Candidate Information Pack

ASSISTANT CORONER

Inner South London and South London coroner areas

Relevant Authority:
London Borough of Southwark
London Borough of Croydon
Assistant Coroner Appointments
Inner South and South London
Application and Selection

The senior coroners and relevant (lead) local authorities for two South London coroner areas have chosen to conduct a joint recruitment process for assistant coroners. It is anticipated that successful applicants will be appointed to both jurisdictions but work regularly in one. Applicants without coronial experience should indicate how they intend managing office and coronial time commitment.

Applicants with coronial experience should indicate:-
- how many days worked since appointment
- how many days worked in last 12 months
- extent of experience in completing Forms 100A and 100B
- the number and types of inquests in the last 12 months, and if any Article 2

Please state the number of days you would be available to sit as a coroner.

Applicants should send a letter demonstrating how they meet the person specification, together with a short CV and names of two referees, one of whom should relate to recent work experience. NB: There is a word limit of 800 words.

Applications which do not show how the applicant meets the person specification will not be considered. If applicants have a preference as to which jurisdiction they work, they should state that in their application. Those wishing to have an informal discussion should contact one of the coroners by email: andrew.harris@southwark.gov.uk or hmc@southlondoncoroner.org. Application Packs can be requested from CoronersClerk.Enquiries@southwark.gov.uk or Joan.Browne@southlondoncoroner.org.

Applicants will be asked to make a 5 minute presentation at interview on the subject “What contribution will you make to promoting consistency of judicial decision making between coroners”

Recruitment Timetable
Southwark is leading on the recruitment process and all applications should be sent to Paul.Dumke@southwark.gov.uk by 26 October
Shortlisting w/c 5 November, Interview 26 November
Please indicate clearly in your application if you have a preference for a particular jurisdiction or have no preference and wish to be considered for both Inner South London and South London jurisdictions

London Inner South Jurisdiction
The jurisdiction comprises the population of the London Boroughs of Southwark (lead), Lambeth, Lewisham and Greenwich, which numbers about 1.2 million with a rich mix of cultures. It includes affluent suburbs and inner city socioeconomic deprivation, with most people working in service industries. It includes several major NHS Trust hospitals, two mental health trusts, two private hospitals and four prisons. About 3,600 deaths are reported and about 500 inquests heard each year, of which about 15-20 have juries. There are two courts located in 1 Tennis Street, Borough, SE1 1YD, where coroners are based. We use the public mortuary at Greenwich and local hospital mortuaries. Full details of the jurisdiction can be found on our website: www.innersouthlondoncoroner.org.uk.
London South Jurisdiction

South London Coroner’s Court is in the centre of Croydon and has a newly located and refurbished court. The jurisdiction has four Boroughs – Croydon (lead), Bexley, Bromley and Sutton. Very similar to Inner South, there are affluent areas but also more deprived ones. The population is multicultural. There are three main local hospitals (Croydon University, Princess Royal and St Helier) and the Royal Marsden. There are two large mental health Trusts in the jurisdiction, with some secure units. There are three mortuaries used by the court with a public mortuary at Croydon.
Job Description of Assistant Coroner

Accountable to

As a judicial office holder accountability for judicial decisions is to the High Court and for conduct to the Judicial Conduct Investigation Office. For management and service related matters accountability is to the Senior Coroner.

Post

Part time, fee paid judicial office holder. Appointment is made under the powers of Coroners & Justice Act 2009 (CJA). Nothing in this JD is to be read as making the post holder an employee. Once a Coroner is appointed, they are then a Judicial Office holder until they reach the age of 70 years (compulsory retirement age) unless they choose to resign or are removed by the Lord Chief Justice and Lord Chancellor prior to their 70th birthday.

Starting date

1st December 2018

Pay

Sessional per diem within national recommended range (£375-£474 per day) depending on the complexity of the work undertaken.

Purpose of the job

To assist senior coroners deliver a high quality coronial service mindful of the duties and responsibilities required in law, the needs of the bereaved and other interested persons, and available resources.

Principal roles

1. To carry out the legal duties of a coroner, drawing on the experience of staff and regularly review and contribute to efficient management of cases, ensuring that listings and hearings minimize avoidable adjournments.

2. To commit to developing and contributing to a programme of jurisdictional policy and practice, incorporating Chief Coroner’s and other national guidance.

3. To work with Senior Coroner, lead local authorities and Metropolitan Police Service, to achieve service efficiency and effectiveness and contribute to measuring and evaluating activity and performance.

4. To provide clear direction to staff on coroner investigations.

5. To stay up to date with coronial law and developments in coronial practice. To undertake any relevant training and development including mandatory training provided by the Judicial College and Chief Coroner. This may include shadowing or sitting with an experienced coroner.
6. To retain an experienced coroner as mentor, and maintain the relationship for support in challenging decision making and professional development

7. To develop areas of interest and expertise to advise and act as a resource for Senior Coroners and colleagues and attend and contribute to meetings

8. To be available if called upon, to participate in a 24 hour on call rota to advise on calls from coroner’s officers and others; on occasions be available to issue forms for urgent release of bodies to meet the expectations of diverse faiths, including at weekends and bank holidays.

9. To contribute expertise and cover in the event of a local disaster or emergency.

10. To be committed to teamwork, developing and sustaining good working relationships with colleagues, staff, external stakeholders, those who appear in court and the general public.

