



## Candidate Information Pack

### **AREA CORONER**

Manchester West

Relevant Authority:

Bolton Council



November 2021

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

## 1. ADVERT

# Area Coroner for Manchester West

Salary £105,601 pa including statutory out of hours payment

Closing date: 5pm Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022

### **About the post:**

Bolton Council the relevant Local authority for the Manchester West Coroner Area, is seeking to appoint a second Area Coroner to provide a statutory coroner service for the area of Manchester West, which includes the local council boroughs of Bolton, Salford, Wigan and Leigh. The service is funded by Bolton, Salford, Wigan and Leigh councils with Bolton Council as the lead authority.

The second Area Coroner will work closely with the existing Area Coroner and Senior Coroner to provide judicial leadership to the coroner team as well as conducting their own coroner investigations and inquests.

The Area Coroner is the nominated deputy for the Senior Coroner when the Senior Coroner is absent. The Area Coroner will be expected to be available out of hours on a rota-based system.

The Coroners are supported by Coroner's Officers who are employed by Bolton Council and Police Coroner's Officers who are employed by Greater Manchester Police and are co-located in the coroner's office.

Manchester West is an area of high complexity, including a number of hospital trusts, HM prisons, mental health institutions and private care homes. It is a very busy and challenging area. In 2020 there were 3434 deaths reported and we expect to have undertaken between 600 – 700 inquests by the end of 2021.

Bolton Council is looking for an exceptional candidate with excellent proven, organisational, management and efficiency skills, as well as experience of exercising sound judgement and communicating effectively. In this role, you will work closely with the Senior Coroner and local authority manager to ensure value for money, performance, and financial efficiencies. Collaborative working with the senior coroner, local authority, the police, and other stakeholders is essential.

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.

It is desirable that the successful candidate has proven experience of running or sharing running a coroner's jurisdiction including carrying out investigations, case management, and conducting inquests.

### **Who can apply:**

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 which means they will have five years of experience *whilst* holding that qualification. They will be under the age of 70, have experience of working as an assistant coroner or area coroner and be subject to the appointment and eligibility conditions within the [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(s.23 and Schedule 3\)](#).

## **Statutory Terms of the Appointment:**

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 Area Coroner will be based in the dedicated court and coroner's office in Paderborn House, Howell Croft North, Bolton BL1 1QY. Office opening hours are 8.30am - 4.00pm.

## **How to apply:**

Suitably qualified applicants are requested to apply through [www.greater.jobs](http://www.greater.jobs) which will require completion of a short application form and an upload of their CV, with a supporting statement addressing all 23 points of the personnel specification in full.

Direct link to information and application form - <https://greater.jobs/search-and-apply/job-details/BN-54713%20CE21-363/>

If you wish to have an informal discussion or arrange a visit, please contact Gary Broome, First Officer on 01204 338794.

Closing date: 5pm Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022

Interview & Assessment dates:

Stage 1 Assessments: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Castle Hill Centre, Castleton St, Bolton BL2 2JW

Stage 2 Appointment Interviews: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
(only successful candidates from day 1 will proceed to day 2) Bolton Town Hall, Bolton BL1 1RU

**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 West Coroner Area includes an area of 152 square miles with a current population of 843,00. Bordering coronial areas include Manchester South, Manchester North, Manchester Central, Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen and Sefton, Knowsley and St. Helens.

Manchester West has an average annual PM rate of 44% of reported deaths. These include invasive histopathological post-mortems from three mortuaries located at Royal Albert & Edward Infirmary, Wigan, Royal Bolton Hospital, Salford Royal Hospital. Forensic Home Office approved post-mortems are provided at Royal Oldham Hospital with additional specialist reports (neuropathological, paediatric, and non-invasive scanning).

HMSC is working on initiatives to seek to reduce the level of invasive post-mortems in line with suggested targets suggested by the Chief Coroner.

There are 2 HM Prisons within Manchester West area, namely HMP Forest Bank, one of largest prisons in the country with circa 1500 inmates and HMP Hindley, one of very few prisons in the country privately run requiring additional scrutiny of deaths. HMP Prison Hindley has two components: HMP Hindley and HMYOI Hindley with a total population of 700.

The area has a large number of complex investigations.

There are also more hospital trusts per coronial area than average, from the total numbers in UK, plus many areas of specialism in the following Trusts:

- Salford NHS Trust
- Bolton NHS Trust
- Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust
- Private Hospitals

In addition, there are 2 (of 54 in the UK) large Mental Health Trusts, namely Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust and North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

### **Daily Operations and accommodation**

The service is located within dedicated accommodation, including offices and courts in Paderborn House, Howell Croft North, Bolton BL1 1QY. 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. The average time from opening to hearing is currently 25 weeks.

