



# Coroners

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Public Protection Group



# Coroners

## OUR DUTY

Put families at the heart of the service and provide a professional, sensitive and caring approach to meet the needs of bereaved people who come into contact with the Coroners service.

## SERVICE OBJECTIVES

- Organise post mortems and ensure the deceased is released to the family as soon as possible.
- Help bereaved people understand the cause of death. Investigate deaths where the coroner has reason to believe that the death was violent or unnatural, if the cause of death is unknown or the person died while in prison, police custody or another type of state detention.
- Hold inquests where necessary to establish the identity of the person who has died and how, when and where they died.

## 2014/15 IN NUMBERS

Area	Deaths referred	Post mortems	Post mortem rate	No. of Inquests	Inquest waiting time
North West Kent	1661	731	44%	140	18 weeks
North East Kent	1838	1135	62%	189	31 weeks
Mid Kent & Medway	2267	1047	46%	277	24 weeks
Central & South East Kent	1526	764	50%	143	36 weeks

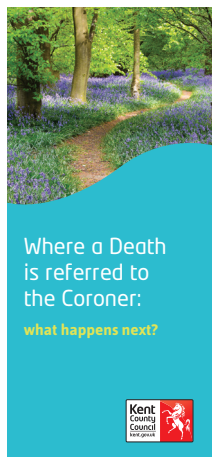
**“ I COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR ANYONE MORE HELPFUL OR THOUGHTFUL. SHE IS A CREDIT TO YOUR PROFESSION. ”**



## 2014/15 SUCCESSES

### PUTTING CUSTOMERS AT THE HEART OF THE CORONERS SERVICE

- 4000 copies of a new information leaflet, "Where a death is referred to the Coroner", were printed and published online to help bereaved families know what to do when a death is referred to the coroner. Distribution was via KCCs contracted funeral directors to bereaved families, Kent police and Libraries as well as promotion of the online version.



- To minimise the impact on bereaved families of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS), a protocol was established to allow the funeral director, nominated by the family, to collect the body and retain it on behalf of the Coroner at their own premises. In most cases, the Coroner Service conducts an inquest without a post mortem so this removes the need for KCCs contracted funeral director to remove the body to a designated hospital mortuary. Families are therefore able to carry out the end of life plans. This will benefit approximately 250 families each year who will be able to visit their loved one in a funeral home which is likely to be located close to them.

- The Coroners for for Mid Kent & Medway and North East Kent successfully piloted new working practices. The Coroners and Officers are co-located using a single case record which increases efficiency of file management, streamlines processes and enables the Coroner to effectively give judicial direction and issue forms for registration and funerals in a timely manner. 4,105 families have already benefited from this improved service delivery this year.

### NEW WINTER PRESSURES WORKING GROUP ESTABLISHED

Our key Stakeholders including the NHS (post mortem providers), contracted funeral directors and crematorium providers now meet to look at dead body storage capacity during the winter when the death rate is higher. They are also looking at ways to speed up the body release process to provide a better service for bereaved families as well as deliver efficiencies.

### RELOCATION OF THE CORONERS SERVICE

Successful relocation of the entire Coroners Service which involved moving 16 staff from 5 police stations to 4 KCC offices. The entire move took just 4 months causing minimum disruption to service delivery.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**THE SERVICE IS A CREDIT TO THE COUNTY AND MAYBE ONE THAT DOES NOT GET THE CREDIT IT DESERVES. I THEREFORE HOPE THAT YOU WILL PASS ON MY SINCERE THANKS TO THE STAFF AND CORONER, THEIR KINDNESS WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN.** ”

### BUDGET

GROSS EXPENDITURE

**£3.380M**

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE

**£2.394M**

TOTAL INCOME

**£0.986M**