



Please complete this section to tell us more about you.

About you

Full name

Job title or capacity in which you are responding (e.g. member of the public etc.)

If 'Other', please specify

Date

Company name/organisation (if applicable)

Address

Postcode

If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response please tick this box.

Address to which this acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above

If you are a representative of a group, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent

List of questions for response

We would welcome responses to the following questions set out in this consultation paper. Please email your completed form to coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk or it fax to 020 3334 2233.

Question 1: do you agree that the proposals set out in this consultation paper will impose no significant new burdens on local coroner's services or others?

Yes No

If you disagree, what new costs would arise? And how could these be mitigated?

New costs will arise if there is an obligation to process significant amounts of inquest work within three months.

Question 2: do you have any views on the proposed changes to coroner areas under the 2009 Act, as set out in the table at Annex E? If so, please give details.

Essex County Council welcomes the proposal to create a single jurisdiction from the former Essex and Thurrock and Southend and South East Essex jurisdictions.

In recognition of the Access to Local Services issue referred to in paragraph 19 of the Consultation it is proposed to continue to hold inquests in some cases in the Southend Area.

Question 3: do you support the proposal to amend the Judicial Appointments Order 2008 so that Fellows of CILEX are eligible for coronial appointments?

Yes No

Please give reasons for your response.

Question 4: in your experience what difference has the current Guide to coroners and inquests and Charter for coroner services made since it was published?

The current Guide has been an extremely useful aid, an authoritative Guide to distribute to the bereaved. The inclusion of guidelines has assisted the Service in planning and goal setting and given a wider perspective of their work to the staff of the Service.

Question 5: the new Guide to coroner services (at Annex D) revises the Guide to coroners and inquests and Charter for coroner services, so that it is consistent with the 2009 Act. Do you think the new document is a helpful summary of what to expect during a coroner investigation?

Yes No

If not, please explain your answer.

The new document is welcomed. It is clear and sensitive and improved by the amalgamation of the two sections contained in the previous guidance.

Question 6: is there anything else we should cover in the Guide to coroner services, or cover differently?

Yes No

If so, please explain your answer.

There may be some benefit in including reference to faith groups and also a target for the day to day work as well as the inquest work.

Question 7: should the new coroners rules include a target date for completing inquests?

Yes No

If so, what should this target be? Would three months be appropriate?

Yes No

Please give your reasons.

A three months target for the completion of inquests would be difficult to achieve for all the reasons set out in the text of the Consultation. It might be achievable for very routine cases but in any event could result in raising the expectations of the bereaved in all cases. It may impinge unfavourably on the quality of inquests if a time target is substituted or imposed. There are instances where it is better for the bereaved for an inquest to take longer because it gives them more time to adjust to their loss and make a constructive contribution to the inquest process. The imposition of a three month target would not be cost neutral and may result in a target focussed approach to inquests rather than quality focussed approach.

Question 8: are you aware of a time when a coroner has in practice needed to be available out of hours for duties not relating to a post-mortem examination or organ donation?

Yes No

If so, please give details.

The only instance where it may be necessary for a Coroner to be available other than in the circumstances mentioned is in the case of a mass fatality incident either within the area or concerning a point of entry or departure.

Question 9: are you content with this approach to the drafting of the regulations on post-mortem examinations?

Yes No

If you are not, please give your reasons.

Question 10: are you content with the draft regulation which says that a body should normally be released within 30 days, and that if this is not possible, the coroner must explain why?

Yes No

If not, please explain your answer.

The practice in Essex is already in line with the Home Office circular.

Question 11: do you agree that one month (with the possibility of seeking a one month extension) should be sufficient for a person to respond to a coroner's reports of actions to prevent other deaths?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain your reasons.

The one month plus a one month extension proposal ought to be sufficient. It is suggested that if further time is allowed then there should be provision for a monitoring timetable to be imposed.

Question 12: do you agree that the draft regulations to be made under section 43 (Annex A) will ensure more consistent standards in the coroner investigation process?

Yes No

If not, please give details.

Question 13: do you agree with the time limit for notifying interested persons of the arrangements for the inquest hearing?

Yes No

Do you agree with the requirement on coroners to publish the arrangements for an inquest hearing?

Yes No

If you do not, please explain your reasons.

The time limit for notifying interested persons of the arrangements for an inquest hearing may conflict with the three month time limit target suggested for the holding of an inquest. It is agreed that the Coroner should publish the arrangements for an inquest hearing.

Question 14: are you content that our proposed rules on disclosure will help bereaved people and other interested persons play a more active part in the investigation process (where they choose to do so)?

Yes No

Please explain your reasons.

Question 15: do you have any suggestions as to how the rules on disclosure could be improved?

Yes No

If so, please explain your answer.

Question 16: are you content with the proposed rules on evidence: a) written evidence; b) video link; c) screened evidence?

Yes No

If not, please explain your answer.

Question 17: do you agree with new rule 25 and the requirement for a coroner to record inquest proceedings?

Yes No

Should the rules contain sanctions for misuse of recordings?

Yes No

Please give your reasons.

It is agreed with both suggestions contained in Section 17. The need for protection of the identity of a child on a serious case review is particularly endorsed.

Question 18: are you content with the draft rule and form on conclusions, determinations and findings?

Yes No

If not, how could they be improved?

Do you agree with the addition of the new short-form conclusions 'drink/drug related' and 'road traffic collision'?

Yes No

Please give your reasons.

Question 19: do you agree that the draft rules on inquests to be made under section 45 (Annex B) will help make inquests more consistent?

Yes No

If not, please give details.

Question 20: would any of the proposed regulations for juror and witnesses allowances lead to increased costs for local authorities?

Yes No

If you think so, please give details.

The limit on expert costs is particularly to be welcomed. These are a significant financial burden for local authorities.

Question 21: do you have any comments on the draft regulations to be made under Schedule 7 (Annex C) in addition to your answer to question 20 above? If so, please give details.

The proposals in relation to the transfer of investigations are likely to result in more refusals because this will unlock the ability to enable the costs to be discharged by the transferring coroner.