

Suffolk Coroner's Service

Feedback, Compliments & Complaints Policy

The Coroner's Service in Suffolk is judicially independent and committed to providing a caring and efficient service for the investigation of deaths in a sensitive, proportionate and timely manner.

Guide to the Coroner Service and Coroner Investigations

This government produced guide explains to bereaved people, and others who come into contact with the coroner service, what they can expect from the coroner's investigation. It aims to help to make standards of service more transparent for coroners and bereaved people, as well as assisting the Chief Coroner in discharging his responsibility for overseeing coroner services. The guide also includes information about what to do if you are not satisfied with the service you receive.

A copy can be accessed online at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-coroner-services-and-coroner-investigations-a-short-guide

Feedback, compliments and complaints

Our service welcomes feedback to enable us to continuously monitor the way we work and to improve our service for the future. We are always pleased to receive compliments but equally we recognize that on occasion, despite our best efforts that cases will not proceed in line with our desired expectations or to the standards expected by the people we serve.

In the event of any dissatisfaction with any of our work, please speak initially to the Coroner's Officer or ask to speak to the Principal Coroners Officer. They will be pleased to discuss your concerns with you and will make every effort to resolve them to your satisfaction.

If you wish to make a more formal complaint, please follow the guidance below: -

Challenging a Coroner's Decision

A Coroner conclusion made in court is legally binding. We would recommend that you seek legal guidance if you wish to challenge the outcome of an Inquest or Investigation. Some bereavement support organisations may also be able to offer advice.

If you decide to proceed, you need to make an application to the High Court for judicial review of the coroner's decision or conclusion. You should do this as soon as possible and within three months of the end of the investigation.

There is a separate power under which the Attorney General, or someone who has received the Attorney

General's permission to do so, may apply to the High Court for an investigation of a death to be carried out if a coroner has not held one; or for another investigation of the death if this is in the interests of justice (e.g. because new evidence has come to light). There is no time limit under these circumstances.

New Evidence is available

If you have new evidence in relation to a case that you wish to put before the Coroner this should be presented in writing to

The Senior Coroner,
Suffolk Coroner's Service,
Beacon House,
Whitehouse Road,
Ipswich IP1 5PB

Or email coroners.service@suffolk.gov.uk

You will receive an acknowledgement to your correspondence within 5 working days and a fuller reply within 20 working days.

Complaints about a Coroner's personal conduct

If you are dissatisfied with the personal conduct of the Coroner, you should raise this by writing initially to the

The Senior Coroner,
Suffolk Coroner's Service,
Beacon House,
Whitehouse Road,
Ipswich IP1 5PB

Or email coroners.service@suffolk.gov.uk marking your email formal complaint

You will receive an acknowledgement to your correspondence within 5 working days and a full response within 20 working days.

If the coroner is unable to deal with your complaint satisfactorily, you may complain to the judicial Conduct Investigations Office (JCIO) (formerly known as the Office for judicial Complaints). Examples of potential personal misconduct would be the use of insulting, racist or sexist language; or unreasonable delays in holding an inquest or replying to correspondence.

There is no charge for complaining to the JCIO and you can do so online via the JCIO website at <http://judicialconduct.judiciary.gov.uk/making-a-complaint.htm>. Further information about complaints about coroners is also on the website.

Alternatively, you can download the JCIO complaints form and send it to the JCIO by fax, post or email. You can also complain by letter or email. The JCIO's contact details are:

The Judicial Conduct Investigations Office
81 - 82 Queens Building Royal Courts of Justice Strand
London WC2A 2LL Tel: 020 7073 4719

Email: inbox@jcio.gsi.gov.uk

Complaints about Coroner's Officers, The Court facility and The Coroner's Ambulance

Suffolk County Council is responsible for the court building at Beacon House in Ipswich, The Coroner's Ambulance contract and the Coroner's officer's and court officials.

If you have a complaint which relates to any of these aspects of our service delivery, please make this to

Suffolk County Council Complaints Team
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BX

Or online at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/give-feedback-or-make-a-complaint/>

You will receive an acknowledgement to your correspondence within 5 working days and a full response within 20 working days.

Complaints about a pathologist who conducts the post-mortem examination

If you wish to complain about a pathologist, you should write to the Coroner using the contact details show in section 1) Serious complaints should also be made to the General Medical Council (GMC). The GMC can take action to remove or restrict a doctor's right to practice if it considers that there has been a serious or persistent breach of its guidance. You can submit a complaint online at https://www.gmc-uk.org/patient_online_complaints. For further information, or if you wish to speak to an adviser, please telephone 0161 923 6602.

A complaint about a registered forensic pathologist should be made to the GMC and the Home Office. Details for the Home Office are at <https://www.gov.uk/forensic-pathology-role-within-the-home-office>.

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