

# Candidate Information Pack

## **ASSISTANT CORONER**

Essex

Relevant Authority:

Essex County Council

15 Jan 2025

# **ASSISTANT CORONER FOR ESSEX**

## **INFORMATION PACK**

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

## **1. ADVERT**

**Role:** Assistant Coroner

**Relevant Authority:** Essex County Council

**Salary** – fee paid, £516 per day. (half-daily rate £258 for hours worked up to 3.7) [in line with the JNC Coroners Circular 69]

**Closing date: 23:59 on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

Essex County Council is seeking to appoint new Assistant Coroners to support the Senior coroner and 3 Area coroners across the full range of coroner duties to deliver a high-quality coroner service to the people of Essex.

**Successful candidates, if not already an Assistant Coroner, will be required to attend a mandatory Assistant Coroner Induction training course on 2-3 December 2025.**

This is an exciting opportunity to work in one of the busiest and most diverse jurisdictions in England and to develop your Coronial experience.

### **About the post:**

Essex County 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 Coroners to ensure the efficient running of a 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 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.

These are fee paid positions although they are likely to involve a regular commitment, which is to be agreed between the assistant coroner, senior coroner, and the local authority. Assistant Coroners are required to sit a minimum of 20 days a year. You may be expected on occasion to be available to assist on an out of hours rota system.

### **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 75th birthday.

### **How to apply:**

The candidate pack is available here:

If you wish to have an informal discussion or arrange a visit, please contact Simon Krone: Senior Coroner Services Manager [simon.krone@essex.gov.uk](mailto:simon.krone@essex.gov.uk)

For questions relating to Human Resources or recruitment please contact Jane Smith and Abbie Mollison: [Resourcing.Team@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Resourcing.Team@essex.gov.uk)

Interview dates: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

## **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 Essex coroner area includes an area of 1,300 square miles with a current population of around 1,832,751. 22% of the population are currently 65+ with the average age currently 41.5 years. Population density is 511 residents per square kilometre and population has grown by 15.5% since 2002. Bordering counties include: Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Kent and Greater London.

The number of deaths registered annually is 18,845 with approximately 26% referred to the senior coroner. Postmortem examinations are conducted at three Hospital Trusts by hospital pathologists (Addenbrookes and GOSH for deceased under 18). Postmortem services in Essex comprise of invasive and more recently, CT scanning at East London Forensic Centre – Waltham Forest.

Local pathology services comprise of forensic, neuro, cardio. The service works closely with the local and regional Medical Examiner Service. In 2024 1,026 inquests were held and 2,540 post-mortem examinations.

The coroner area contains sections of the M25 and M11 motorways as well as several major A-roads, main rail lines to/from London. There is one adult male prison (Chelmsford category B) – an adult male prison, there are several acute mental health facilities across Essex. There is also an asylum accommodation in Wethersfield.

There are 5 acute hospitals, Basildon University Hospital, Colchester General Hospital, Southend University Hospital, Broomfield Hospital and Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow as well as 9 community hospitals.

The county of Essex also has the Dartford Bridge which falls in part in Essex and part in Kent as well as Stansted airport and Harwich and Tilbury ports.

Essex County Council is the lead authority for the coronial area (which includes the unitary authority areas of Southend and Thurrock).

Seax House is situated a 2 minute walk from Chelmsford station (direct line from Liverpool St -35 minutes). Chelmsford City Centre is well served by other public transport links and two "Park and Ride" services.

### **Daily Operations and accommodation**

The service is in dedicated accommodation, including offices and courts in Seax House, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1QH. The service is co-located with the Registration Service. 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.

29 coroner's officers and 3 Team Leaders are employed by the Council as well as 2 court coordinators and a court receptionist. In addition, there is a coroner's office manager and a Senior coroner's services manager. The Senior Coroner, the coroners and coroner's officers are supported by 4 administrative staff employed by Essex County Council

All staff are co-located with the senior and area coroners.

The administrative support staff are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays 8:30am – 5pm.

### **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 Coroners 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 occasionally available to assist with 24-hour availability on a rota basis.

#### **Assistant coroner 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.**

##### **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.**
- 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 coroner service and 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:**

- 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, particularly 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.**

**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.**

### **Desirable criteria:**

- 20. Full current driving licence (unless disability precludes this) and use of a vehicle for work purposes.**
- 21. Details of any other Judicial Appointments held**

## **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. 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 fee paid and the current fee is £516 per day (half-daily rate £258 for hours worked up to 3.7. (in line with the JNC Coroners Circular 69) The fee paid is inclusive of prep time needed for inquests (Additional prep time may be agreed with the Senior Coroner for exceptionally complex cases).

### **Pension Scheme**

An Assistant Coroner may join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS).

### **Hours of work**

As these are fee paid positions the Assistant Coroner will work on days and times as agreed with the senior coroner.

You may be asked to participate in an out of hour's service, by agreement with the senior coroner. Assistant coroners should live within a reasonable commuting distance from the court or office they will be expected to attend.

### **Holiday entitlement**

None (fee paid appointment).

### **Payment of expenses**

Expenses will be paid in line with the Council's expenses policy. Reasonable expenses for attendance at Judicial College Training (including travel expenses, accommodation where necessary and a normal sitting fee payable for each day of training) will be paid by the Local Authority.

Travel to and from the court offices is not payable.

There is no on-site parking at Seax House, but several public car parks are nearby.

### **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 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 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 this position, you are required to submit a CV, and a full supporting statement of up to two sides of A4 (no smaller than font 11). It is important that your supporting statement fully addresses the assessment criteria detailed in **bold** in the job summary section above.

**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**

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**

A panel interview of up to 45 minutes will be conducted comprising of general and technical based questions.

## **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.

## **6. RECRUITMENT TIMETABLE**

**Suitably qualified applicants are requested to email their CV and their supporting statement to [Resourcing.Team@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Resourcing.Team@essex.gov.uk).**

**Closing date: 23:59 on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

**Sift return date: by Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Interview invitations will be sent out: w/c Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025**

**Interview dates: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

**If you do not hear by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025, please assume you have not been shortlisted.**

**The interview panel will be:**

**Senior Coroner - Lincoln Brookes**

**Area Coroner - Michelle Brown**

**Head of Statutory and Regulated Customer Services – Janine Last**

**People Business Partner – Cheryl Graham**

**We are aiming for the successful candidates to take up post as soon as is possible. This will be subject to attendance of the Chief Coroner's mandatory induction training on 2-3 December 2025 (where necessary).**