12 Coroner's Officers (3 temporary subject to review) are currently employed by Bolton Council. In addition, there is a Coroner's First and Second Officer who manage the office. The Senior Coroner and Coroner's Officers are supported by administrative staff employed by Bolton Council. All staff are co-located with the Senior Coroner.

### **Management**

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance, and support staff are managed by the First Officer, who is employed by the Council within the Chief Executive's Directorate.

The First Officer 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 Senior Coroner receive a high-quality service.

### **Daily Operations**

The Area Coroner will work a minimum 8 hours each day Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm at the office and court accommodation at Paderborn House. However, the Area Coroner is expected to be available at all times. 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 also be available outside the above hours to deal with statutory duties, emergencies, and other urgent requests. The Area Coroner must also be prepared to deal with a mass fatality disaster.

The administrative support staff are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays from 8.30am – 4.00pm.

### **The Coroner Team**

The Senior Coroner is the head of the local coroner service and leads the team of coroners. This team includes a full-time salaried Area Coroner and 8 fee paid Assistant Coroners. Deputy cover is provided by the Area Coroner or a nominated Assistant Coroner when the Senior Coroner and

Area Coroner are unavailable due to leave, sickness, training etc and as additional support (by agreement with the local authority) in office and case work.

### 3. JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Post Title</b>	AREA CORONER MANCHESTER WEST
<b>Service Area</b>	Coroners Service, Chief Executive's Department
<b>Contact point:</b>	Borough Solicitor
<b>Location</b>	Coroners Service, Paderborn House, Howell Croft North, Bolton BL1 QY.

#### **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 Area Coroner:**

- The Area Coroner supports the Senior Coroner in providing a high-quality coroner service that puts the bereaved at the heart of the process. The Area Coroner deputises for the senior coroner when the senior coroner is absent and works with the senior coroner to ensure that the day to day running of the jurisdiction takes place to the highest standard. This includes preparing for any significant emergencies which may occur and [where appropriate] to be available to assist with 24-hour availability on a rota basis as well as holding regular team meetings and liaising with stakeholders. The Area Coroner will assist the Senior Coroner in submitting annual returns to the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor as and when required.

## **PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION**

### **Area Coroner Role Responsibilities and Assessment criteria**

<b>Post Title</b>	AREA CORONER
<b>Service Area</b>	Coroners Service, Chief Executive's Department
<b>Contact point:</b>	Borough Solicitor
<b>Location</b>	Coroners Service, Paderborn House, Howell Croft North, Bolton BL1 QY.

### **Assimilating and clarifying information**

As an Area 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.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>1. Excellent analytical skills and a consistency of decision-making and administrative direction.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>2. Experience of legal work in the coroner jurisdiction (e.g., representing clients at inquest).</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>3. The ability to explain complex terms to those from non-legal or non-medical backgrounds.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>

### **Managing work effectively**

A large amount of coronial work takes place outside of the court setting and therefore Area Coroners are expected to work effectively both in the office and whilst conducting court hearings. They will also assist the Senior Coroner in the management of work across the team as a whole. When sitting Area Coroners are required to run hearings efficiently to facilitate a fair conclusion, minimise delays and effectively deal with case management. Area 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. Area Coroners are committed to ensuring that any expenditure is reasonable and controlled and works to monitor this regularly with the senior coroner.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>4. An ability to prioritise work effectively to minimise delays.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>5. Able to work at speed and under pressure.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application</b>
<b>6. Demonstrates resilience responding calmly and flexibly to changing circumstances.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>7. Is able to assist in managing and leading a team effectively</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>

### **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. Area Coroners must be able to constructively assist the Senior Coroner in leading 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.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>8. Must have knowledge of the extent to which cultural and religious requirements can be met within the constraints of coroner law and practice.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>9. An ability to drive the service and be receptive to new ideas, reforms, and diverse needs.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>10. Treats people with respect, sensitivity and in a fair manner without discrimination; ensuring the requirements of those with differing needs are properly met.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>

### **Communicating effectively**

Area Coroners must be excellent communicators and have the ability to express themselves clearly and authoritatively when required. 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 coroner process. Area Coroners must be IT literate and able to provide clear directions to staff on coroner investigations whilst creating a safe, harmonious, and effective working environment through co-operative working including supporting the senior coroner with holding team meetings.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>11. Excellent verbal and written communication skills.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>12. Establishes authority and inspires respect and confidence.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>13. Remains calm and authoritative even when challenged.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>

### **Exercising judgement**

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

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>14. Able to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>15. Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>16. Reaches clear, reasoned decisions objectively, based on relevant law and findings of fact.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>

### **Possessing and Building Knowledge**

It is the responsibility of the area coroner to keep an up-to-date working knowledge of coroner law, practice, and guidance. Coroners must undertake compulsory Judicial College and Chief Coroner training as appropriate. Area Coroners are expected to take part in local training as and when required.

