



H.M CORONER, CEREDIGION



The County of CEREDIGION Coroners Service Charter

GENERAL

Application

1. This Charter is made between H.M. Coroner Mr. Peter Brunton, Dyfed-Powys Police and Ceredigion County Council. It relates to the Coroner Service in Ceredigion.

The Charter tells you what standards of performance are to be expected in the Coroner Service and what to do if something goes wrong.

Legal Position

2. The Ceredigion Coroner Service operates within a legal framework. It is the duty of the Coroner to investigate deaths which are reported to him and which appear to be due to violence, or are unusual, or are sudden and of unknown cause, or which occur in legal custody and to carry out certain related responsibilities. The aim of the Coroner Service is to ensure the Legal functions of the Coroner are effectively discharged.

Conduct

3. The Ceredigion Coroner and the Coroner' Officer (employed by Dyfed-Powys Police) will treat the bereaved and other members of the public courteously and sympathetically at all times and will have regard, within the constraints of the statutory duties, to the deceased's religious faith and cultural traditions.
4. Duties will be discharged impartially, with a view to ascertaining the facts surrounding a death for the purpose of the Coroner's statutory responsibilities.
5. Confidentiality will be preserved as far as possible within a system based on public court hearings. Explanation of the procedures adopted in particular cases will be given, on request, where the Coroner is satisfied that the person has a proper interest.

Correspondence

6. Written enquiries to the Coroner will normally receive a reply within 14 working days from receipt. If the matter cannot be resolved within that time, an acknowledgement will be issued within 14 working days with an estimate of when a more detailed reply will be sent.

CONTACT AND ENQUIRY POINTS

7. The Ceredigion Coroner' Office is situated at 6 Upper Portland Street, Aberystwyth. The Office is open from 9.00 a.m. – 5.00p.m. Monday to Friday. Further contact details below.
8. Inquest hearings are normally held at Aberystwyth Justice Centre.
 - The Courts have toilets and separate waiting rooms. Those wanting to attend Court who have any special requirements (including, for example, translating or interpreting services) are requested to contact the Coroner's Office in advance, giving 14 days' notice in writing. Occasionally Inquests may be held at other locations within the Ceredigion area.
 - Details of when and where Inquests are held are available from the Coroner, Dyfed-Powys Police and/or Ceredigion County Council (contact details below).

BEFORE THE INQUEST

Interviews

9. If the Coroner or the Coroner' Officer need to interview someone about a death, it will be at a time and place convenient to the person concerned. If the persons wishes, they be accompanied during the interview by a relative, friend or other person. Every effort will be made to avoid causing any additional distress to close friends or relatives of the deceased.

Post Mortems

10. When the Coroner decides that a post mortem is necessary, wherever possible, the immediate next of kin whose details are known will be given:
 - An explanation why a post mortem is necessary, if requested;
 - A copy of the post mortem report, if required and upon payment of the prescribed fee.

Administrative Arrangements

11. The Coroner will notify those asked to attend an Inquest of the following:

- The date and time of each hearing (if more than one) at least 10 working days in advance (but note that the formal opening of the Inquest – for taking evidence of identity – will generally take place within 5 working days of the report of the death, at which point the body will normally be released);
- Details of the location of the Court where the Inquest will be held and of the facilities which will be available there;
- Details of the telephone for enquiries;

and will;

- Advise on the availability of a leaflet explaining the purpose and procedures of Inquests;
- Explain to those called as a witness or juror how to claim for travel and subsistence expenses and for financial loss allowances;
- Ascertain any preference for swearing evidence (e.g. in accordance with specified religious beliefs or on affirmation).

Timing

12. The Coroner will endeavour to hold a necessary Inquest as soon as practicable. Most Inquests in Ceredigion take place within 6 months of the death. However, there may be factors outside the Coroner's control which can cause delay. Where the Inquest is likely to be delayed, the Coroner will notify interested persons of the position, unless the inquest has been formally adjourned to a specific date.

Release of the Body

13. The Coroner will release the body of the deceased for the funeral at the earliest opportunity, normally within 5 days. Where there are uncertainties as to the cause of death, or where the death is suspicious, it may be necessary to retain the body longer for further investigations. The Coroner will ensure that relatives are, upon enquiry, advised of potential delays and the reasons for them.

