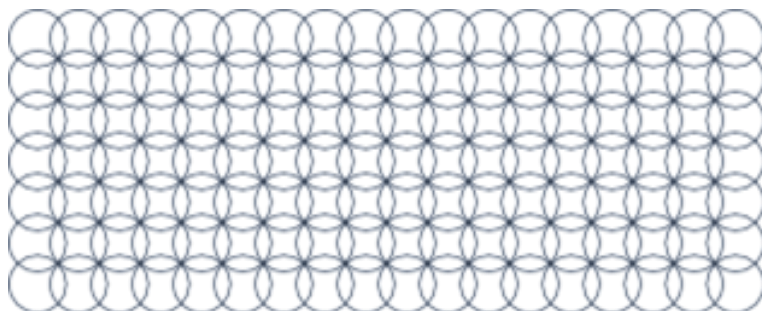




H.M. Coroner's Office Leicester City & South Leicestershire

Jury service at an inquest

[A guide for jurors](#)



What is an inquest?

Under the law of England and Wales, an inquest must be held as part of an investigation into certain deaths.

The inquest is conducted by a coroner in a coroner's court.

Inquests are always open to the public, unless the coroner rules that this would not be in the interests of national security.

What does the jury do?

The jury hears the evidence and, after being directed by the coroner, must reach conclusions on the following key facts:

- who the person was
- how, when and where they died
- the information needed to register the death

The jury does not view the body in order to arrive at these (or any other) facts.

Unlike other types of court hearings, an inquest is not a trial. The jury does not find someone guilty or not guilty, nor does it decide if someone is to blame for the death or if anyone should receive compensation.

On the day, the coroner will explain in detail what you are required to do.

Doing jury service

With a few exceptions, everyone aged 18 - 75 who is on the UK Electoral Register can be called for jury service. The Central Jury Summoning Bureau

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chooses people at random to serve at their local coroner's court. Jury service usually lasts for up to 10 days but can last longer.

Please note: if you are called, it is an offence not to attend, unless you have a good reason. A definition of 'good reason' is given in the juror summons.

What to do when you receive a juror summons?

When you receive a juror summons, you should:

- complete the form confirming that you can attend at the appointed place, day and time
- sign the form
- return the completed form in the pre-paid envelope provided within 3 days

If you think you won't be able to attend, please write immediately to the coroner's office at the address given in the accompanying notice, giving your reasons.

If you have any problems or difficulties

It is in everyone's interests that inquests are held efficiently and effectively.

So, if you become ill or something happens that prevents you from doing your jury service, please phone the coroner's office as soon as possible or ensure someone else does so on your behalf.

You can also contact the coroner's office if you have any queries about your jury service.

If you have a disability

Please let the coroner's office know if you have a disability so that any necessary arrangements can be made for you.

What happens on the day of the inquest?

Please be punctual. Make sure that you arrive at the court before the set time. If you are late or absent it can delay the start of the inquest, causing inconvenience to everyone.

Please dress appropriately out of respect for the seriousness of the event and the feelings of the bereaved.

On arrival, you will be shown to the jury room. This is where you will meet the other jurors and where you will go to discuss the case together in private. No one else is allowed in the jury room.

You are not allowed electronic equipment in the jury room or courtroom. Please hand mobile phones, mp3 players, personal stereos, tablets or recording equipment to the Inquest Officer for safekeeping.

The Inquest Officer will explain to you:

- the timetable for the day
- when to go into court and where to sit

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- where you can buy refreshments, and
- help you with any other queries

Oaths and affirmations

Before the inquest starts, each member of the jury must be formally sworn in. You can either take an oath on a holy book or make a non-religious affirmation. If you want to take the oath on a holy book other than the New Testament, you will have to bring your own preferred holy book and let the Inquest Officer know on the day of the inquest. Also let the office know if you need to make special arrangements before you handle a holy book.

Travel costs

- You may claim the cost of the return journey between your home and the court
- If you use public transport, you can claim the standard class return fare
- If you drive your car, you can claim an allowance based on the number of miles travelled to and from the court using the most direct route
- You may use a taxi if the coroner is satisfied that there is no available alternative. Please check beforehand with the coroner's office that using a taxi is acceptable

Other expenses

You may also claim for subsistence and financial loss allowance. The Inquest Officer will explain the details and give you an expenses claim form.

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For more information about coroners' investigations and inquests, visit:

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