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## JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR CORONERS

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**To: Chief Executives (London Boroughs, Metropolitan Districts, County Councils  
and Unitary Councils in England and Wales)**

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8 January 2018

### **CORONERS' CIRCULAR No 62**

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **Coroners' pay guidance**

This guidance must be read in conjunction with JNC circular No. 61 (copy attached). This sets out the principles of the agreement reached and indicated that the JNC would produce guidance to assist local decision-making in respect of the approach to be taken in determining pay within the appropriate range. That guidance is now set out below.

The level of pay will be determined locally, in line with the complexity of the coroner area. This guidance is intended to provide assistance to councils on how the factors should be interpreted, without directing or being overly prescriptive. It aims to provide those whose responsibility it is to determine and decide on a local evidential basis, the appropriate level of pay. This joint guidance seeks to identify factors to consider in determining the complexity of a coroner's area in order to consider the appropriate pay point at a local level.

In making the assessment of the relevant pay level to be applied locally it should be on the basis that all the duties and responsibilities are being performed at full capability as outlined within the jointly agreed and adopted job descriptions (within the KFH report commissioned by the JNC). Councils are reminded that the pay framework does not cover non-statutory out of hours duties. The KFH report can be found at <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/coroners>.

The factors should be considered holistically in order to arrive at a balanced overarching picture of an Area's complexity. It is not intended to be a simple numbers exercise.

In considering the factors below the assessment of the relative complexity of a coronial area should be considered in terms of the likelihood of the presence of these factors to require additional coronial intervention beyond that which would be normally expected and cannot be addressed solely through additional Assistant Coroner capacity. Similarly, the absence of such factors should be considered in

terms of a reduction in the likelihood of coronial intervention compared to that normally expected. In practical terms, the difference in the types of an institution present in an area are likely to provide for different demands upon the coronial service (e.g. local prison as compared to an open prison or a large acute hospital compared to a community hospital) and the overall assessment should be on the basis of the coronial area as a whole.

In considering all factors local knowledge/experience/risk will be a feature and should be evidence based. These factors include:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>For consideration</b>
Prisons and other institutions of state detention.	Are there any? Type of institution/s - where more vulnerable people are detained e.g. local prisons, young offenders institutions, female prisons and/or immigration detention centres. Number of institutions.
Mental Health Unit(s)	Are there any? Type of such units i.e. in-patients Number of units.
Hospitals with areas of specialism	Type of such hospitals e.g. tertiary hospital (tertiary characterised by offering specialised consultative care, usually on referral from primary or secondary medical care personnel, by specialists working in a centre that has personnel and facilities for special investigation and treatment.), hospitals with specialist units e.g. neurological, stroke, neo-natal units. Number of such hospitals.
Caseload	Caseload of the respective coroner  It should be noted that it may be possible for a coroner (including a part-time coroner) to have a low but quite complex caseload e.g. due to a number of factors of complexity and that would need to be taken into account in determining the local pay point. Conversely, it may be possible for a coroner to have a high caseload of low complexity.

In addition to the above factors there may be an exceptional local factor that it is determined is appropriate to be taken into account e.g. a major transport hub such as an international airport or military port/hub. As with all other factors you will wish to be mindful of the number, type, and local evidence of risk/complexity.

## **Senior and Area Coroners**

The factors set out above would apply to both Senior (full-time and part-time) and Area Coroners and we would anticipate them being placed at the same point within the appropriate range for the coronial area.

## **Part-time Senior Coroners**

Part-time senior coroners must keep a note of time spent on coronial business including details of days worked, indicating time worked (half or full day), where and what work undertaken and they may be required to provide a “fee note” in this respect. How such a note would look in practice is a matter for local determination. How and when payment is made to part-time senior coroners is a matter for local determination. Earnings will be capped at the level of a full-time senior coroner in a similarly complex area.

## **Assistant Coroners**

We would expect a broad correlation between the pay of a Senior Coroner and the daily rate determined for Assistant Coroners working within that same coroner area. Where the Senior Coroner role is paid at the mid-point or below then the mid-point of the Assistant's range should be a ceiling. Where the Senior Coroner role is paid above the mid-point then that same figure should be a floor. Assistant Coroners will be expected to operate across the complexity of the area/role as per the jointly agreed job description.

## **Other issues**

Performance management - local authorities will be aware that at present, they are unable to formally performance manage coroners. This matter is outside of the remit of the JNC. However, it is believed that the Chief Coroner at some future stage will be providing guidance on performance management.

Next review - The JNC's pay ranges will next be reviewed in September 2018 with a view that any agreed changes would be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

Yours faithfully

**SIMON PANNELL**  
**JENNIFER LEEMING**

Joint Secretaries

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## JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR CORONERS

**To: Chief Executives (London Boroughs, Metropolitan Districts, County Councils and Unitary Councils in England and Wales) (copy for Treasurer)**

2 November 2017

### CORONERS' CIRCULAR No 61

Dear Sir/Madam

#### Coroners' pay

We are writing to update you on our negotiations regarding the pay of coroners.

As you are aware the JNC for Coroners agreed to undertake a job evaluation (JE) exercise to assess the roles set out in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

We commissioned Korn Ferry Hay Group to undertake the job evaluation exercise to enable us to develop a grading arrangement based on broader criteria than the population based approach taken in the past. That exercise has created new model job profiles and has been able to take account of criteria relevant to both local authority and judicial contexts. It has also been the first opportunity to consider through the JNC pay recommendations with regard to Area and Assistant Coroners. Having considered the outcome of the technical evaluation exercise and looked at a wide range of potential pay benchmark data, the two sides have reached agreement in principle on an approach, details of which are set out below.

- Senior coroners - a range of £117,000 to £130,000. The salary includes statutory out of hours work as set out in legislative provisions. The current JNC 5.5% salary pension supplement will no longer apply.
- Part-Time senior coroners – a base salary of £20,000 and then a daily rate range of £440 to £500 with earnings capped at the level of a full-time senior coroner in a similarly complex area. The 5.5% pension allowance provision would fall as would the current provision in some authorities of 'county loadings' of at least 10% of salary. This would also see the abolition of long inquest payments. Legislation requires that all senior coroners are salaried which precludes falling back solely on a day rate for part-timers. A fixed salary will also cover the need for coroners to be available at all times even given they are notionally part-time. The proposed range of day rates is based on removing the suggested level of £20,000 from the senior coroner range and then dividing by 220 to achieve a range of daily rates which is transparent and equitable. The

salary includes statutory out of hours work as set out in legislative provisions.

- Area coroners – a range from £87,000 to £100,000. The JNC 5.5% pension allowance will not to be sought in addition (Area Coroners have not previously been covered by the JNC). The salary would include statutory out of hours responsibility to the extent that it applies to Area Coroners as set out in legislative provisions.
- Assistant coroners – daily rate from £375 to £454 with a ceiling/floor mid-point for less complex/highly complex areas. This approach takes account of the 2 levels within the single role that Korn Ferry Hay identified in its job evaluation exercise. The 5.5% pension allowance would not be sought in addition should access to the LGPS be provided to assistant coroners.

Joint guidance will be produced before the end of 2017 to assist local decision-making in respect of the above approach. Until that happens, no action is necessary.

Background information in relation to this work is contained in past circulars which can be found at the following link: <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/coroners>

We are grateful to the technical advisers from local authorities who have worked with us on this exercise.

Yours faithfully

**SIMON PANNELL**  
**JENNIFER LEEMING**

Joint Secretaries

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