

JOB SUMMARY

The Role of the coroner:

- Coroners are independent judicial office holders. When made aware that a body or bodies of deceased persons lie within the coroner area, the coroner is responsible for conducting investigations and holding inquests when required (with or without a jury) into deaths to determine **who** the deceased was, **when** and **where** the deceased came by his or her death and **how** that death occurred. A referral is made to the coroner when there is reason to suspect that:
 - i. The deceased died a violent or unnatural death;
 - ii. The cause of death is unknown; or
 - iii. The deceased died while in custody or otherwise in state detention.
- Conducting investigations of this kind will include where appropriate directing pathologists and others to determine these answers. Coroners also have a duty to produce Prevention of Future Death reports should an investigation give rise to concerns about future deaths occurring from the circumstances that caused the death. Coroners also deal with claims for treasure when required in accordance with statutory regulations and guidance.

The overview of the role of an assistant coroner:

- To support the Senior Coroner and Area Coroner in providing a high quality coroner service that puts the bereaved at the heart of the process. This includes preparing for any significant emergencies which may occur and to be available to assist with 24 hour availability on a rota basis.

Assistant coroner - The Role Responsibilities and Assessment criteria

Assimilating and clarifying information

As an assistant coroner you will be expected to be able to quickly assimilate information to identify essential issues, seeking clarification where necessary so a clear understanding of this information is gained. This will include possessing the ability to explain legal and medical terms to people from non-legal or non-medical backgrounds.

Assessment criteria:

1. **Excellent analytical skills and a consistency of decision-making and administrative direction.**
2. **Experience of legal work in the coroner jurisdiction (e.g. representing clients at inquest).**
3. **The ability to explain complex terms to those from non-legal or non-medical backgrounds.**
4. **Experience of running inquests since the introduction of The Coroner and Justice Act 2009.**

Previous Coroner Experience:

If you have worked or currently work as a coroner it is important that you detail your coroner experience. Please can you confirm in your application the following:

- (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 Jury inquests conducted.
- (h) experience of digital case management system.

Managing work effectively

A large amount of coronial work takes place outside of the court setting and therefore assistant coroners are expected to work effectively both in the office and whilst conducting court hearings. They are required to run hearings efficiently to facilitate a fair conclusion, minimise delays and effectively deal with case management. Assistant coroners must respond calmly and flexibly to changing circumstances and prioritise work effectively to make the most of available resources whilst taking in to account any budgetary considerations as appropriate. Assistant coroners are committed to ensuring that any expenditure is reasonable and controlled and works to monitor this regularly with the senior coroner.

Assessment criteria:

- 5. An ability to prioritise work effectively to minimise delays.**
- 6. Able to work at speed and under pressure.**
- 7. Demonstrates resilience responding calmly and flexibly to changing circumstances.**
- 8. Resident within one hour commuting distance of the Flax Bourton courts.**

Working with others

An ability to work constructively with others whilst demonstrating an awareness of diversity and showing empathy and sensitivity in building relationships is required in this post. Assistant coroners must work constructively with members of the coronial team and interact well with bereaved families and external stakeholders (e.g. relatives, police officers, medical personnel, mortuary staff, Registrars, witnesses and the media). Where necessary they assist the senior coroner to engage with the local community, for example giving talks and seeking feedback and views.

Assessment criteria:

- 9. Must have knowledge of the extent to which cultural and religious requirements can be met within the constraints of coroner law and practice.**
- 10. An ability to drive the service and be receptive to new ideas, reforms and diverse needs.**
- 11. Treats people with respect, sensitivity and in a fair manner without discrimination; ensuring the requirements of those with differing needs are properly met.**

Communicating effectively

Assistant coroners must be excellent communicators. They must be sensitive and, as far as possible, responsive to the needs and requirements of those who engage with the coroner service and also possess the awareness to manage their expectations of the process. Assistant coroners must be IT literate and provide clear directions to staff on coroner investigations whilst creating a safe, harmonious and effective working environment through co-operative working.

Assessment Criteria:

- 12. Excellent verbal and written communication skills.**
- 13. Establishes authority and inspires respect and confidence.**
- 14. Remains calm and authoritative even when challenged.**

Exercising judgement

Assistant coroners must demonstrate integrity and apply independence of mind to make incisive, fair and legally sound decisions.

Assessment criteria:

- 15. Able to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement.**
- 16. Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.**
- 17. Reaches clear, reasoned decisions objectively, based on relevant law and findings of fact.**

Possessing and Building Knowledge

It is the responsibility of the assistant coroner to keep an up to date working knowledge of coroner law, practice and guidance. Coroners must also undertake compulsory Judicial College and Chief Coroner training as appropriate. Assistant coroners should take part in any local training as appropriate. Assistant coroners are expected to take part in the on-going yearly assistant coroner appraisal scheme to build upon their knowledge and skills.

Assessment criteria:

- 18. All applicants must be a barrister or solicitor or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives and satisfy the judicial-appointment eligibility condition which includes a requirement for the candidate to hold a relevant qualification, to have also gained experience in the law for a total period of at least 5 years *whilst holding that qualification* and be under the age of 70: paragraph 3 of Schedule 3.**
- 19. Thorough, up to date knowledge of legislation, case law and guidance relating to coroner's duties.**
- 20. Knowledge of structures and procedures of the police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths.**
- 21. Knowledge of the organisational structures of local government including an understanding of the challenges facing local government, both at present and in the future.**

Desirable criteria:

22. Full current driving licence (unless disability precludes this) and use of a vehicle for work purposes.