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>17. 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 <i>whilst holding that qualification</i> and be under the age of 70: paragraph 3 of Schedule 3.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application</b>
<b>18. Thorough, up to date knowledge of legislation, case law and guidance relating to coroner's duties</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>19. Knowledge of structures and procedures of the police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>20. Knowledge of the organisational structures of local government including an understanding of the challenges facing local government, both at present and in the future.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>21. Experience of holding inquests, including jury inquests.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>22. Previous experience as an area or assistant coroner confirming the following –</b>  <b>(a) how many days worked as coroner.</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 &amp;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 Jury inquests conducted.</b> <b>(h) experience of digital case management systems.</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Application &amp; Assessment</b>

**Desirable criteria:**

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Method</b>
<b>23. Full current driving licence (unless disability precludes this) and use of a vehicle for work purposes.</b>		<b>x</b>	<b>Application</b>

#### **4. SUMMARY OF TERMS & CONDITIONS OF THE AREA CORONER**

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

##### **Salary**

The annual salary for the post is £105,601 for a basic 40 hour a week together with the provision of an out of hours service. The salary provision includes any statutory out of hours work in line with the Coroners JNC Circular 66.

##### **Pension Scheme**

An Area Coroner may join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in accordance with any provisions relating to coroner appointments as applied to that scheme.

##### **Travelling Distance to Work**

The Area Coroner is normally expected to live within one hour travelling distance of the office and to work on a daily basis during the week in the office provided.

##### **Holiday entitlement**

The Area Coroner will be expected to take an annual leave entitlement of 30 days (excluding bank holidays and public holidays).

##### **Sick Pay**

The Area coroner is entitled to full sick pay (subject to medical evidence) and the local authority will provide assistant cover during the period of sickness to meet the needs of the Area.

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

Expenses will be paid in line with the Council's expenses policy.

##### **Indemnity**

The Council will indemnify the Area Coroner 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**

The Area Coroner 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**

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

## 5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

### Applications

To apply for this position, you are required to complete a short application form, submit your CV and a full supporting statement through the greater.jobs website. It is important that your supporting statement fully addresses the assessment criteria detailed in **bold** points 1-23 in the Personnel Specification above – **please note there are 23 points to fully address** under the following headings.

1. **Assimilating and clarifying information**
2. **Managing work efficiently**
3. **Working with others**
4. **Communicating effectively**
5. **Exercising judgement**
6. **Possessing and Building Knowledge**

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.

### 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.

### 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. All applicants will be required to complete a declaration form when they attend for interview.

The successful candidate will be required to undergo a DBS check.

Applicants **must** specify in their application if they are the subject of any complaint or disciplinary proceedings by any professional body to which they belong (including personal conduct referred to the Judicial Conduct Investigations Office), and clearly state the salary or fee payable. Applicants will also be asked in interview to declare anything about themselves including in their past that might be an embarrassment to the Local Authority, the Chief Coroner or the Lord Chancellor 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/>

## **Interview**

Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an assessment centre and interview as part of the process. The assessment process will include a psychometric WAVE assessment, written assessment, and technical Interview. Successful applicants from day one will progress to stage two of the assessment process which will include a presentation and an appointment panel interview.

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

The Chief Coroner or his nominee will be providing advice to the Council throughout the recruitment process, 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.

## **6. RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE**

Suitably qualified applicants are requested to apply through [www.greater.jobs](http://www.greater.jobs) which will require completion of a short application form and an upload of their CV, with a supporting statement addressing all 23 points of the personnel specification in full.

Closing date: 5pm Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022.

Interview invitations will be sent out: w/c 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022

WAVE assessments sent out: w/c 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Interview & assessment dates:

Stage 1 Assessments: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
Castle Hill Centre, Castleton St, Bolton BL2 2JW

Stage 2 Appointment Interviews: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
(only successful candidates from day 1 will proceed to day 2) Bolton Town Hall, Bolton BL1 1RU

If you do not hear by Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022, please assume you have not been shortlisted.

### **The interview panel will be:**

Tim Brennand, Senior Coroner Manchester West  
Helen Gorman, Borough Solicitor  
Salford City Council Representative

Observing: Zafar Siddique, HM Senior Coroner for Black Country (Chief Coroner's nominee)  
Neeta Graham, HR Operations Manager

We are aiming for the successful candidate to take up post April 2022 onwards