidate Information Pack

## **AREA CORONER**

### Manchester City Area

Relevant Authority:

Manchester City

Council

25 July 2019

## **Area Coroner for Manchester City Area**

### **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 – Manchester City Area Salary - £102,000**

Manchester City Council is seeking to appoint a full time Area Coroner to support the Senior Coroner and the existing Area Coroner who is working part time in providing a high quality coronial service to Manchester residents. 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 post will be based at The Coroner's Court, The Royal Exchange Building in Manchester City centre. The premises have only just been very recently opened and are modern state of the art facilities. Office opening hours are 08.30am-4.30pm. The salary includes statutory out of hours work as set out in the legislative provisions.

We are looking for an exceptional candidate with excellent proven organisational case management and efficiency skills, as well as experience of managing and embracing change. You will work closely with the local authority Head of Service and the Senior Coroner in addition to the existing Area 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, case management and conducting inquests. 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 candidates 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.

The successful candidates 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).

Applications by way of CV and supporting expression of interest (no more than 2 sides of A4) to [specialistrecruitment@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:specialistrecruitment@manchester.gov.uk) by midnight on 6 September 2019.

Interviews will be conducted on 3 October 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 Manchester City Coroners area includes 45 square miles and is the third most populous urban area in the UK with a population of approximately 530,000. It is located about 160 miles northwest of London and is bordered by mountain chains known as the Pennines that run from north to east. The area is recognised as a complex coronial area due to its diversity, deprivation and integration. The people of Manchester have recently demonstrated their strength and stood together to unite the community and drive forward acceptance and understanding. **In addition to any statutory requirement, Manchester City Registrars and Coroners service is cited and recognised as providing the gold standard for out of hours cover.**

The average number of deaths registered is 5,300 around 64% (3,300) of which are referred to the Senior Coroner. The public mortuary is provided under an SLA with the Manchester Foundation NHS Trust based at their Oxford Road Site, previously known as Manchester Royal Infirmary. The public mortuary recently underwent a full refurbishment and now has capacity to carry out standard and bariatric post-mortems. All paediatric post-mortems are undertaken at the Manchester Royal Children's Hospital and we have a dedicated team of three forensic pathologists based at Royal Oldham for Home Office post-mortems. The Senior Coroner is expected to aim to keep the number of post-mortem levels to 30% of reported deaths. In 2018 the service discharged 3,507, 1370 of which were subject of a coronial post mortem, a total of 651 inquests were heard, 288 of which had narrative conclusion.

Although we have a number of arterial routes through the city, we only have one small area of motorway, the M60 south of Whitefield. In recent years the NHS have relocated its centres of excellence to the city meaning our hospitals receive tertiary referrals from a wide geographical area. This includes The Christie for all oncology related conditions, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital for paediatric ICU, neurology, burns and metabolic disorders, and a major trauma air ambulance receiving centre at Wythenshawe Hospital. Wythenshawe also contains the north west's thoracic critical care unit, adult burns unit and central receiving hospital for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO). St Mary's Hospital remains the north west's obstetric lead with Manchester Royal Infirmary specialising in hepatic and renal disorders. In addition we cover Manchester Prison (Strangeways), Manchester International Airport, two large university campuses, Manchester Arena, the Etihad Stadium and Manchester Exhibition Centre.

The responsible authority is Manchester City Council who has recently secured the Coroners Service a spectacular purpose built office with three court rooms, multiple consultation rooms, family rooms and fully operational back office serviced by a 24.5 strong team. The senior coroner is supported by a full time area coroner and eight assistant coroners. The back office function consists of one service team manager (First Officer), three deputy managers, seven senior officers and seven coroner officers with a further administrative team of six and court clerks.

### Office and court accommodation

The service is located in dedicated accommodation, including offices and court in Royal Exchange Building, Cross Street, Manchester, M2 7EF. The coroner's court, which is next to the coroner's offices, is available Monday to Friday 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 38 weeks.

## **Staff**

24.5 coroner's officers are employed by Manchester City Council. In addition there is a coroner's office manager. The Senior Coroner, Area Coroner, coroner team and coroner's officers are supported by 7 Police Coroners Officers staff employed by Greater Manchester Police.

All staff are co-located with the Senior Coroner and Area Coroner.

## **Management**

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance and support staff are managed by the coroner service manager, who is employed by the Council, Kevin Harmon.

The coroner service manager works closely with the Senior Coroner 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 day Monday-Friday between 9am and 5pm at the office and court accommodation at the Royal Exchange Building. 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 the service demands.

The administrative support staff are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

## **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 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.

**Manchester City Council  
Role Profile**

**Area Coroner for Manchester (City) District  
City Solicitor's Division, Chief Executive's Department**

**Key Role Descriptors:**

The role holder will support the Senior Coroner to deliver a high quality coronial service within the Manchester (City) District.

The role holder will support the Senior Coroner on the strategic direction of the service and in line with the expectations set down by the Chief Coroner. Deputise for the Senior Coroner, as required, and covering the full range of duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, guidance issued by the Chief Coroner and locally agreed practice.

**Key Role Accountabilities:**

Support and work closely with the Senior Coroner to provide a high quality coroner service in accordance with the requirements of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and other statutory provisions and associated guidance issued by the Chief Coroner.

Be sensitive and responsive to the needs and requirements of those who engage with the coroner service, including the bereaved, witnesses, the media, police and other interested persons in the process.