11. Any other duties commensurate with this post that may be required by Senior Coroners.
Conditions of Service

**Days of work:**

*Inner South London*

We are seeking to appoint one or two assistant coroners and anticipate that there will be about 60 sessions to cover in the year, probably comprising one fixed day per week and additional attendance on days when a jury inquest being held. We would expect an individual to be able to offer to sit for at least 30 days per year. Much of the work will be simple inquests and case management, not requiring any previous coronial experience. It is essential that an assistant ensures that the Clerk to HM Coroner at all times knows of availability and proposed variations.

*South London*

We are seeking to appoint one or two assistants at least one of whom would be an experienced inquest advocate familiar with Article 2 and jury coronial law and procedure. Experience as an Assistant coroner is not necessary. No fixed days will be offered. However, the court is looking to recruit lawyers with sufficient diary availability in the near future to be able to assist in the short-medium term. The Senior Coroner will assist with in-house training and new Assistant Coroners will be required to attend the mandatory Judicial College induction training as soon as reasonably practicable.

**Hours of work**

*Inner South London and South London*

This will require attendance at court from 08.30 until 17.00 or completion of hearing, whichever is the later. Willingness to participate in a 24-hour service across the jurisdiction is necessary.

**Places of work**

*Inner South London*

This will normally be 1 Tennis Street, SE1, Borough. There may be a need to attend Greenwich mortuary or work from other locations in the jurisdiction in unusual circumstances.

*South London:*

This will be at the South London Coroner’s Court, 2nd Floor, Davis House, Robert Street, Croydon, CR0 1QQ.
**Professional practice**

The appointee will be expected to meet expected standards of conduct of a judicial officer in line with the Guide to Judicial Conduct and associated guidance.

**Equality and Diversity**

Required to respect the rights of people under The Equality Act 2010 and conduct self in accordingly.

**Indemnity**

The Council will indemnify you for costs or damages in relation to legal proceedings in accordance with Regulation 17 of The Coroners Allowances, Fees and Expenses Regulations 2013.

**Politically restricted post**

This post is politically restricted under the terms of Schedule 3, paragraph 4 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

**Conflicts of interest**

The appointee must inform the Senior Coroner of all other permanent or part time appointments, and changes in these. The Senior Coroner should be informed of all potential conflicts of interests or suspicions of bias, which arise in managing or hearing a case.

**Health and Safety:**

The appointee must comply with relevant Health and Safety legislation.

**Complaints and Praise:**

There is an expectation that letters of complaint and praise are shared with the office and are discussed in confidence with the Senior Coroner (or for Inner South London, the Deputy).

**Pre-employment checks:**

These positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and applicants are required to disclose any convictions. Applicants must agree to pre-employment checks.

Due to the nature of the post, it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore any conviction, whether spent or unspent, must be declared. Applicants invited to interview will be required to complete a declaration form. The successful candidate will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
Applicants must specify in their application if they are subject of any disciplinary proceedings or complaint by any professional body to which they belong and clearly the outcome.

The candidate should declare any other matters which they believe should be brought to the attention of the Local Authority, particularly bearing in mind the basic set of guiding principles in the Guide to Judicial Conduct

**Appointment:**

The successful candidates will be appointed to the posts by the respective relevant authorities, once the consent of the Chief Coroner and Lord Chancellor have been obtained.
Assistant Coroner, Person Specification

Knowledge, including educational qualifications:

1. Barrister, Solicitor or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives satisfying the judicial appointment eligibility conditions with a minimum of 5 years' post-qualifying experience (CJA 2009 s23 and Schedule 3.) Below the age of 70 years. E

2. Thorough, up to date knowledge of legislation relating to Coroner’s duties. E

3. Knowledge of the requirements on coroners with regard to confidentiality, disclosure and the General Data Protection Regulations. E

4. Knowledge of structures and procedures of the police, in particular those relating to the investigation of sudden or suspicious deaths. E


6. Knowledge of coronial case law and its application D

7. Knowledge of a specialist area of forensic, medical, or legal practice relevant to the coronial role. D

Experience:

1. Experience sitting as a judicial officer or Assistant Coroner or Experience in court appearing as counsel or solicitor or Experience in complex legal case management E

2. Experience of conducting investigative enquiries, demonstrating clarity of thought in identifying relevant issues D

3. Experience of teamwork and working with people junior and senior and from different organisations and backgrounds D

4. Experience of managing or embracing change D
Aptitude, skills and competencies:

1. Be creative and receptive to new ideas, diverse needs and comfortable with change. D
2. Commitment to developing jurisdictional policies where appropriate and maintaining high standards of legal practice E
3. Be prepared to engage in peer review of own practice with colleagues and to joint sitting or shadowing where appropriate for training purposes and to assess own learning needs and support peers. To accept Appraisal; when it is introduced. E
4. Effective verbal and written communication skills and the ability to explain legal and medical terms to people from non-legal or non-medical backgrounds. E
5. Excellent analytical, decision making and administrative skills. E
6. IT literacy, including experience of using Microsoft Office package and with e-mail and internet systems. E
7. Ability to work under pressure and to tight deadlines E
8. Ability to work effectively with a wide range of people (e.g. colleagues, coroners’ officers, IPs, police officers, pathologists, mortuary staff, local authority staff, witnesses). E
9. Ability to deal with emotionally charged situations that require sensitive handling and confident/positive judgement, showing sensitivity to the bereaved and the needs of families of different cultures and religions E
10. A commitment to public service at the highest standards valuing honesty and integrity. E

Key: D Desirable E Essential