



July 2022

## APPLICANT INFORMATION PACK

Dear Candidate

### Reference your application for post of Coroners Administration Officer (CAO)

Thank you for your interest in this busy but rewarding role. The successful candidate will be offered a position, ensuring the right skills, experience and knowledge mix exist in the team.

### IMPORTANT NOTE to candidates BEFORE making an application:

- You must provide all relevant information in the online application itself, a CV is not required for this position and will **not** be reviewed as part of the selection process.
- You must list a full employment history and explain all gaps in employment.
- Please list the qualifications, listing the **highest** first: provide the level of qualification; name of subject; the grade and year of achievement. For example BSc(Hons) Forensic Science (2:1); HND Bio-medical Science (distinction) (2017); GCSE (O-level) English Literature (C) (2017)
- **Refer to the person specification and use the 'reason for application' to demonstrate how your experience, knowledge or skills and achievements will transfer to the position you are applying for, please provide examples.**

### Shortlisting

A scoring matrix is used to identify those candidates that demonstrate through the online application form how they meet the selection criteria for the role and the successful applicants will be invited for an on-line assessment, assessment day and or an interview. Please make a diary note of the date(s) if provided.

### The Interview

Candidates that are successful at the pre interview assessment will be informed asap and invited for interview. Please make a diary note of the interview date(s) if provided. The successful candidate(s) will be advised in writing asap after the last interview. You may ask for feedback after the decision has been made.

### Further Information

Below is some background information which may assist you in deciding if the role is for you. All information is provided in good faith to assist candidates, but Terms and Conditions of appointment are specified by the Kent Scheme (Blue Book) and the Contract of Employment and candidates are advised to satisfy themselves of details of appointment and not to rely on the information provided below. Broad details on the terms and conditions of working for KCC are available by following this link: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/jobs/careers-with-us/working-for-us>. In the event that you are successful and are offered a position you can of course ask us to provide you with any additional information to assist you to decide if the role and terms of appointment are right for you.

## **The role of the Coroners Administration Officer (CAO)**

The position of Coroners Administration Officer (CAO) is a new role within the coroner service. It is extremely rewarding, the work is continuous and the volume of work is largely unpredictable other than to say that it can be pressured and subject to competing demands with the need to constantly re-prioritise, so you will be resilient and composed when working under pressure.

Once trained the CAOs will be responsible for all administrative support key to the successful progression of the workflow through the office and court ushering duties, which are important roles in the KCC Coroner Service Team. The tasks will be varied and include answering and making calls to the bereaved families and stakeholder partners and a range of administrative duties. All case related work in the coroners office is under explicit or implicit judicial direction from the coroner and subject to chief coroner guidance and other statutory and non-statutory national and local policy and procedure.

The Coroners Investigation Officer (CIO) conducts the investigation into any death reported to the coroner. The Coroners Court Officer (CCO) works to prepare case files for court and deal with matters of Treasure. The Coroners Court Usher (CCU) is based at the court venues and attends and manages all inquest hearings. On a day to day basis the CAO, CIO and CCO will work collaboratively to ensure seamless progression of a cases reported to the Coroner Service.

The CAO role is full-time (37 hours per week) and is and is office based in Maidstone with most enquiries being dealt with by telephone and e-mail.

There are 4 distinct coroner areas each with a senior coroner who is an independent judicial officer and not a KCC employee. You will deal with work from any of the four areas as directed by your manager and subject to business need. However all judicial decisions regarding the progress of case work is under the explicit or implicit direction of the coroner.

Patricia Harding is the Senior Coroner for three of the four coroner areas: Central & South East Kent; Mid Kent & Medway; and North East Kent. Roger Hatch is the Senior Coroner for North West Kent.

## **Employment with Kent County Council (KCC)**

The CAO is employed under the Kent Scheme which specifies the terms and conditions (T&Cs) (*The Blue Book*). Please note that some T&Cs in the Blue Book do not apply to the Coroner Service, most notably the KCC flexi-time does not operate in the Coroner Service. All Coroner Service Team members are subject to the Kent Code and are required to demonstrate KCC Values and Behaviours at all times. As the role is public facing, there is an acceptable dress policy.

The CAO post is KCC grade KR5 with an annual salary of £20,595 to £21,693 (at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022). All new KCC appointments are made at £20,595. The annual pay increase is subject to a TCP award and not incremental points on a scale. You have the opportunity to progress through your grade under the Total Contribution (TCP) process. Your manager will have regular 1-2-1s with you throughout the year. It is the manager's responsibility to recommend a TCP assessment rating as part of the appraisal cycle. There are four ratings and each one equates to a percentage pay increase.

In order to develop a healthy work-life balance, KCC provides paid annual leave (the leave period operates from 1<sup>st</sup> April). CAOs are entitled to 26 days annual leave (per full year) rising to 28 days after five years service. Actual leave entitlement is calculated by the number of whole months worked. Leave is generally agreed on a first come first served basis, however in the interests of fairness, this may not always be the case. All leave must be

approved in advance and you should not assume that leave will be agreed when making holiday arrangements. Leave will only be agreed where the operational delivery of the service can be maintained, so there will be a limit to the numbers of CAOs who may be off at any particular time. At certain times leave may be restricted for example immediately before or following bank holidays, during periods of training or exceptional staffing pressures. For new appointees, pre-existing leave arrangements will be accommodated wherever possible on production of confirmation of a pre-existing holiday booking.

