



**Cumberland  
Council**

Candidate Information Pack

# **ASSISTANT CORONER**

CUMBRIA AREA

*'Relevant Authority'* for the Cumbria Coroners area:

**Cumberland Council**

**February 2026**

# CONTENTS

## ASSISTANT CORONER FOR CUMBRIA INFORMATION PACK

1. Advert	Page 3
2. Coroner Service Information	Page 5
3. Job Summary	Page 7
4. Summary of Terms and Conditions	Page 10
5. Recruitment and Selection Process	Page 11
6. Recruitment Timetable	Page 12

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

## 1. ADVERT

# Assistant Coroner for Cumbria (2 posts)

**Salary: Fee based position, £533 per day (pay award pending)**

**Closing date: Midnight - Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Interview date: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

Cumberland Council is seeking to appoint two (2) additional Assistant Coroners for the Cumbria coroner's area, to support the Senior and Area Coroners across the full range of coroner duties, and to help ensure the delivery of high-quality coronial service to the people of Cumbria.

### **About the post:**

Cumberland Council is looking for exceptional candidates, with excellent proven organisational, management and efficiency skills, as well as experience of exercising sound judgement and communicating effectively. You will work closely with the Senior Coroner and Area Coroner to ensure the running of an efficient coroner service that puts the bereaved at the heart of its service.

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 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.

These are fee paid positions, although they are likely to require a regular commitment, which is to be agreed between the Assistant Coroner, HM Senior Coroner and the local authority.

Assistant Coroners are required to work a minimum of 20 days a year, with a mix of court sitting days and office / case progression days. You will be required on occasion to be available to assist on any out of hours rota system to meet statutory requirements.

You will also be required to attend the Coroner Continuation training, arranged through the Judicial college.

Key is that you demonstrate an ongoing commitment to supporting the work of the service in Cumbria and HM Senior Coroner.

### **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 5 years of experience *whilst* holding that qualification.

They will be under the age of 75 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 75 years (compulsory retirement age) unless they choose to resign or are removed by the Lord Chief Justice or Lord Chancellor prior to their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**How to apply:**

If you have any specific questions regarding the post, or the area, or would like an informal discussion, please contact Ms Kirsty Gomersal (HM Senior Coroner, Cumbria) via [hmcoroner@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:hmcoroner@cumbria.gov.uk)

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their CV and their application / supporting documents, and a covering letter, to:**

- Chris Fleming: [Christopher.Fleming@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Christopher.Fleming@cumbria.gov.uk)

**Important information**

Key to note is that ***all*** successful candidates, if not already an Assistant Coroner, will be required to attend the ***mandatory*** Assistant Coroner Induction training course, to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2026, and a follow up course in June 2027 (dates to be confirmed).

Failure to attend would preclude a candidate from being appointed.

**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**

#### **Cumbria**

Cumbria is an attractive area in terms of its striking scenery, boasting stunning natural beauty, with everything from the quiet sandy beaches of the west coast to the mountains with tranquil valleys, rivers and lakes, and with a variety of small towns and villages full of character. In the majestic Wasdale Valley is Scafell Pike, the highest mountain in England, and Wastwater, the deepest lake in England. The county is also known for its good quality of life and affordability.

#### **Area information**

The Cumbria Coroner area includes an area of 2,614 square miles with a population of approx. 500,000.

The area's borders are coterminous with those of Cumbria Constabulary, and of Cumberland Council and Westmorland & Furness Council.

Bordering counties to the east are Northumbria, Durham and North Yorkshire, and to the south Lancashire. The county also borders with Scotland to the North.

The area is predominantly rural with the Lake District National Park within it and large transient population due to tourism and visitors who come to enjoy the mountains, lakes and wide array of outdoor activities. The area has a large coastal border, and the area also contains sections of the M6 motorway as well as several major A-roads, and the main rail line between Scotland and London.

There are pockets of large industry within the county, such as Sellafield Nuclear Facility & BAE Systems Manufacturing Plant. There is also the Port of Workington.

The area has one prison within its boundaries (HMP Haverigg) which houses adult male category C and D prisoners. There are also three secure mental health detention facilities.

There are four main hospitals in the main population centres. These are: Cumberland Infirmary (Carlisle), West Cumberland Hospital (Whitehaven), Furness General Hospital (Barrow –in-Furness) and Westmorland General Hospital (Kendal), plus several community / cottage hospitals and hospices throughout the county.

The average number of deaths registered annually is approx. 6,200, and of those 1,577 were referred to the HM Coroner in 2025. Post-mortem examinations are conducted at two Hospital Trusts by hospital pathologists (at both Carlisle and Lancaster mortuaries).

In 2025 there were 385 inquests held.

There were 711 post-mortem examinations (incl. 136 by CT / non-invasive, plus 28 Home Office / forensic). Specialist post-mortems (such as paediatric) take place out of county.