Disclosure of Information

14. The Coroner will, on request and at his discretion, provide to interested persons not less than 10 working days in advance of the Inquest copies of the post mortem report, for which payment may be required.

Jurors

15. For Jurors, the Coroner's Office will:
- Send a leaflet explaining the duties of a juror at an Inquest and providing other relevant information, 10 days beforehand.
 - Provide an indication in advance of how long the Jury Service will last.

AFTER THE INQUEST

16. On the conclusion of the Inquest, the next of kin will be provided with an explanation about how, where and when a copy of the Death Certificate may be obtained.

17. If in the interests of preventing further fatalities, the Coroner decides to report the matter to a relevant person or authority; he will do so within 14 working days of the Inquest outcome. He will also send copies of his letter to all the interested persons if requested to do so. A copy of any subsequent reply will be sent within 14 working days of its receipt.

18. The Coroner will supply to an interested person, on application a copy of the Inquest Verdict (although this is reproduced on the Death Certificate), or any of the documents produced in evidence, within 10 working days of receipt of the prescribed fee (which will vary according to the number of and size of the documents to be copied). An estimate of the fee will be provided in advance if requested.

19. The Coroner will also supply, for the prescribed fee, a copy of the transcript of evidence, but this may take up to 12 weeks to provide. In all cases, an estimate of the fee will be given on application.

20. The Local Authority will pay witness and juror expenses claims promptly and within 21 working days of receipt from the Coroner of properly completed applications.

Applications for Permission to Remove a Body Abroad

21. The Coroner will make every effort to complete his enquiries and decide such applications within 5 days of receipt of notice (including weekends and Bank Holidays).

TREASURE INQUESTS

22. Coroners have responsibility for enquiries into treasure funds. Information leaflets about treasure are available from the Coroner's office.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

23. Coroners will not normally enter into correspondence about the cases they have compiled.

Complaints about a Coroner's **decision** or **the outcome of an Inquest** can only be dealt with through the High Court. The Coroner's Office will be able to explain the procedure on request, but cannot give legal advice.

All complaints about the **administration** of the Ceredigion Coroner Service, or the **conduct** of individual Coroners or their Officers should be raised in the first instance with the Coroner.

- If the Coroner fails to deal with the complaint satisfactorily, the complainant may refer to Office of the Chief Coroner, Contact details are provided below.

The Office of the Chief Coroner has no disciplinary powers or powers to award compensation but may, in appropriate cases, refer the complaint to the Lord Chancellor who is responsible for the discipline of Coroners.

Comments and suggestions on improving the Coroners Service are always welcome. These can be directed to the Coroner's Officer or to the Ceredigion County Council Coroners Service.

FURTHER INFORMATION

24. Further copies of the Charter may be obtained from the Coroner's Office. the Coroners Officer, from Ceredigion County Council Coroners Service,, and from Police Stations at Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Lampeter and Ceredigion Libraries.

- General information is contained in:
- The Ministry of Justice Guide to Coroner Services.
- The Coroners and Justice Act 2009
- The Chief Coroner's Guide to the Coroner's Justice Act 2009

25. Contact Details

- **Ceredigion H.M Coroner's Office**

6 Upper Portland Street, Aberystwyth.

Tel: 01970 612567/617913

Fax: 01970 615572

Opening Hours: 9.00a.m. – 5.00p.m. Monday – Friday

Email: peter.brunton@bruntonandco.co.uk

- **Ceredigion Coroner's Officer**

Dyfed-Powys Police

Aberystwyth Police Station

Boulevard St. Brieuc

Aberystwyth

Ceredigion

SY23 1PH.

Office hours: Monday-Thursday 07.00-14.30pm.

Non-emergency: 07966 64 8812

Non-emergency: 101

Fax: 01970 630605

E-Mail: eric.james@dyfed-powyspnn.police.uk

- **Ceredigion County Council Coroners Service**

Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Abeaeron.

Tel: 01545 570881

E-Mail: coronerservice@ceredigion.gov.uk

peter.brunton@ceredigion.gov.uk

Website: www.ceredigion.gov.uk

- **Office of the Chief Coroner**

11th Floor

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