Additionally KCC grants an additional day leave over the xmas period (the KCC day) however this is a normal working day for the Coroner Service Team. Staff that work the designated KCC day will either receive pay or be granted an additional day leave which will be taken at a suitable time as agreed with their manager and subject to business need but before 31<sup>st</sup> March.

All new appointments to KCC are subject to receipt of two satisfactory references and confirmation in post is subject to successful completion of a six month probationary period. You will meet regularly with your line manager to support your training and progress through probation. The contractual notice period for this role is one month.

### **Staffing Structure**

The KCC Coroner Service Team sits within the Public Protection (PP) Unit, the Head of which is Mike Overbeke. PP sits within the Growth Environment and Enforcement (GT-EPE) Directorate, the (interim) Director is Stephanie Holt-Castle.

The Coroner Service Team is one team and CAOs are supervised and line managed by a KCC Coroners Office Manager. Coroners have no line management responsibilities for KCC staff.

The current staffing structure consists of:

'as and when' coroners court ushers	'full-time' coroners court ushers
coroners administration officers	coroners court officers
coroners investigation officers	coroners office supervisor
coroners court supervisor	coroners office managers
coroner service operations manager	head of service

### **Work-base**

Although your work-base is Maidstone, subject to business need you may be asked to work from any KCC building or other site or exceptionally from home. Should you be asked to make any work related journeys mileage allowance and other approved expenses in excess of the usual travel to and from work is paid at the rate in place at the time (KCC Blue Book). Please note that KCC does not provide staff car parking.

### **Office Hours**

The KCC coroner service operates core hours 9am to 5pm, to reflect the operational needs of our service delivery and the expectations of the bereaved families in Kent & Medway. The role is full time and KCC flexitime is not available. This is for continuity of contact for families with their nominated case officer (CIO) and of course the CAO role is an integral part of the process. This is in line with guidance issued by the first chief coroner.

Normal office hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm with 36 mins unpaid break each day (37 hours per week) however subject to business need we may ask staff to work their hours between 8am and 6pm, or ask staff to work additional hours. Staff will be paid for all approved overtime worked.

Additionally in the event of an incident (for example a mass fatality incident) or under exceptional circumstances (for example a flu pandemic) we may operate extended working hours and CAOs may be asked to work additional hours. Although CIOs operate a limited service on bank holidays and provide an out of hours duty-rota, to respond to matters between 5pm and 9am however, there is no requirement for CCOs or CAOs to routinely work bank holidays or out of hours, except for exceptional circumstances.

Although the KCC flexi-time is not available to the Coroner Service Team, we do try to work flexibly with staff to, for example accommodate appointments during the working day etc. On the occasions when staff need to arrive later for work or leave earlier (ie outside core hours), or leave the office during the working day for non-work related appointments or matters. Any such requests should be made in advance to the line manager and the request will be considered on a case by case basis and approved subject to business need. Any time lost will be classed as 'time owing' which will need to be made up at a time and date(s) to be agreed with the line manager.

Dentist, GP and hospital appointments and any other personal appointment should normally be outside of your core hours. In the event that they occur during your normal working hours it must be discussed and agreed with the manager in advance. Such a request will be considered on the basis of operational needs and staffing levels.

### **Training and Continuous Professional Development**

There are two mandatory Staff Development Saturdays each year for which dates are provided with as much notice as possible.

### **Well Being**

CAOs must be prepared to see visual images, for example photographs in a case file or video of the body of a deceased person or persons, and will have sight of reports of post-mortem examinations or other findings

The work is pressured and subject to continuous competing demands, the CAO is responsible for meeting timelines set by the coroner or statute. Staff must therefore be prepared to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. KCC provides access to support and other services through occupational health. Additionally CAOs will have regular supervision meetings and 1-2-1s with their line manager where you can discuss any issues that may affect your performance or health and well-being.

KCC implements a Smoking Policy which seeks to guarantee you the right to work in an atmosphere free from tobacco smoke. Smoking is not permitted in the workplace apart from in the designated smoking areas. Smoking breaks are not paid and will be taken as part of your daily 36 minute refreshment break.

All activities are subject to health and safety policy and risk assessment. KCC undertakes to provide a safe working environment and the managers will take the necessary action to reduce the risk to self and others and make a positive contribution to the maintenance of a healthy and safe working environment and provide a secure, accessible and fit for purpose work area. All CAOs must comply with individual responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace and you will be required to undertake dynamic risk assessments when attending to any duty outside of the office to ensure that you: take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and that of others who are affected by what you do, or do not do. You will cooperate on all issues involving health and safety: use work items provided for you correctly, in accordance with training and instructions and do not

interfere with or misuse anything provided for your health, safety or welfare; you should also report any health and safety concerns to your line manager as soon as practicable. Additionally you will be asked to adhere to the acceptable dress policy.