



Chief Coroner

GUIDANCE No.3

OATHS and ROBES

OATHS and AFFIRMATIONS

Introduction

1. Coroners are independent judicial office holders and must therefore take the judicial oath or affirmation on taking office. The form of the judicial oath in English and Welsh is set out at Annex A below. There is no need for any additional oath of allegiance.
2. Coroners appointed before the implementation of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 may not have been required to take an oath on appointment. However, the principles underlying the oath/affirmation still apply to them.
3. Taking the oath or affirmation is not a pre-condition of sitting on an inquest or conducting an investigation, so a swearing-in ceremony can be arranged at a convenient time following a coroner's appointment.

Senior coroners

4. For Senior Coroners, the judicial oath or affirmation will be taken before the Lord Chief Justice, the Chief Coroner, a Deputy Chief Coroner, or another senior judge, in a short but formal swearing-in ceremony.
5. The Chief Coroner's office will arrange the swearing-in ceremony at a convenient time following the Senior Coroner's appointment.

Area coroners and assistant coroners

6. Area and Assistant coroners will take the judicial oath or affirmation before the senior coroner in the coroner's court.
7. It is suggested that there is a brief, formal event in court, in which the new coroner takes the oath or affirmation and is then welcomed to the coroner area. The Chief Coroner's office can provide a suggested procedure, if requested.

ROBES

8. Robes may be worn by coroners for formal or ceremonial occasions (including swearing-in ceremonies), provided that the person in charge of the event agrees this is appropriate. There is no need to differentiate between Senior Coroners, Area Coroners and Assistant Coroners in relation to the types of robes that are

worn. The wearing of robes for formal or ceremonial occasions should never be mandatory.

9. To maintain consistency across England and Wales and reflect best practice, robes should not be worn by coroners on any other occasion, including in hearings (and that includes gown, bands, wig, or a combination of them).
10. Counsel and solicitors should not be expected to wear robes at coroner's courts.
11. With the exception of appearing in photographs at formal/ceremonial occasions, a coroner should not be photographed in robes for any public purpose, including for the coroner area's website.

HHJ Thomas Teague KC
The Chief Coroner

18 April 2023

ANNEX A

Oaths and Affirmations

Judicial Oath

“I, _____, do swear by Almighty God that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign King Charles the Third in the office of [Senior/ Area/ Assistant coroner], and I will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this realm, without fear or favour, affection or ill will.”

Judicial Affirmation

“I, _____, do solemnly sincerely and truly declare and affirm that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign King Charles the Third in the office of [Senior/ Area/ Assistant coroner], and I will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of this Realm without fear or favour, affection or ill will.”

Judicial Oath in Welsh

“Yr wyf i, _____, yn tyngu i Dduw Hollalluog y byddaf yn gwasanaethu’n ofalus a chywir ein Harglwydd Sofran y Brenin Charles y Trydydd yn y swydd fel [Uwch Grwner / Crwner Dosbarth / Crwner Cynorthwyol], a byddaf yn delio’n gywir â phob math o bobl yn ôl deddfau ac arferion y deyrnas hon, heb ofn na ffafr, hoffter na drwgdeimlad.”

Judicial Affirmation in Welsh

“Yr wyf i, _____, yn datgan a chadarnhau yn ddifrifol ac yn ddiffuant y byddaf yn gwasanaethu’n ofalus a chywir ein Harglwydd Sofran y Brenin Charles y Trydydd yn y swydd fel [Uwch Grwner / Crwner Dosbarth / Crwner Cynorthwyol], a byddaf yn delio’n gywir â phob math o bobl yn ôl deddfau ac arferion y Deyrnas hon, heb ofn na ffafr, hoffter na drwgdeimlad.”

Other acceptable forms of the oaths above

Hindu faith

Members of the Hindu faith will omit the words “I swear by Almighty God” and substitute the words “I swear by the Gita” or “Tyngaf i Gita”.

Jewish faith

Members of the Jewish faith use the oaths above although some may wish to affirm.

Muslim faith

Members of the Muslim faith will omit the words “I swear by Almighty God” and substitute the words “I swear by Allah” or “Tyngaf i Alah”.

Sikh faith

Members of the Sikh faith will omit the words “I swear by Almighty God” and substitute the words “I swear by Guru Nanak” or “Tyngaf i’n Gwrw Nanac”.