



Cumberland Council

Post Specification

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| Date | March 2022 |
| Post Group Number | PG 7003 |
| Post Title | Coroners Officer |
| Job Family | OS |
| Job Family Role Profile | OS9 |
| Final Grade | 9 |

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile

Service Area description

The role of the HM Coroner is to ascertain the circumstances surrounding specific types of deaths. They hold an inquiry / investigation, and any subsequent inquest, into deaths that are unexplained or unnatural (other than natural illness or disease). They can include violent deaths, deaths resulting from accident or neglect, or occurred in public institutions where liberty has been deprived, such as a prison, care home or whilst in police custody. They can include sensitive and complex cases including the deaths of young children, cases subject to Police criminal investigations and domestic homicides and cases requiring Inquests to be held with a jury.

HM Coroner also makes recommendations to relevant authorities or organisations where there are issues of significant interest to the wider community in relation to the prevention of future deaths.

The Coroners Service is a customer focused service dealing with a wide variety of stakeholders, such as medical and legal professionals, Police, HSE, undertakers, and bereaved families. It delivers guidance and advice to professional agencies and families at one of the most difficult and emotional periods in an individual's life, where there is the sudden death of a loved one or family member.

Main Purpose

To work directly to HM Senior Coroner, Area, and team of Assistant Coroners. To liaise directly with a range of other stakeholders, legal and medical professionals, Cumbria Constabulary, neighbouring police forces and other investigatory organisations and bodies (such as Health and Safety Executive and IOPC), to ensure the effective delivery of Coroner's services to the residents of Cumbria and the wider community.

To assist HM Coroner in fulfilling their statutory duty with regards to the investigation and direct case management of unexplained or unnatural deaths from initial referral through to inquest conclusion. This can include deaths which occur abroad/overseas and involve international liaison.

Manage a personal caseload including complex and sensitive cases which will involve child deaths, homicide, road traffic fatalities and cases involving suicide, some of which may attract media attention at a local and national level. Provide updates, advice and guidance on the coronial process and case management to professional agencies in respect of these cases.

To carry out all the necessary investigations and enquiries to identify statements and reports to be secured from all relevant agencies in respect of Coronial investigations and Inquests.

To ensure the statements and reports cover all the essential legal requirements and specific issues to be addressed during a Coronial investigation or for the purpose of an Inquest. To personally case manage and build cases to present to the Coroner for investigation reviews and in advance of Inquest hearings.

To communicate directly with bereaved families, legal representatives, witnesses and other Properly Interested Persons (PIPs) to provide advice and guidance in respect of Coronial proceedings.

Key job specific accountabilities

1. Personal ownership and case management of both Investigation and Inquest cases.

2. Coordinating the process for the effective reporting, evaluation, and investigation of sudden, unexplained, or unnatural deaths to enable the appropriate judicial decision to be made, thus enabling HM Coroner, and the local authority, to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. This can include deaths which occur abroad/overseas and involve international liaison.

3. Carry out all aspects of the day-to-day management of coronial cases including, but not limited to:

- Dealing with the initial referral of a death to HM Coroner and providing advice and guidance to agencies involved in the death to enable effective progress.

- Manage a personal caseload, assess cases, identify, and gather all evidence required, including statements and reports to enable the effective investigation and progression of the full range of coronial cases.

- Liaise directly with bereaved families providing them with regular updates on the progress of cases including advice and guidance on the coronial proceedings and case management

- Liaise directly with medical professionals, Mental Health service providers, Police, Properly Interested Persons (PIPs), and their legal representatives to ensure effective progress of cases.

- Procure any relevant services appropriate to the case, such as specialist reports, Home Office post-mortems, pathology/histology/toxicology services, and transcription/translations in accordance with directions given by HM Coroner

- Coordinate and compile case inquest files to include all relevant statements and reports required for the purpose of an investigation and/or inquest (including jury inquests). To review and evaluate evidence received requesting further and better particulars where necessary.

