



June 2025

APPLICANT INFORMATION PACK

Dear Candidate

Reference your application for post of Coroners Court Officer (CCO)

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 your qualifications, listing the highest first: provide the level of qualification; name of subject; the grade and year of achievement. For example HND Office Administration (distinction) (2017); GCSE (O-level) English Literature (C) (2017)
- **IMPORTANT**
- **Refer to the person specification and use the 'reason for application' to demonstrate how your past 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. The successful applicants will be invited for an on-line assessment, on successfully passing this you will then be invited in for 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. Candidates invited for interview will be asked to complete an online questionnaire followed by a telephone validation call (up to 90 minutes) before the interview date. 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 Court Officer (CCO)

The position of Coroners Court Officer (CCO) 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.

As well as working under pressure the role will mean that you are dealing with written and visual information relating to circumstances of death which may at times be distressing, so you will be resilient and take the necessary steps to protect your own health and wellbeing and be able to dissociate from the emotional aspects of working with death and distressing information on a daily basis. The well-being of the coroners service team members is a priority and a range of support and resources are available ranging from peer-to-peer informal support, line manager support and a range of specific staff well-being resources

You will receive extensive training and will be supported to develop the service specific knowledge and skills to perform the role effectively. Once trained the team of CCOs are responsible to oversee all case administrative tasks and preparation for court hearings. All activities are within statutory and locally set guidance and time limits. You will also be required to deal with all non-case related administration in the office and to deal with all aspects of reported finds of Treasure. 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 administrative tasks are managed by effective collaborative working with the Coroners Administration Officer (CAO), the Coroners Court Usher (CCU) and Coroners Investigation Officer (CIO) to ensure seamless progression of coroners casework. The CIO conducts the investigation into any death reported to the coroner and are responsible for all 'investigative' tasks relating to a coroners case.

The CCO role is full time (37 hours per week) primarily office based with most enquiries being dealt with by telephone and e-mail. The CCO may occasionally be required to attend inquest hearings but generally court ushers perform the court duties but CCOs must be prepared to usher court, of their own accord, and sometimes on an unexpected basis. The courts currently in use are in Maidstone but exceptionally could be elsewhere inside or exceptionally outside Kent or Medway

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 and a CCO can never make a judicial decision.

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.

A summary of the key duties (but not limited to) is provided at the end of this document

Employment with Kent County Council (KCC)

The CCO 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. Although the coroner service does not operate flexitime the

service will be flexible and respond to specific individual needs. 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 CCO post is KCC grade KSD with an annual salary of £26,393 to £27,713 (at 1st April 2025). All new KCC appointments are made at £26,393. The annual pay increase is subject to satisfactory completion of a yearly PDP. Your manager will have regular 1-2-1s with you throughout the year. It is the manager's responsibility to evaluate your progress and agree if you have successfully achieved your self-allocated targets.

In order to develop a healthy work-life balance, KCC provides paid annual leave (the leave period operates from 1st April). CCOs 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 CCOs 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 the following 31st 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 Economic and community Protection, the Head of this Service is Mark Rolfe. ECP sits within the Growth, Communities & Environment division, the Divisional Director is Stephanie Holt-Castle, which sits within the Growth Environment and Transport directorate, the Corporate Director is Simon Jones.

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

The current staffing structure consists of:

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| 4 coroners administration officers | head of coroner service |
| 7 coroners court officers | |
| 2 Senior Court Officers | |
| 17 coroners investigation officers | |
| a pool of 'as and when' coroners court ushers | |
| 2 coroners office supervisor | |
| 4 coroners office managers | |

Work-base

Your work-base is Oakwood House, Maidstone but subject to business need you may be asked to work from any KCC building or other site. There is a requirement for all CCOs to be able to travel across Kent and Medway to other courts or offices and be able to transport court documents or equipment. In light of these requirements, and the need for any court documents to be appropriately safeguarded, travel and accessibility by means of public transport is likely to be inappropriate. Car mileage allowance and other approved expenses for all work related journeys 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, but we are fortunate here at Oakwood House to have ample 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 CCO 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 lunch 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. Likewise, staff may ask for a longer lunch break or to start or finish earlier and managers will agree subject to service need and the time will be worked at a mutually agreed time.

KCC operates hybrid working but due to the nature of the service this isn't something that we routinely offer, but is considered as part of our business continuity. In determining whether home working is suitable, consideration is made of the nature of the work that the CCO is dealing with, potentially distressing information and difficult conversations which may not be appropriate for open spaces in other KCC buildings or at home, additionally the coroners office is open to the public Monday to Friday 0900 to 1700 and the office and courts will always require adequate numbers of staff on site.

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 CCOs will be asked to work additional hours. The coroner service operates a limited service on bank holidays and CCOs will be required to participate. It may be necessary for the CIOs to provide an out of hours duty-rota, to respond to matters between 5pm and 9am however there is currently no requirement for CCOs to routinely work 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. If they occur during your normal working hours it must be discussed and agreed with the manager in advance. Such a request will be considered based on operational needs and staffing levels.

Training and Continuous Professional Development

CCOs are required to undertake directed and self-directed learning to effectively work as a reflective practitioner. There is an expectation that you will develop broad knowledge of coroners and other relevant law and medical terms, effective communication skills and religious and cultural observances relating to death rituals as well as Microsoft 365 and database applications and to undertake continuous personal professional development. A CPD log-book will record all learning activities.

There are two mandatory Staff Development Saturdays each year for which dates are provided with as much notice as possible. There is also chief coroner mandatory residential staff training each year (currently two days and outside Kent). Staff may also be required to attend further training which could include overnight stays. As it is not possible to close the office for staff training during the working week, additional training may be offered throughout the year on Saturdays which all staff are encouraged to attend but this will not be compulsory.

Well Being

CCOs 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 for example, a dash-cam recording of a road traffic collision played in court. Furthermore, the work is pressured and subject to continuous competing demands, the CCO is responsible for meeting timelines set by the coroner or statute.

It is important for CCOs to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. KCC provides access to support and other services and through staff care services as well specific support from the coroner service itself. Additionally, CCOs will have regular supervision meetings with your supervisor and 1-2-1s with your 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 CCOs 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 and conduct relevant dynamic risk assessments as relevant for example for inquest cases requiring attendance by prisoners or where there is potential for conflict.