



September 2024

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 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 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 and the successful applicants will be invited for an assessment day. Please make a diary note of the date of the assessment day.

The Interview

Candidates that are successful at the assessment day will be informed asap after the end of the day itself and invited for interview. Please make a diary note of the interview date(s). 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.

Once trained the team of CCOs are responsible to oversee all matters relating to court hearings which, includes case related administration in order to prepare case files for inquest hearings and within statutory and locally set 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 Coroners Investigation Officer (CIO) conducts the investigation into any death reported to the coroner. The CCO and CIO will therefore work collaboratively to ensure seamless handover of investigation files for court hearings.

The CCO role is office based with most enquiries being dealt with by telephone and e-mail. The CCO may occasionally be required to attend some inquest hearings but generally court ushers perform the court duties but CCOs must be prepared to attend court, of their own accord, and sometimes on an unexpected basis.

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.

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. 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 KR6 with an annual salary of £25,127 to £26,383 (at 1st April 2024). All new KCC appointments are made at £25,127. 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 1st April). CCOs are entitled to 27 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 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 (ECP), the Head of which is Mark Rolfe. ECP sits within the Growth, Communities and Environment Directorate, the Director is Stephanie Holt-Castle

The Coroner Service Team is one team and CCOs are supervised by a KCC Coroners Court 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:

21 coroners investigation officers	7 coroners court officers
a pool of 'as and when' coroners court ushers	4 coroners administration officers
2 coroners senior court officers	3 coroners court supervisor
4 coroners office managers	Head of Service

Work-base

Although your work-base is Oakwood House, Maidstone, subject to business need you may be asked to work from any KCC building or other site. 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).

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.

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. 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 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

CCOs are required to undertake directed and self-directed learning during and outside of work in order 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 and causes of death as well as to continue your 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 is offered throughout the year on Saturdays which all staff are encouraged to attend but it is not 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, the bodies of which may be in various stages of decomposition or be damaged or subject to fragmentation for example, a dash-cam recording of a road traffic collision played in court.

The work is pressured and subject to continuous competing demands, the CCO 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 CCOs will have regular supervision meetings with the court supervisor 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 No 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.

Job Title	Coroners Court Officer
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<p>Typical Duties (may include but not limited to), the post holder will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. at all times act under the express or implied direction of the coroner for all judicial matters 2. seek guidance when necessary, work under the further direction and guidance of the supervisors, managers or head of service as relevant 3. act within the scope of coroner law, other relevant statutory provisions, and case law, comply with the chief coroners written advice and guidance and the standard practice and procedures of the Kent and Medway coroner service 4. act within the scope of the policies and procedures of Kent County Council and the expectations and procedures of the Coroner Service Team 5. comply with the standard practice and procedures and key performance indicators of the Kent and Medway Coroner Service and Kent County Council 6. understand the role of the Coroner Service Team in delivering the strategic vision of the Public Protection Group and KCC 7. maintain a professional attitude, promote the Kent Coroner Service and KCC in a positive manner and adhere to individual or team performance and behaviour targets 8. ensure integrity, fairness and consideration of the needs of others is integral to all of your actions, always treat people inside and outside the service with dignity and respect, appreciating equality and diversity 9. maintain confidentiality and comply with KCC information governance policy, GDPR and intellectual property rights 10. maintain knowledge of and adhere to KCC safeguarding and Prevent policies and strategies 11. promote KCC environment strategy, reducing and minimising negative impact of energy, water use and waste eg through reduced printing and paper consumption and business mileage 12. look for opportunities to improve and innovate 13. play a full role as part of the KCC Coroner Service Team and court volunteers 14. support the recruitment and induction and welcome new team members and assist with the buddy role, train and mentor new court and administration officers 15. acquire through training and self-directed learning, knowledge and a working understanding of: coroner law and practice; effective communication; religious and cultural considerations in death; MS 365 applications and database management tools 16. undergo compulsory training as required, including chief coroner or local training in the coroners office itself or as required by KCC and undertake continuous professional development activities 17. act as the initial point of contact (primarily by telephone and e-mail) for the coroner service team, assess the nature of the contact, respond promptly and / or refer to the appropriate person 18. ensure all communication eg in response to telephone calls and e-mail enquiries is accurate, polite and with sensitivity and compassionate
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19. record all contact calls, actions or notifications (including no response to contact) with details of name and relationship, on the case record and reasons for inaction
20. develop effective working with all professional partners, including external stakeholders and volunteers to ensure smooth operation of the coroner service
21. perform a professional family liaison function to initiate contact, and respond in a courteous and prompt manner to ensure that the service users are responded to with empathy as well as consistently, efficiently and effectively
22. undertake general administrative duties including but not limited to monitoring and actioning e-mail accounts, document preparation and distribution including those relevant to case preparation for inquest hearings
23. operate the coroners case management database as necessary including but not limited to, checking for new referrals and duplicate records, upload, check, modify and retrieve or pursue missing data, allocate cases for action, creating or completing subsequent actions on the case records
24. check referral for confirmation that next of kin or personal representative have been notified of the death, where there is no such confirmation, set an alert on the case record, if directed, contact the referrer to ensure the notification is made
25. complete case related administrative tasks, including but not limited to report requests, receiving, checking uploading reports and other evidence to the relevant case record and produce the relevant notification
26. monitor, maintain and take relevant actions with the relevant spreadsheets and calendars (CAO)
27. Work from the court office and undertake reception duties as per the allocated rota
28. produce statutory documents, other forms, reports and statistical data as required
29. receive and prepare medical record bundles, track the movement of medical records, ensure originals are returned and the log is updated
30. receive and process incoming correspondence, process outgoing post
31. provide case administration support for complex cases.
32. arrange pre-inquest and inquest hearings and prepare documents for disclosure to interested persons subject to the statutory and local requirements
33. monitor the court diary, ensure case administration tasks are completed in readiness for the hearing
34. Respond to all telephone calls and e-mail enquiries promptly and communicate with all members of the public, particularly bereaved family members, with sensitivity and compassion.
35. ensure remote inquest attendance links are created and distributed to families, witnesses and interested persons in accordance with time expectations
36. notify the leadership team where there may be a need for security or additional measures at a hearing
37. ensure details of hearings are publicly announced according to the statutory requirements
38. collaborate with the coroner, coroners investigation officers, coroners court ushers and court volunteers before, during and after the inquest to ensure smooth running
39. confirm that all witnesses, interested persons and family members have been notified of the hearing according to the statutory requirements
40. summons and make relevant arrangements for jury members