The service is currently looking at the gradual transition from the majority of the post-mortems being invasive, to a model where the majority are non-invasive / by CT imaging.

#### **Daily Operations and accommodation**

The service is currently located in dedicated accommodation in Workington, which includes offices, two courts, meeting rooms / family room and jury facilities.

HM Coroner has sole use of the courts, so they are available Monday to Friday, which allows inquests to be opened quickly, with dates usually set for inquest hearings within the required six months. The average time from opening to hearing is currently (2024) 27 weeks (national average = 31 weeks).

All the support team for HM Coroner are co-located with the Senior Coroner at Cockermouth.

The support team comprises of the following:

- 1 (1.0 fte) x Team Lead / Lead Coroner's Office (day-to-day operational oversight)
- 4 (2.0 fte) x Coroners Coordinators (triage and initial management of new referrals)
- 1 (1.0 fte) x Senior Coroners Officer (Investigation / inquest end-to-end case management)
- 8 (7.6 fte) x Coroner's Officers (Investigation / inquest end-to-end case management)
- 2 (2.0 fte) x Coroner's Support Assistants (business support and finance)
- 2 (1.2 fte) x Coroner's Inquest Clerks (admin, court and inquest support)

All the above are employed by Cumberland Council, and the service sits within the group of services managed by the Chief Legal Officer for Cumberland Council.

The support team are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public and meeting visitors on weekdays between 8.30am and 4.30pm.

The Senior Coroner is supported by a full-time Area Coroner, and the current four Assistant Coroners.

The responsibility for the service within the local authority, and who has overall operational management responsibility, rests with the Service Manager (1.0 fte), and they lead on matters such as accommodation, contracts & procurement, financial management, stakeholder liaison, HR and the management of the support team, and such as service planning.

### 3. 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 coronial service in Cumbria, that puts the bereaved at the heart of the process. 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.

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

As with other Judicial roles the Judicial Skills and Abilities Framework 2025 [JSAF 2025 230725](#) outlines the essential skills and competencies expected of judicial office holders, aiming to enhance recruitment and development processes within the judiciary.

It will be helpful to read the as the JSAF has been drafted by judges, for judges and prospective judges to enable them to evidence their experience and suitability for judicial office. The JSAF highlights the key skills that all judicial office holders or prospective judicial office holders should demonstrate across their application or career.

The specific assessment criteria for Coroners is set out below:

#### **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. ***An ability to analyse information in order to support the effective running of a team.***
3. ***The ability to explain complex terms to those from non-legal or non-medical backgrounds.***

#### **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:**

- 4. *An ability to prioritise work effectively to minimise delays.***
- 5. *Able to work at speed and under pressure.***
- 6. *Demonstrates resilience responding calmly and flexibly to changing circumstances.***

**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:**

- 7. *Must have knowledge of the extent to which cultural and religious requirements can be met within the constraints of Coroner law and practice.***
- 8. *An ability to drive the service and be receptive to new ideas, reforms and diverse needs, including working collaboratively with the team, and with internal and external stakeholders and relatives.***
- 9. *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 Coroners Service and also possess the awareness to manage their expectations of the process. Assistant Coroners must be IT literate and provide clear directions to the team on Coroner investigations whilst creating a safe, harmonious and effective working environment through co-operative working.

**Assessment Criteria:**

- 10. *Excellent verbal and written communication skills.***
- 11. *Establishes authority and inspires respect and confidence.***
- 12. *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**

- 13. *Able to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement.***
- 14. *Experience of conducting investigative enquiries including demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying issues relevant to the investigation.***

**15. 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:**

- 16. 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 75: paragraph 3 of Schedule 3.**
- 17. Thorough, up to date knowledge of legislation, case law and guidance relating to Coroner's duties.**
- 18. Knowledge of structures and procedures of the police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths.**
- 19. 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:**

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

#### **Other Judicial Appointments:**

Please include details of any other judicial appointments that a currently held.

#### **Past experience**

If you are already an Assistant Coroner within another coronial area, please give details of the scope and breath of the coronial work that you have undertaken, including:

- (a) how many days worked as Coroner per annum
- (b) the nature of the work, and scope and complexity
- (c) the division of time between office and court
- (d) the extent of experience in completing Forms 100A and 100B / CN1a and CN1b
- (e) the number and type of inquests conducted
- (f) the number of long inquests and their subject matter
- (g) the number of Jury inquests conducted
- (h) experience of digital case management systems

#### **IMPORTANT TO NOTE**

**In relation to each competency, please provide specific, examples and instances which demonstrate the relevant competency. Generalised assertions, such as 'it is my practice to...' or 'I generally/always do x, y or z' or 'I have the following general skills' do not assist the sifting panel in determining if the competency has been met.**

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

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 to time agreed between the Coroner and the relevant local authority*.

