



Berkshire Coroner's Office

Service Level Agreement Guidelines

The Coroner's Office has come to the decision to implement new guidelines which dictate our service level. This has come into practice due to the need to manage expectations, of both members of the public and individual professional agencies, of the service level that the Coroner's Office is able to provide.

Although the Coroner's Office will continue to work to the high standard it has always strived to maintain, the need for these guidelines have become apparent due to ever increasing work levels and to provide for staff absences due to annual leave and sickness.

These service levels also come into implementation following the centralisation of the Berkshire Coroner's Office to Reading Town Hall. These are initial guidelines and are subject to review in 6 months' time.

Hospital Referrals

When referrals are received from the Hospital, the Coroner's Office will make initial contact with the family **within 1 working day**. This is in line with the Chief Coroner's Guidance.

The Coroner's Office then has **up to 2 working days**, from referral, within which to make initial enquiries, refer to the Coroner and decide how the case is going to proceed.

Once this decision has been made, we will inform the Bereavement Office at both Wexham Park and Royal Berkshire. We ask for both offices to respect this timeframe and enable us to make our enquiries before chasing for any updates. Therefore, we ask for Bereavement Office staff to inform families of the above timeframes when receiving calls.

Police Referrals (Deaths within the Community)

Once The Coroner's Office is in receipt of the Police report (Gen19), we will have **up to 1 working day** within which to make initial contact with next of kin. This is, again, in line with the Chief Coroner's Guidance.

The Coroner's Office then has **up to 2 working days**, from receipt of the report, within which to make initial enquiries, refer to the Coroner and decide how the case is going to proceed.

We ask Police Officers and Staff to be mindful of the above timeframes when relaying the death message to family members.

Funeral Directors

The Coroner's Office asks all funeral directors to inform us that they are dealing with clients and what disposal they require via email:

coroner@reading.gov.uk

We will acknowledge receipt of this email and we then have **up to 5 working days** to ensure cremation or burial paperwork is sent to the relevant funeral directors.

The Coroner's Office will ensure that a mortuary release is received by the relevant mortuary **within 1 working day** of the body being clear for release.

We ask that funeral directors are mindful of the above timeframe when arranging funeral dates, and to also ensure that we are made aware of your involvement at the earliest possible opportunity.

Registry Offices

The Coroner's Office has **up to 2 working days** to ensure that the relevant Registry Office has received signed copies of either Form 100A or Form 100B via email.

In the case of Form 100A, the Coroner's Office asks the Bereavement Offices to inform families of this time frame. We also ask Registry Offices to not book families in for appointments until this form has been received. This will save unnecessary journeys for family members.

We also ask for Register Offices to respect this timeframe before calling the Coroner's Office to enquire.

In the case of Form 100B, the Coroner's Office will be informing family members of this time frame. We, again, ask for Registry Offices to await receipt of this form before making appointments.

The Coroner's Office has **up to 5 working days** following Inquest to send out the Form 99 to the relevant Registry Office. We will be informing families of this time frame and asking them to consider this before calling Registry Offices to order death certificates.

Interim Death Certificates and Inquest Letters

The Coroner's Office has **up to 5 working days**, following completion of the Open Inquest Form with family members, to send Interim Death Certificates and Inquest Letters. We will be informing family members of this time frame.

Peter J Bedford
Senior Coroner for Berkshire

Note

For further information regarding the Chief Coroner's Guidance, please see following link:

<https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/related-offices-and-bodies/office-chief-coroner/guidance-law-sheets/coroners-guidance/>