

# Candidate Information Pack

## **ASSISTANT CORONERS**

Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire

Relevant Authorities:

Buckinghamshire Council; Oxfordshire County Council

March 2020

**ASSISTANT CORONER FOR OXFORDSHIRE  
INFORMATION PACK**

1. Advert	page 3
2. Coroner Service Information	page 4
3. Job Summary	page 6
4. Summary of Terms and Conditions	page 8
5. Recruitment and Selection Process	page 9
6. Recruitment Timetable	page 11

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

## 1. ADVERT

### **1 x Assistant Coroner for Buckinghamshire**

**Fee paid post, £391 per day (includes April 2020 JNC uplift)**

### **2 x Assistant Coroners for Oxfordshire**

**Fee paid post, £437 per day (includes April 2020 JNC uplift)**

**Successful candidates may be appointed to both authorities or individual authorities**

Buckinghamshire Council and Oxfordshire County Council are seeking to appoint new Assistant Coroners to support the Senior Coroners across the full range of coroner duties in order to deliver a high quality coroner service to the people of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

Both authorities are looking for exceptional candidates 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

In Buckinghamshire, the Assistant Coroner will be based in the dedicated court and Coroner's Office in Beaconsfield where it is co-located with the Registration Service. Office opening hours are 8am-4pm.

In Oxfordshire, the Assistant Coroners will be based in the dedicated court and Coroner's Office in Oxford where it is co-located with the Registration Service. Office opening hours are 8am-4pm.

The candidate packs are available here, you can apply to either authority and will be considered for all roles unless specified in the application:

Buckinghamshire: <https://jobs.buckscc.gov.uk/job-search/details/100000170999/>

Oxfordshire:

<https://career5.successfactors.eu/sfcareer/jobreqcareerpvt?jobId=29410&company=hamp>

[shirecP&username=&st=10C89D95D576EA219539476DCE656233D2F1196D](#)

If you wish to have an informal discussion or arrange a visit, please contact:

Buckinghamshire: Wendy Morgan-Brown on 01296 383521. If you wish to have a discussion with the Senior Coroner or arrange a visit please email: [coroners@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:coroners@buckscc.gov.uk)

Oxfordshire: For all enquiries please contact Ruth Rees on 01865 815022.

**Closing date: Monday, 6 April 2020**

**Interview date: Monday, 18 May 2020**

## **Notification**

The vacancies for these posts have been notified to the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor (as required by statute).

## **2. CORONER SERVICE INFORMATION**

### **Area information – Buckinghamshire**

The Buckinghamshire coroner area includes an area of 724 square miles with a current population of around 540,000. The County is expecting a 13% growth in population by 2026. Bordering counties are: Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Milton Keynes, Hertfordshire, and Northamptonshire.

The number of deaths registered annually averages 3,500 with approximately 1,230 cases (34%) referred to the Senior Coroner. Post mortem examinations are conducted at Buckinghamshire Hospital Trust by hospital pathologists. In 2019, 240 inquests were held (19%) and 538 post-mortem examinations (44%).

The coroner area contains sections of the M40 and M25 motorways as well as several major A-roads, main rail lines to/from London and underground lines. There is an adult male prison and a youth offenders prison; there is also a mental health detention centre.

There are two acute hospitals – Stoke Mandeville and Wycombe General, well as several community hospitals (both NHS and private).

There is a Medical Examiner Service delivered in partnership with the Trust which has been operational for around three years.

### **Office and court accommodation**

The Service is located in dedicated accommodation, including offices and court in Beaconsfield (Old Town). The Service is co-located with the Registration Service. The Coroner's court, which is next to the Coroner's offices, is available Monday-Thursday 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 23 weeks.

### **Staff**

There is a Senior Coroner's Officer, three Coroner's Officers and an Assistant Coroner's Officer, all of whom are employed by Buckinghamshire Council. The Senior Coroner and the Assistant Coroners are supported these staff.

All staff are co-located with the Senior Coroner.

### **Management**

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance and HR are managed by the Head of Registration,

Coroners and Trading Standards, who is employed by the Council in the Housing & Regulatory service area.

The Head of Service works closely with the Senior Coroner on the delivery of the Service to ensure those affected by the work of the Coroner's 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 Assistant Coroner's Officer is responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays from 8am to 4pm.

### **Area information - Oxfordshire**

The Oxfordshire coroner area includes an area of 1,006 square miles with a current population of around 687,500. The County is expecting a 11% growth in population by 2026. Bordering counties are: Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.