Ensure that the service takes full account of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population within the Coroner's area and seeks to be responsive to the varying religious and cultural needs of their diverse communities.

Work co-operatively with the City Council at all times to deliver the highest possible quality of service and to ensure that, wherever possible, the diverse needs of the community are met. This will include the urgent release of bodies to meet the expectations of the diverse faiths as far as is compatible with the relevant law and liaison with other stakeholders.

Support the Senior Coroner to organise the delivery of the coronial service in an efficient and effective manner, having full regard to the statutory requirement of the coronial service along with the financial and budgetary constraints associated with public sector funding.

Make enquiries and if necessary investigate the circumstances of the deaths of all persons whose bodies are lying within the Coroner's area where he/she has reason to suspect that the death was violent or unnatural or took place in custody or other state detention, where the cause of death is unknown.

Decide whether a post mortem examination or other form of non-invasive examination is necessary and, if so, to give directions to a suitable practitioner.

Hold an inquest with or without a jury, where he/she is satisfied that one is required in accordance with Section 6 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

Notify, as appropriate, the relevant Registrar of Deaths of the findings of the inquiries, or, if no inquest is held, of the fact that the death reported does not need to be subject to an inquest.

Pay the relevant fees and allowances to witnesses and jurors, and to submit accounts to the

Senior Coroner.

Support the Senior Coroner to make annual statistical and other returns as required, to the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor in connection with the inquests held and deaths he/she has enquired. Notify the Chief Coroner of investigations which have not been concluded or discontinued within a year of the Senior Coroner being made aware of the death (s16 CJA). Support the Senior Coroner and in liaison with other key stakeholders, to ensure that the coronial service has planned for and is prepared for any significant emergencies which may occur or affect the coronial area and which are in excess of the day to day resource and capacity of the local service.

Deal with claims for treasure, in accordance with the statutory regulations.  
Undertake any relevant training and development as required and ensure the training and development of those under his/her supervision.

Support the Senior Coroner to manage the relationship between Local Authority Officers and Coroner's Officers located at the Coroner's Court to ensure a safe and harmonious working environment and promote the Council's values in the performance of all aspects of their role. Provide Local Authority Officers and Coroner's Officers with relevant and appropriate coronial advice and training as required.

**Where the roleholder is disabled every effort will be made to supply all necessary aids, adaptations or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the role. If, however, a certain task proves to be unachievable, job redesign will be given full consideration.**

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**Area Coroner**  
**Key Competencies and Technical Requirements**

**Key Competencies**

**Essential**

- Excellent analytical, decision making and administrative skills
- Ability to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement.
- Excellent interpersonal skills demonstrating the ability to deal with the bereaved and those under great stress with tact, diplomacy and compassion
- Speaks fluently and writes articulately, expresses information and key points of an argument clearly, undertakes public speaking with skill and confidence; projects authority and credibility
- Ability to distil complex medical, legal and other technical information into a format easily understood by all.
- Ability to work in and manage conflict/sensitive situations involving competing personal and organisational priorities, with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Ability to and experience of regularly reviewing and challenging processes to ensure standards are always maintained and systems remain efficient.
- Must be able to recognise discrimination in its many forms and willing to put the Council's Equality and Diversity Policies into practice.
- Demonstrates excellent judgement skills under competing priorities and pressure.

**Desirable**

- Effective budget and resource management within an organisation.
- Ability to assist the Senior Coroner in service strategy and steer the service through change and challenge to achieve positive outcomes.
- Ability to lead and inspire a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary team to deliver excellence.

**Technical requirements**

**Essential**

- Applicants must be a barrister, solicitor or fellow of CILEX and satisfy the judicial-appointment eligibility condition on a 5 year basis and be under the age of 70.
- Thorough, up-to-date knowledge of legislation relating to Coroner's duties, including particularly the law of evidence, the administration of the legal system and the procedures of courts.
- Knowledge of the extent to which cultural and religious requirements can be met within the constraints of Coronial law and practice.
- Either worked as a Senior Coroner, Area Coroner or Assistant Coroner in a busy coronial Area, or can demonstrate and evidence significant equivalent experience such as advocacy in multi-handed jury inquests involving human rights.
- Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.
- Experience of analysing complex situations resulting in clear decisions and positive outcomes.
- IT literacy, including experience of using Microsoft Office package and familiarity with email and internet systems.

- Prepared to undergo relevant pre-employment checks including enhanced DBS clearance.

### **Desirable**

- Knowledge of the structures and procedures of local authorities.
- Knowledge of structures and procedures of the Police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths.

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

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

## **4. 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 checks.

### **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.

Once appointed a Coroner becomes and remains an independent judicial officer holder.

## **5. RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE**

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their CV and expression of interest to: [specialistrecruitment@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:specialistrecruitment@manchester.gov.uk)**

**Closing date: midnight on Friday 6 September 2019**

**Interview invitations will be sent out: w/c 23 September 2019**

**Interview date: Thursday 3 October 2019 please allow the full day.**

If you do not hear by 27 September 2019, please assume you have not been shortlisted. The interview panel will be:

Fiona Ledden, City Solicitor  
Jacqui Dennis, Deputy City Solicitor  
Nigel Meadows, H.M Coroner, Manchester City Area  
Chief Coroner's Nominee:

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