- To manage all casework correspondence, issues, and enquiries, including complex and sensitive case related matters. To escalate urgent issues and liaise with HM Coroner where appropriate. Produce witness lists and inquest evidence bundles for HM Coroner, and disclosure to bereaved families, and all Interested Persons and their legal representatives.

- Liaise with hospital legal teams, Pathologists (including Forensic Home Office Pathologists and other expert witnesses), Solicitors, Barristers and family members, summoning witnesses and jurors where appropriate. Liaison with all PIPs regarding arranging and if required attendance at inquests (attendance in person and remote attendance via telephone and IT links).

- Liaise with relevant agencies, including Government Ministries in respect of any Regulation 28 Notices (Prevention of Future Deaths) that may be issued, ensuring relevant and appropriate responses are received within legal timeframes addressing the issues identified.

- Carry out all the post case closure checks to ensure cases finalised on case management system, relevant notices/legal forms sent, and cases archived in accordance with standard procedures.

4. Ensure only relevant and appropriate matters are referred directly to HM Coroner enabling them to focus on essential coronial work.

5. Provide any other appropriate support to HM Coroner and undertake any other such additional duties as may be appropriate and reasonable to meet the needs of the Coroners Service, or the wider Local Authority, as may be specified by either HM Coroner or the Local Authority.

6. Provide the highest standards of customer care, and act with professionalism and to the high standards that befit the judicial status of the service, and HM Coroner as a Judicial Officer.

Please note annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process

Key facts and figures of the post

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| Budget Responsibilities | No direct budget responsibilities |
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| Staff Management Responsibilities | No direct staff management responsibilities |
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| Other | |
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Essential Criteria - Qualifications, knowledge, experience and expertise

A-Level or equivalent qualifications. NVQ 2 or 3 in a related field, or equivalent demonstrable / proven experience providing support within a legislative, regulatory, or technical service

ILEX qualifications or substantial experience working within a legal/coronial environment in a case management/legal practice or equivalent role.

Organised and methodical, with good issue resolution skills. Accurate and analytical attention to detail.

Experience dealing with sensitive, potentially distressing, and confidential information and liaising directly with professional organisations

Ability to work to tight deadlines, organise workload according to changing priorities and remain calm during difficult circumstances

Good communication skills and a customer focused approach. Sound judgement and ability to reach balanced, unbiased decisions.

Flexible and enthusiastic approach to tasks, workload, people and working situations within a dynamic and fast-moving environment. Ability to manage time and prioritise casework issues and task completion. Robust case-management organisational skills

IT literate and experience working with information management systems Desirable · Legal or similar professional qualification

Experience of case management within a legal, medical and/or legislative/regulatory service

The ability to interpret technical terminology and information, and some basic knowledge of medical terminology

Some experience dealing with the bereaved/next of kin who may be distressed and emotional

Some basic knowledge of coronial law and procedures relating to investigating sudden deaths

Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job working circumstances

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| Emotional Demands | Potential for the bereaved/next of kin and members of the public to be distressed, emotional and handle difficult conversations · Dealing with information that is sensitive, and linked to potentially distressing situations including reading reports that may contain distressing details and viewing upsetting photographs/images · Dealing with cases which may involve the deaths of young children, homicide, and suicide case. · Time-bound workload with conflicting priorities and very short deadlines · Being able to work effectively under pressure. |
| Physical Demands | Minimal physical demands |
| Working Conditions | Primarily office based |

Other Factors

Misc. Notes or requirements relevant to the position

1. In the unlikely event of an incident with mass fatalities, the post holder will be required to provide reasonable additional cover out-with normal working to meet the needs of the service.
2. Due to the nature of the Service, there is a requirement to dress in smart/formal office attire.
3. The ability to travel independently to meet the needs of the service

Important information

Under current legislation local authorities are responsible for the provision and funding of the local Coronial Services, however, all HM Coroners are 'independent judicial officers' and are not employed by or accountable directly to the authority. They are independent of both Local and Central Government and are required to act in accordance with legislation and various statutory instruments. The local authority cannot monitor performance, discipline, or give formal direction to HM Coroner.