



April 2021

## APPLICANT INFORMATION PACK

Dear Candidate

### Reference your application for post of Coroners Court Usher (CCU)

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

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

- You must provide all relevant information on the online application form, 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 '**supporting information**' section to demonstrate how your experience, knowledge or skills and achievements will transfer to the position you are applying for, please provide examples.

### Shortlisting

Four mandatory questions and a scoring matrix are used to identify those candidates that demonstrate through the online application how they meet the selection criteria for the role. Successful candidates at this stage will be invited for an on-line IT assessment.

### The Assessment & Interview

Candidates that are successful at the pre interview IT assessment will be informed asap and invited for assessment & 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 and the recruitment process is completed.

### 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 Usher (CCU)**

The position of Coroners Court Usher (CCU) is an integral role within the coroner service. It is extremely rewarding, the work is continuous and often unpredictable other than to say that it can be pressured and emotionally charge. There are competing demands with the need to constantly problem solve, so you will be resilient and composed when working under pressure.

Once trained the CCUs day to day main duties and responsibilities will include (but are not limited to):

- Ensuring that the courtroom is prepared for the days Inquest listings.
- Greeting those coming to court for hearings such as witnesses, family members or other visitors.
- Ensuring witnesses and all Interested Persons are admitted into court either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams in a timely manner.
- Directing witnesses in the taking of oaths and swearing in jurors.
- ‘Sworn ushers’ have a duty to prevent anyone from approaching the jury without permission.
- Ensure all evidence is prepared in advance or handed to the jury or coroner as required.
- Passing messages as directed.
- Keeping public areas disciplined and under control.
- Administrative duties, such as transferring and saving of court recordings and attaching relevant documents and judicial forms onto our computer database.

All case related work in the coroners court is under explicit or implicit judicial direction from the presiding coroner and subject to chief coroner guidance and other statutory and non-statutory national and local policy and procedure.

## **Staffing Structure - Teamwork**

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 CCUs are supervised and line managed by a KCC Coroners Court Supervisor or designated Office Manager. Coroners have no line management responsibilities for KCC staff.

The current staffing structure consists of:

23 coroners investigation officers	8 coroners court officers
a pool of ‘permanent relief’ coroners court ushers	*4 coroners administration officers (*pilot temporary role)
1 coroners court supervisor	4 coroners office managers
0.4 FTE budget and contract officer	coroner service operations manager, head of service

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 Admin Officer (CAO) works between administrative functions and court duties.

The Coroners Court Usher (CCU) is based at the court venues, attends and manages all inquest hearings. On a day-to-day basis the CCU, CIO, CCO and CAO will work collaboratively to ensure seamless progression of cases reported to the Coroner Service.

There are 4 distinct coroner areas, each with a senior coroner who is an independent judicial officer and not a KCC employee. The court listings may be from any of the four areas and each day may contain multiple cases or one case lasting a full day or longer.

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 CCU role is being offered as a Permanent Relief (PR) contract and is based in Maidstone.

The CCU 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 flexitime 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 CCU post is KCC grade KR5 with an annual salary of £19,723 to £20,893 (at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021). All new KCC appointments are made at £19,723. 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.

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. Courts close for recess for the xmas period (at a date determined near the time) and resume usually in the first full working week of the new year. If you are required to work the designated KCC day (and it falls within the recess period) you will receive pay in the normal way.

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.

### **Work-base**

Although your work-base is Maidstone, subject to business need you may be asked to work from a satellite court location. 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/Courts 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. This is in line with guidance issued by the first chief coroner.

Normal court hours are Monday to Friday 8:30am to 16:30pm 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.

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**

The work is pressured and subject to continuous competing demands. 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 CCUs 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.