

Job Description

Post Title Coroner's Officer

Role Profile	_ Specialist BCP Band H
Service/Team	_ Environment Services/Bereavement, Coroner & Mortuary/Coroner
Reports to	_ Bereavement, Coroner & Mortuary Manager / Senior Coroners Officer
Responsible for	_ n/a
Number of posts	_ n/a
Post number	_ 9647

My job improves the quality of life for the people of Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole by ensuring all deaths reported to the Coroner's Service are properly investigated and concluded within the statutory framework working alongside agency partners, providing guidance and support to the bereaved and death care community.

Career Grade _ n/a

Job Overview

The Dorset Coroner's Service investigates the circumstances of all deaths where there is reason to suspect that the cause of death is unknown, is violent or unnatural, or occurred whilst the deceased was in lawful custody.

The Coroner's Officer supports the Coroner by the provision of an effective and efficient investigative and administrative service to enable the Coroner to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in connection with the occurrence of sudden and reportable deaths. They will also provide accurate and timely information and appropriate guidance to bereaved people on deaths reported to the Coroner of a natural or un-natural basis.

Key Responsibilities

- Act within the scope of Coronial law, including the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 and the Coroners (Inquests) Rules 2013 and other relevant statutory provisions and case law.
- To comply with written advice and guidance as directed by the Senior Coroner.
- Assess reports of sudden, violent, suspicious, unnatural and other reportable deaths in accordance with local practice directions, making preliminary enquiries of each death case assigned and keeping the Coroner informed as required.
- Liaise with the police and other emergency services including GPs and hospitals for the purpose of a complete and thorough investigation.
- To advise the next of kin of the Coroner's processes required to investigate the death and obtain the funeral authorities and death certificate.
- To liaise with the family in all cases to see whether they have any particular concerns or relevant information concerning the circumstances of the death and communicate with all members of the public with sensitivity and compassion, particularly bereaved family members.
- Gather information, including social and medical history, to create and progress cases.

This job description is not exhaustive and reflects the type and range of tasks, responsibilities and outcomes associated with this post.

- To collate and gather evidence from a wide range of agencies including taking statements and gathering information from relevant parties for the attention of the Coroner.
- Maintain all casework files using the coronial case management software system according to pre-approved workflows ensuring case files are kept up to date for business continuity and resilience purposes.
- Provide a report to the Coroner in all cases, enabling the Coroner to have sufficient information to make judicial decisions.
- Investigate all deaths referred to the Coroner including those where a non-natural event may have contributed to the death.
- Discuss with GP's and Hospital Doctors facts surrounding a death in order to facilitate the issuing of the Medical Certificate for Cause of Death, where appropriate, negating the need for a post-mortem examination.
- To arrange for a post-mortem examination when requested by the Coroner, including arrangements for transfer of the deceased, and liaison with the family of the deceased, and any other person at the direction of the Coroner.
- To provide the pathologist with relevant information by preparing a report regarding the circumstances of the death and obtaining medical records prior to any post-mortem being carried out.
- Attend post-mortem examinations when necessary.
- To liaise with relevant authorities of any possible contagious disease.
- Explain each step of the Coronial process to the next of kin or bereaved family members and other interested persons and to keep them informed of progress including any delay and make relevant and timely disclosure to interested persons at the direction of the Coroner.
- During an investigation collect and secure all necessary evidence, ensuring preservation and security of physical and photographic exhibits to create an investigation case file with a view to proving (a) identification of the deceased; (b) when, where and how the deceased came by their death; and (c) the medical cause of death.
- Evaluate evidence and information obtained on an ongoing basis and prepare for the Coroner, an investigative case for an inquest hearing.
- Manage investigative caseload relating to the legal recording and investigation of deaths within the jurisdiction of HM Coroner for the County of Dorset and ensure all administrative tasks in connection with the case are completed.
- Respond promptly and professionally to requests for information and explanation, whether by telephone, written communication or in person as directed by the Coroner.
- Assist with the arrangements and to attend inquests. Ensuring witnesses, evidence, bereaved families and other relevant parties are in attendance and supported.
- Support the administrative support teams in the delivery of the service.
- Effectively contribute to the development and implementation of service and policies, procedures.
- Co-ordinate processes and investigations in relation to case management work-flow arrangements.
- Comply with GDPR at all times and act with discretion.
- Inquire as directed into finds of treasure when reported to the Coroner.

Specific Qualifications and Experience

- Degree educated with 3 A levels, NVQ 4 in Business Administration (or equivalent experience) (**Essential**)

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- Good working knowledge of ICT including Excel, Word, Outlook and other programmes relevant to the role (**Essential**)
- Extensive experience of operating effectively within an administrative role (**Essential**)
- Knowledge of Coronial Investigations (**Desirable**)
- Medical or legal knowledge or experience of working in a coroner's service or relevant bereavement related area (**Desirable**)
- Knowledge of Coronial Law and investigation (**Desirable**)
- Work towards and maintain an appropriate level of competence in the procedures and policies operated by the Coroner's Office in the investigation and management of reportable matters (**Essential**)
- Able to write concise and structured reports and files (**Essential**)

Personal Qualities & Attributes

- Attention to detail and methodical approach to work at all times and be able to prioritise where necessary (**Essential**)
- Able to work under pressure and to tight deadlines by planning and organising own workload in an environment of change and where there are competing demands (**Essential**)
- Able to work collaboratively and unsupervised (**Essential**)
- Develop relationships which have an influence on service improvement in your area (**Desirable**)
- Possess mature interactive communication skills with the ability to deal with potentially difficult and volatile situations in a professional and calm manner (**Essential**)
- Possess a high level of resilience and emotional intelligence (**Essential**)
- Highly motivated with a confident demeanour (**Essential**)
- Able to deal with distressing situations in a professional, dignified and respectful manner without compromising the needs and reputation of the service (**Essential**)
- Demonstrates the highest standards of personal conduct, honesty, integrity that inspires trust and confidence (**Essential**)
- Proactive and supportive team player (**Essential**)
- Contribute to and celebrate the success of the whole team (**Essential**)

Job Requirements

- DBS check and Police Vetting (**Essential**)
- Must be able to travel, using public or other forms of transport where they are viable, or by holding a valid UK driving licence (**Essential**)
- To be rostered on 'call out' duty with other Coroners Officers on a 6-week shift pattern (**Essential**)
- Some weekend working including public holidays within a shift pattern (**Essential**)
- Be flexible to work alone and as part of a team where appropriate, use initiative and take appropriate decisions where necessary (**Essential**)
- Be flexible to work both within office premises and at home (**Desirable**)
- Able to examine a deceased person, whether the death is recent or whether there is a level of decomposition or disfigurement (**Desirable**)
- Basic knowledge of the human anatomy (**Desirable**)

Prepared by: Liz Hall

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