

Protocol for Legal Professionals Wishing to Raise Concerns Informally About Coroner Behaviour

Issued by the Chief Coroner of England and Wales

July 2026

Introduction

1. There are both formal and informal routes through which legal professionals¹ may raise concerns about the behaviour of a coroner.
2. This protocol sets out the process for legal professionals who wish to raise a concern **informally**. It commits to writing a process which has long been in existence. An informal approach can be the preferred route for those who are looking for a quick resolution or whose concern relates to a less serious issue, for instance isolated incidences of brief loss of temper, or an apparently isolated ill-judged remark.
3. More serious concerns, including allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination, misconduct, or repeated inappropriate behaviour, should be referred to the [Judicial Conduct Investigations Office](#) (JCIO) which is responsible for formal complaints against judicial office holders.
4. This protocol is intended to support a professional, respectful, and constructive working environment within the coroner service and to promote early resolution where it is appropriate.

Procedure for Raising Concerns Informally

Direct Approach

5. Coroners are expected to foster a working environment where diversity is recognised and valued, and everyone is treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect. Therefore, all coroners should all be open to feedback if their actions may have caused discomfort or offence.
6. If you are a legal professional and an issue has arisen, you may choose to speak directly with the coroner concerned about their behaviour and its impact upon you. Such discussions should normally take place after the conclusion of an inquest and in private. Either party may choose to have a colleague

¹ Legal professionals include barristers, solicitors and legal executives. This protocol does not apply to members of the public who are not legal professionals.

present, and the legal professional should give some indication in advance of what it is they wish to discuss.

Indirect Approach

7. If you do not feel able to raise the matter directly with the coroner concerned, you may approach the relevant Senior Coroner for the area.
8. Where the concern relates to the Senior Coroner, the matter may be raised with either the Chief Coroner or a Deputy Chief Coroner.
9. You may make the approach personally or ask a senior representative within your organisation, chambers, law firm, local authority, or professional body to raise the matter on your behalf.
10. The person raising the concern should provide:
 - A clear account of the incident(s);
 - The date and location of the incident(s);
 - Details of any witnesses;
 - Any supporting documents or information;
 - An explanation of the impact of the behaviour.

Alternative Route

11. If you are unable or unwilling to approach the relevant Senior Coroner, you may contact the Chief Coroner's Office directly by email chiefcoronersoffice@judiciary.uk.
12. The Chief Coroner may determine that a Deputy Chief Coroner or another Senior or Area Coroner may be appropriately placed to address the concern.
13. This route should not be used where the matter has already been considered by the relevant Senior Coroner.

Action

14. Those receiving concerns under this protocol should seek to provide an environment in which individuals feel able to raise concerns without fear of adverse consequences.
15. Concerns should be considered promptly, fairly, and proportionately. Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible.

16. The person considering the concern will normally discuss the matter with the coroner concerned.
17. Where requested, reasonable steps will be taken to protect the identity of the individual raising the concern. However, anonymity cannot always be guaranteed if meaningful action is to be taken. An individual's identification will not be disclosed without permission.
18. Following consideration of the matter, the person who raised the concern (or their representative) will be informed, in general terms, of the outcome and any action taken.
19. The informal process is intended to resolve concerns at an early stage where appropriate. It does not prevent any individual from pursuing a formal complaint through the appropriate formal complaints process.

Appendix: Routes for Raising an Informal Concern About Coroner Behaviour

Concern relates to	Appropriate contact
Assistant Coroner	Senior Coroner for the coroner area
Area Coroner	Senior Coroner for the coroner area
Senior Coroner	Chief Coroner's Office
More than one coroner within a coroner area	Senior Coroner, or Chief Coroner's Office where appropriate
Concern involving a Senior Coroner and/or where local resolution is inappropriate	Chief Coroner's Office

Chief Coroner's Office

Individuals who are uncertain about the appropriate route, or who do not know who to contact, may contact the Chief Coroner's Office for guidance. The Office will assist in identifying the most appropriate person to consider the concern and will respect confidentiality as far as possible.