



Cumberland Council

Post Specification

Date	October 2022
Post Group Number	PG 7285
Post Title	Coroner's Inquest Clerk
Job Family	Business Support
Job Family Role Profile	BS6
Final Grade	Grade 7

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile

Service Area description

The role of the HM Coroner is to ascertain the circumstances surrounding specific types of deaths. They hold an inquiry / investigation, and any subsequent inquest, into deaths that are unexplained or unnatural (other than natural illness or disease). These may be as a result of violence, an accident or neglect, or occurred in public institutions where liberty has been deprived, such as a prison, care home or whilst in police custody.

HM Coroner also makes recommendations to relevant authorities or organisations where there are issues of significant interest to the wider community in relation to the prevention of future deaths.

HM Coroner also investigates the circumstances of items found which are classified as 'Treasure'.

The Coroners Service is a customer focused service dealing with a wide variety of stakeholders (such as medical practitioners, police, undertakers, next of kin/bereaved, etc.), and it delivers services to individuals and families at one of the most difficult and emotional periods in an individual's life, where there is the sudden death of a loved one or family member.

Main Purpose

To work with HM Coroners in Cumbria and in accordance with the relevant legislation and policies, support HM Coroner by assist with various aspects of the preparation, hosting, and administration, of Coroner's Inquest Court proceedings, and where appropriate other related tasks in the wider coronial process.

To be present at inquest hearings, and provide efficient, effective, and professional assistance to HM Coroner, and those attending the inquest.

To assist in ensuring inquests take place in accordance with HM Coroners requirements and meet the needs of the bereaved families / Next of Kin.

Key job specific accountabilities

1. Work flexibly and collaboratively with HM Coroners and the wider Coroners Service team to support the efficient and effective hosting of coronial inquests in Cumbria.
2. Provide the highest standards of customer care, and act with professionalism and to the high standards that befit the judicial status of the service, the Court and that of HM Coroner as a Judicial Officer.
3. To work flexibly and effectively with colleagues, and any other professional partners and stakeholders who may attend a Coroner's Inquest.
4. To ensure the effective use and operation of court equipment and resources, including the use of ICT to support virtual / multi-channel inquests and the management of audio recordings.
5. Assist HM Coroner by the reading / presentation of documentary evidence such as reports and statements in open court.
6. To act as first point of contact at inquest proceedings, ensure attendees are in Court in a timely manner, and where appropriate assist the families of the Deceased and next of Kin, witnesses and/or other interested persons with any operational requirements
7. Assist in ensuring any relevant local authority policies and procedures are adhered to by those on site, and help in other aspects such as maintaining the security of the building (Doors are locked/unlocked at the correct times, visitors sign in, water dispensers are stocked, etc.)
8. Maintain any relevant skills and knowledge, including any local authority policies and procedures relevant to the position, and processes put in place by HM Coroner at inquest.
9. Assist with any relevant operational requirements where a Jury is required at the inquest, including, but not limited to, 'meet and greet', distribution of documents and act as usher to ensure they are in the Court room at the required times.
10. Work with the wider support team and assist with any general administrative support or tasks related to the inquest process.
11. Ensure court recordings, documents and case files are stored appropriately and where required after inquest prepared for safe transfer to Records Management.
12. Take responsibility for own actions and managing own workload and tasks to achieve the required standards and outcomes and ensure any relevant matters regarding the smooth running of the Court are brought to the attention of HM Coroner.
13. To have a proactive approach to the work of HM Coroner and inquests and maintaining effective relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.
14. Undertake any other such additional duties or tasks commensurate with the position, as may be appropriate and reasonable to meet the needs of the Coroners Service, or the wider council, as may be specified by either HM Coroner, the Team Leader / Lead Coroners Officer, and / or the Service Manager

Please note annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process

Key facts and figures of the post

Budget Responsibilities

- No direct budget responsibilities

Staff Management Responsibilities

- No direct staff management responsibilities

IMPORTANT: The post holder must be robust and resilient by nature and have the appropriate character that gives them the ability to cope with the emotional aspects of the work of the service and court proceedings and dealing with the subject of sudden deaths on a daily basis. The role will sometimes include viewing and listening to potentially distressing and/or graphic information and dealing with the bereaved / families / NoK who may be potentially distressed.

Essential

Minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade C or above, NVQ 2 in a related field or equivalent demonstrable / proven other experience providing enhanced support within a legislative, regulatory, medical, or technical service or framework, (i.e. from a legal, medical and/or legislative/regulatory service background)

Proven and demonstrable experience in a customer facing role dealing sensitively and empathically with difficult and potential emotional or distressing situations, and managing large groups of people

Strong communication skills with a customer service focus and high standards of customer care

Demonstrate well developed self-awareness and understand the specific requirements of a sensitive public facing role

Experience dealing with the bereaved/next of kin or those who may be distressed and emotional

Experience of reading aloud in public to large groups, potentially for extended periods and including documents with medical and legal terminology

Proven team player who can still work independently where required

Organised and methodical, with good problem-solving skills, excellent time keeping, accuracy and attention to detail

Be considered in your actions with the ability to react positively to changing situations

Ability to work to very tight deadlines, organise workload according to changing priorities and remain calm during difficult circumstances

The ability to deal with sensitive, potentially graphic, and highly confidential information

Flexible and enthusiastic approach to tasks, workload, people and working situations within a dynamic and fast-moving environment

IT literate (Microsoft Office) and some experience working with video conferencing and audio recording equipment, and knowledge of case management systems

Awareness of data protection and confidentiality

Understanding of equality and diversity in all aspects of work

Suitable attire and appearance appropriate to a legal / judicial court setting

Additional

Some understanding of Courts procedures would be advantage, but not essential as training will be given

Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job working circumstances

Emotional Demands	Potential for the bereaved/next of kin and members of the public to be distressed and emotional, with the rare potential for conflict between families · Dealing with information that is sensitive, and linked to potentially distressing situations including reading reports that may contain graphic detail and sight of upsetting photographs / images · Time-bound workload with conflicting priorities and potentially short deadlines
Physical Demands	Minimal physical demands
Working Conditions	Primarily office / Court based

Other Factors

Misc. Notes or requirements relevant to the position

Due to the nature of the Coroners Service and that inquests are Court proceedings there is a requirement to dress in smart formal office attire (such as a business suit, collar and tie, etc.).

Where there was an increase in inquest volumes or demand, the post holder will be asked to provide reasonable additional cover out-with their normal working week / hours to meet the needs of the service.

Occasionally, subject to the needs of HM Coroner, you may be required to undertake your duties at an alternative venue.

Important information

Under current legislation local authorities are responsible for the provision and funding of the local Coronial Services, however, all HM Coroners are 'independent judicial officers' and are not employed by or accountable directly to the authority. They are independent of both Local and Central Government and are required to act in accordance with legislation and various statutory instruments. The local authority cannot monitor performance, discipline or give formal direction to HM Coroner.