

# Candidate Information Pack

## **ASSISTANT CORONER**

ESSEX

Relevant Authority:

Essex County Council

6<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**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

**Salary – fee paid,** £450 per day. [in line with the JNC Coroners Circular 66]

**Location:** Chelmsford, Essex

**Closing date:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Midnight

**Role Type:** As and when required (min 20 days per annum)

### **Assistant Coroner for Essex.**

Salary – Fee Based: Daily rate of £450 is applicable (half-daily rate £225 for hours worked up to 3.6). Rates are based on JNC Coroners Circular 63

Essex County Council is seeking to appoint 3 new Assistant Coroners to bring additional capacity to the Senior and Area Coroners, across the full range of coroner duties in order to deliver a high-quality coroner service to the people of Essex.

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

### **Job Summary and Responsibilities:**

Home to 1.4 million people, Essex is the second most populated English county and one of the busiest Coronial Areas in the UK. As a broadly diverse area that benefits from an unspoilt coastline and countryside, desirable market towns, dynamic working opportunities and a varied social and cultural life, the county offers something for everyone. Home to major urban areas including Basildon and Harlow and nationally important infrastructure such as Stansted Airport, the work we do at Essex County Council is both complex and highly interesting. Chelmsford is only 40 mins from London via train, and our facilities include 3 courtrooms including new offices and court accommodation.

Essex is a busy Coroner service; the number of reported deaths pa was 6597 in 2021. This is a significant number of reported deaths, due to the geographical size of the jurisdiction as well as its make-up, with a combination of major urban areas as well as rural components and means that Essex is amongst the largest coroner areas in England and Wales.

We take our responsibilities to our local population very seriously in both life and death. As such, we are committed to providing a sector-leading, compassionate coronial service – and it is here that you could play a vital part in our duties. We are currently looking for an organised individual with good investigative skills to work closely with the coronial team, including the Senior Coroner and Area Coroners, delivering a high-quality and efficient service, that is recognised as a centre of excellence for best practice. For an ambitious and experienced professional this is an excellent opportunity to lead change to improve service delivery and make a difference for the people of Essex.

You 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.

### **Knowledge, Skills and Experience:**

To excel in this role, you must be a Barrister, Solicitor or Chartered Legal Executive and satisfy the judicial appointment eligibility condition on a five-year basis. You will be under the age of 75 and subject to the appointment and eligibility conditions within the [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(s.23 and Schedule 3\)](#). You will also need to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the relevant

legislation and you will be adept at holding complex inquests. With well-developed communications skills, you will be able to handle sensitive situations.

In turn, we can offer a desirable benefits package, plus the chance to join a progressive team that will welcome your input. We are always keen to improve the service that we offer and explore new opportunities and better ways of working – making for a particularly fulfilling working life. With the backing of friendly colleagues and a senior management team who will help you excel in the role; you will find a solid work/life balance. So, join us in this progressive role, and share your expertise with a team who are committed to excelling in all that they do.

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 an assistant 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 which require a commitment from you to support the service as and when required, and which is to be agreed between the assistant coroner, senior coroner and the local authority. You will also be expected, on occasion, to assist in supporting an out of hours rota.

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 20 sitting days each financial year. However, it is recognised that there is a variance of workload in each area.

### **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).

To discuss this post informally, or for more information as to how to apply please contact [thomas.clyde@essex.gov.uk](mailto:thomas.clyde@essex.gov.uk)

### **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:**

Please note that the selection interviews are planned to be in County Hall, Chelmsford.

Closing Date: 10th June 2022, midnight.

Interview Dates: 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022

### **Equal Opportunities:**

**Essex County Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.**

We seek the best talent from the widest pool of people as diversity is key to our success.

If you have any queries regarding this role, or require anything further, please contact [Thomas.Clyde@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Clyde@essex.gov.uk)

Please email your CV and supporting statement (limited to 2 sides of A4) along with your declaration [Assistant Coroner Declaration, CLICK HERE](#) to [Thomas.Clyde@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Thomas.Clyde@essex.gov.uk) by the specified closing date, June 10th 2022

### **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 jurisdiction of the Essex Coroner Service includes not only the Essex County Council area, but also that of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils, making the Essex jurisdiction one of the largest in the country. The service consistently receives a high number of referrals each year.

The coroner area contains sections of the M11 motorway as well as several major A-roads, main rail lines to/from London as well as Stansted and Southend airports. The area includes HMP Chelmsford and Youth Offending Institution.

There are 5 acute hospitals in total located in Basildon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow and Southend-on Sea) as well as several community hospitals. There is a world-renowned specialist Burns Unit in Chelmsford and a specialised Cardio Thoracic Centre in Basildon.

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

The service is located in dedicated accommodation, including offices and court in Seax House, Chelmsford. 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

This post will work alongside the existing coronial team, made up of the Senior Coroner and 2 Area Coroners The service also currently has 3 Assistant Coroners who work on an occasional basis. 17 coroner's officers are employed by Council as well a small team of administrative staff. In addition, there are two team leaders and a Coroner Service Operations Manager. The Coroner Service as a whole is part of the Council's Corporate and Customer Services function.

Accommodation, contracts, tendering, finance and support staff are managed by the Coroner Service Operations Manager, who is employed by the Council

The Operations Manager works closely with the Senior and Area Coroners on the delivery of the service to ensure those affected by the work of the coroner team receive a high-quality service.

All staff are co-located with the Senior Coroner

The administrative support staff are responsible for answering incoming calls from the public on weekdays 9am – 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 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 [where appropriate] to be 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 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:**

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.

#### **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.

#### **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*.

[the following section contains some general terms and conditions in relation to this post, the specifics of such terms should be agreed between the coroner and the local authority. Some general headings of terms and conditions for coroner posts is available upon request.]

#### **Fee**

The post is fee paid and the current fee is £450 per day (half-daily rate £225 for hours worked up to 3.6). **[in line with the JNC Coroners Circular 66]**

#### **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 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.

### **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.

**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**

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**

You will be required to undertake a short presentation as part of the interview process. **On the day of your interview a presentation topic will be provided to you, and you will be given time to prepare your view on this topic. The first ten minutes of your interview, you will present to the panel on this topic.**

**You will also be asked to complete a psychometric work styles assessment prior to interview. This assessment will be used to develop behavioural questions as part of your interview, further information will be provided.**

### **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 application to:**  
[\*\*Thomas.Clyde@essex.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:Thomas.Clyde@essex.gov.uk)

**Closing date:** Midnight 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Interview invitations will be sent out:** w/c 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Interview date:** 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**If you do not hear by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022, please assume you have not been shortlisted.**

**The interview panel will be:**

**Lincoln Brookes:** Senior Coroner for Essex

**Katy Smith:** Coroner Operations Manager, Essex County Council

**Rhian Parry:** People Consultant, Essex County Council

We are aiming for the successful candidate to take up post as soon as is possible.