The number of deaths registered annually averages 5,500 with approximately 2,265 cases (41%) referred to the Senior Coroner. Post mortem examinations are conducted at Oxford University Hospital Trust by hospital pathologists. In 2019, 297 inquests were held (15%) and 663 post-mortem examinations (33%). In addition, 2 Treasure finds were reported, and 18 inquests held.

The Coroner area contains sections of the M40 motorway, several major A-roads and a number of mainline rail links. The River Thames and Oxford Canal are the main waterways. Oxford Airport is located at Kidlington.

There are 2 prisons – an adult male prison and a young offender's prison. There is also 1 immigration detention centre and 2 mental health hospitals.

There are 3 acute hospitals - The John Radcliffe Hospital, The Horton Hospital and The Churchill Hospital as well as several community hospitals.

RAF Brize Norton is the main repatriation centre for Military Service Personnel deaths. Multiple fatalities or single fatalities where the body is laid to rest in Oxfordshire, are dealt with in Oxfordshire.

There is currently no Medical Examiner Service. The Medical Examiner Service is to be implemented by April 2020 and delivered by Oxford University Hospital Foundation Trust.

### **Office and court accommodation**

The Service is located in dedicated accommodation, including offices and court in Oxford. The Service is co-located with the Registration Service. The Coroner's court, which is close proximity to the Coroner's office, is available Monday-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 23 weeks.

### **Staff**

The Senior Coroner and Assistant Coroners' are supported by a Coroner's Service Manager, 5 Coroner's Officers, 1 Court Officer and 2 administrative staff employed by Oxfordshire County Council. All staff are co-located with the Senior Coroner.

## Management

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance and HR are managed by the Coroner's Service Manager, who is employed by the Council in the Cultural Services area.

The Coroner's Service Manager works closely with the Senior Coroner on the delivery of the Service to ensure those affected by the work of the Coroner's 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.

## 3. JOB SUMMARY

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CORONER</b>
<b>Service Area</b>	<i>Housing &amp; Regulatory</i>
<b>Contact point:</b>	<i>Head of Registration, Coroners and Trading Standards</i>
<b>Location</b>	<i>Coroner Service, 29 Windsor End, Beaconsfield HP9 2JJ</i>

<b>Post Title</b>	<b>ASSISTANT CORONER</b>
<b>Service Area</b>	<i>Cultural Services</i>
<b>Contact point:</b>	<i>Coroner's Service Manager</i>
<b>Location</b>	<i>Coroner's Service, Oxford Register Office, 1 Tidmarsh Lane, Oxford, OX1 1NS</i>

To deliver a high-quality coroner service to the people of Oxfordshire 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 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 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 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>	
<p><b>Requirements for applicants who may have coroner experience</b></p> <p><b>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:</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> <b>(a) how many days worked as Coroner since appointment;</b>  <b>(b) the nature of the work;</b>  <b>(c) the division of time between office and court;</b>  <b>(d) the extent of experience in completing Forms 100A and 100B;</b>  <b>(e) the number and type of inquests conducted;</b>  <b>(f) the number of long inquests and their subject matter; and</b>  <b>(g) the number of Article 2 inquests conducted.</b> </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. 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 £391 (Bucks) and £427 (Oxon) 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 (or by the Coroner's Service Manager on his behalf).

You will be asked to participate in an out of hour's service, 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 training day 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 submit their CV as follows, CVs not submitted here will not be accepted. Application can be submitted to either authority and will be considered for all roles unless specified in the application.**

**Buckinghamshire:** <https://jobs.buckscc.gov.uk/job-search/details/100000170999/>

**Oxfordshire:**

<https://career5.successfactors.eu/sfcareer/jobreqcareerpvt?jobId=29410&company=hampshirecP&username=&st=10C89D95D576EA219539476DCE656233D2F1196D>

**Closing date: Monday, 6 April 2020**

**Interview invitations will be sent out: w/c 27 April 2020**

**Interview date: Monday, 18 May 2020 at Beaconsfield Coroner's Service**

If you do not hear by Friday, 24 April please assume you have not been shortlisted.

The interview panel will be:

Bucks: Crispin Butler, Senior Coroner  
Wendy Morgan-Brown, Head of Registration, Coroners & Trading Standards

Oxon: Darren Slater, Senior Coroner  
Ruth Rees, Coroner Service Manager

We are aiming for the successful candidate to take up post during July 2020.