



**HM Coroner for Surrey**

From: Mr R Travers  
-HM Senior Coroner-

**HM Coroner's Court  
Station Approach  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU22 7AP**

**Tel: 01483 404530**

Sarah Ward  
Local Government Association

Sent by email only: [Sarah.Ward@local.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.Ward@local.gov.uk)

16<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for your letter of the 24<sup>th</sup> March, I am sorry for the delay in coming back to you, but we were not able to meet until earlier this week.

David and I were pleased to have the opportunity of meeting with the councillors who sit behind the LGA Secretariat and were grateful that they took the time to listen to and to understand our position. It was clear to us, as is set out in your letter that, perhaps, they had not previously fully appreciated the importance of the independence of the coroner.

Inevitably, their understanding will be influenced by the coronial area with which they are familiar. From Pete Marland's perspective, acting as the Chair of the group, the Area with which he is familiar is Milton Keynes. From a coronial point of view, Milton Keynes is a very small Area and could not be considered to be representative of the majority of coronial Areas.

On a positive note, we could see that there might be some way forward with regard to annual reviews, if appropriate terms of reference could be agreed, and in that regard we note the willingness to put extra emphasis on the SSRB position and to move the relevant date to align more with the date for the SSRB's annual review of judicial salaries.

However, it seems to us that there is still a significant sticking point on the setting of Coroners' base salaries. Our members are of the firm opinion that our position in that regard is non-negotiable and that salaries need to be aligned with a judicial comparator.

As we explained, a number of Areas have agreed to the CSEW's proposal in this regard and this number is growing, albeit slowly. Many of those Areas where the Local Authority is having difficulty in reaching an agreement with their coroner are not failing to do so because they have a real objection to the CSEW's proposal, but rather because they appear to be awaiting some direction from the LGA and are anxious not to step out of line. In many ways this is frustrating because the position adopted by the LGA is thereby acting as a blocker rather than a facilitator in those local negotiations.



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I would urge you and your colleagues to reconsider your position to allow the issue of base salary to be settled in line with our proposals, which would have the added advantage of being able to avoid the route of coroners having to seek a determination from the Lord Chancellor. Going forward, if there was then to be an evaluation of the role, we would suggest that seeking assistance from the SSRB would be the correct approach, as they would already have the requisite knowledge of relevant judicial roles.

Further, if the LGA and your members were prepared to change their approach with regard to base salaries, we would then be in a much better position to seek to move forward with regard to annual reviews.

I would be grateful if you would speak to your members about this and I shall look forward to hearing the outcome of your discussions.

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Travers**

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**HM Senior Coroner Surrey**

**Local Government & Salaries Secretary of the Coroners' Society of England and Wales**