##### **Fee**

The post is a 'Fee Paid' position, and no 'salary' or remuneration is paid.

The current Assistant Coroner fees are £533 per full day (a day being a minimum of 7.5 hours. (pay award under review and pending).

Please note the post falls under IR35 regulations and statutory deductions will be collected by the local authority at source.

##### **Pension Scheme**

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

##### **Hours of work**

You will be required to work on such days / times as agreed with HM Senior Coroner (or HM Area Coroner in their absence), and to provide cover for such as full-time Coroner's annual leave, sickness absence, training, and where peaks in demand or workload require.

A 'full day' is classed as a *minimum* of 7.5 hours and may be longer subject to service needs.

You may be asked to participate in an out of hour's service, by agreement with HM Senior Coroner.

##### **Location**

The Court / offices are currently located in Workington, therefore you should live within a reasonable commuting distance, as you will be expected to work from this location daily when requested to work.

For clarity, travel time commuting is *not* part of the working day ('full day'), and no reimbursement is payable in respect of any travel expenses whilst commuting to your base.

##### **Holiday entitlement**

None - 'fee paid' appointment therefore no leave or holiday entitlement '.

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

Any necessary expenses incurred during the course of your duties will be paid in line with the relevant local authority's expenses policy, and where practical these should be agreed in advance.

Reasonable expenses for attendance at Judicial / mandatory training (including travel expenses, accommodation where necessary, etc) will be paid by the Local Authority.

##### **Indemnity**

The Council will indemnify the Assistant 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 Assistant Coroner may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the relevant authority, however any resignation does not take effect unless or until it has been accepted in writing by the authority.

Assistant Coroner are, where possible and practical, asked to give reasonable notice of retirement, or resignation, to enable the relevant authority to manage daily operations, and to comply with the provisions of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in filling the vacancy and finding a suitable replacement.

**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 Assistant 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 one of these positions, you are required to submit the following:

- Covering letter
- Complete / up to date CV (with explanation for any gaps or periods of no employment)
- Full supporting statement (Maximum of four (4) sides of A4 – **Aptos font** and no smaller than **size 12**, and with **1.5 line spacing** and **2.0 cm margins**)
- Completed declaration

It is important that your supporting statement fully addresses the assessment criteria detailed in **bold** in the job summary section above.

**In particular it is important that you demonstrate how you meet the following criteria as detailed in Section 3 of this candidate information pack:**

**In particular please demonstrate how you meet the following criteria:**

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

Whilst CV should be included, if no full supporting statement is submitted as part of your application, then 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 detail provided will remain completely 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 only be taken up for short-listed candidates.

### **Evidence of qualifications**

Candidates will be required to bring to the interview evidence of their qualifications.

### **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 which will need to be submitted with the application form and CV.

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

Applicants must also 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**

Details of this will be shared with the candidates selected for interview.

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

All appointments are subject to the consent of the Chief Coroner and the Lord Chancellor.

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

### **Commencement in post**

Successful candidates will be required to commence as soon as is practical, and subject to any requirement to attend the **mandatory** Assistant Coroner Induction training course, to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2026, and a follow up course in June 2027 (dates to be confirmed).

## 6. RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their covering letter, CV, supporting statement and their signed declaration to:**

- Chris Fleming: [Christopher.Fleming@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:Christopher.Fleming@cumbria.gov.uk)

### **Closing date**

The closing date for all applications is: **Midnight – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

All applications selected for interview will be sent to the Office of the Chief Coroner for England and Wales for their review and agreement to proceed.

### **Interview invitations will be sent by**

Those chosen for interview will be notified by: **Close of business on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

If you do not hear from us by close of business on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May please assume that on this occasion you have unfortunately not been shortlisted for the position and will not be part of the interview process.

### **Interview date**

The interviews will be held on: **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> and Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

### **Interview location**

HM Coroner's Courts and Offices  
Allerdale House  
Workington  
CA14 3YJ

What3words: flames.fires.assure

There is parking next to the building, and Workington Train Station is approx. 10 mins walk.

### **Interview panel**

The interview panel will be as follows:

Ms Kirsty Gomersal – HM Senior Coroner, Cumbria Area (Chair)  
Ms Margaret Taylor – HM Area Coroner, Cumbria Area  
Ms Clare Liddle – Chief Legal Officer – Cumberland Council  
Additional Local authority representatives - TBC

### **Mandatory training**

Formal appointment is only granted on the basis that the successful candidates, if not already appointed as a Coroner, attend the *mandatory* Assistant Coroner Induction training course. This will take place on **Tue 1<sup>st</sup> & Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2026** (Venue TBC but likely to be within the Midlands area), and a follow up course in June 2027 (dates to be confirmed).

Not being available for this training will mean that you are unable to commence in post and therefore would not be considered for these appointments. Non-attendance would also mean that you could not commence your appointment.