



CHIEF CORONER

GUIDANCE No.20

KEY SKILLS FOR ASSISTANT CORONERS

1. The purpose of this Guidance is to provide advice for senior coroners (SCs) in bringing forward newly appointed assistant coroners (ACs) into coroner work.
2. SCs are expected to satisfy themselves that a newly appointed AC (with no or limited previous coroner experience) has sufficient knowledge of the key skills required before acting alone.
3. If the key skills are sufficiently satisfied, the AC may be allowed to act alone before completing the compulsory coroner induction course. If not, then it may be necessary for local training to take place before they can act alone. The compulsory induction course normally takes place twice each year and upon notification of appointment the AC should apply to attend the next induction course. The Judicial College also host a cross-jurisdiction induction course and the newly appointed AC should also attend this course.
4. For this purpose a Key Skills Checklist form has been designed. It is attached to this Guidance.
5. SCs should therefore provide arrangements so that newly appointed ACs may learn and develop the necessary experience and skills so as to be able to satisfy each key skill.
6. When a key skill is completed it should be signed off on the Form. A completed form should be sent to the Chief Coroner's office.
7. Not all skills need be completed at once before some kinds of work may be undertaken. For example, an AC may have court skills and experience but little knowledge of coroner office work. Ideally, all skills are learned together, as they complement each other, and inform all aspects of an AC's developing skills. But it is recognized that some skills may be complete before others, so that some areas of work may be undertaken before others.
8. It is the responsibility of the SC to ensure that each skill is completed to his/her satisfaction. It is essential that all ACs are sufficiently qualified before they act in any coroner capacity without supervision.
9. Opportunities should always be provided for a newly appointed AC to learn the procedures of the local office and for in-house training and shadowing. It is also important that the SC should work together with all coroners in the team and hold regular team meetings to discuss local issues of importance.
10. All ACs will be appraised each year by a SC. An appraisal will cover a number of core competencies of a judicial office holder: assimilating and clarifying information, managing

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work efficiently, working with others, communicating effectively, exercising judgment and possessing and building knowledge. The key skills identified and set out in the checklist will fall into one or more of these key competencies. Any judicial decision is one that is capable of being the subject of a review by a higher court and so it is essential that all newly appointed coroners are given the right steer by their SCs.

HH JUDGE MARK LUCRAFT QC
CHIEF CORONER

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