41. ensure jury bundles are available and where required prepare documents for jury members, if applicable to include the use of iPads
42. liaise with the coroners investigation officer to arrange for translators, interpreters or process servers
43. distribute regulation 28 reports and responses to relevant interested persons and the chief coroner
44. liaise where appropriate with registrars of births and deaths, crematorium referees, funeral directors and bereavement and medical examiner offices and any other relevant professional partners
45. receive, validate and process expense claims from witnesses and jurors
46. manage the pathology rota, arrange pathologist attendance (Via agency) and post-mortem lists
47. receive and process wristband errors
48. receive and process the provisional cause of death (short cause)
49. send the toxicology supplementary information to Kent Scientific Service as required
50. receive and add to the case record the CR2 notification of a body removal / transfer
51. Support the case officers with the transfer of deceased to an appropriate post-mortem mortuary.
52. provide digital recordings to interested persons subject to the statutory requirements
53. archive coroners records and concluded inquest cases, digitally onto the case record or paper records to the Kent Archive Service
54. liaise with the Kent Archive Service to retrieve archived files and ensure that requests for information are processed in a timely and efficient manner, ensure all documents are tracked
55. perform non-case related administrative duties
56. receive, validate and process invoices and claims according to service and KCC financial requirements
57. assist the contract manager and accountant with data and reports as requested to assist with budget planning
58. monitor and manage office consumables including stationery effectively and efficiently to avoid unnecessary expenditure or waste
59. maintain logs or produce reports as required for example mortuary, toxicology, wristband errors and property logs
60. where directed make a referral to the local authority or hospital trust (as relevant) to effect the funeral arrangements
61. record all reports concerning Treasure, liaise with the Finds officer and Finder, provide the notice of disclaimer or make arrangements for court
62. support the day to day administrative activity on behalf of the manager team as required, including but not limited to meetings
63. Perform non-case related administrative duties
64. alert the coroners office manager or line manager (as appropriate) at the earliest opportunity where there is a potential issue or complaint
65. perform the function of coroners court usher or jury officer as required including the effective functioning and operation of all court equipment, ensure all equipment is ready to use and all evidence and documents

are available and make the necessary arrangements to ensure smooth running of the court

66. work flexibly and collaboratively in order to contribute to the delivery of a resilient and effective coroner service

67. Health and safety BLUE BOOK