



## Justice Committee

**Commander Stephen Clayman**  
**Metropolitan Police**

By email only

19 March 2024

Dear Commander Clayman,

As you know, the Justice Select Committee is currently gathering evidence for its follow-up inquiry into the Coroner Service of England and Wales. One thing that has come up repeatedly is the unusual way in which the Service is staffed. Local authorities are required by section 24 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 to “secure the provision of whatever officers and other staff are needed by the coroners for that area to carry out their functions”, to the extent that “the necessary officers and other staff for that area are not provided by a local policing body”. The Committee is keen to understand how the law operates in practice and whether it is helping or hindering the provision of the Coroner Service to the people of England and Wales.

The Chief Coroner, following a tour of every Coroner Area in England and Wales has concluded that the division of responsibility between Senior Coroner, Local Authority and Police Force - what he calls “the triangle of responsibility” - is archaic. He recommends moving to a position where local authorities have sole responsibility for the Coroner Service. The Committee would like to hear other views on this topic.

Could you please provide evidence to the Committee on the following:

1. What is the Met’s view on the way the “triangle of responsibility” currently operates in London?
2. Is the Met currently in discussion with either Senior Coroners or Local Authorities in London with a view to moving away from the “triangle of responsibility” and leaving Local Authorities in sole charge of providing Coroner Areas with the necessary staff?
3. What, if any, do the Met see as the obstacles, or challenges, to moving away from the current staffing model?
4. What support – in terms of staffing or otherwise – does the Metropolitan Police provide to each of the Coroner Areas in London?
5. The Committee has heard that the Met recently completed an internal review of the staffing need in each Coroner Area in London. (*Review of the role of the MPS Coroner’s Officer and Support to the London Coronial Service (5 May 2023)*). I would



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be grateful if you could share a copy of that review.

6. The Committee has heard that the Met has decided not to provide staff to Coroner Areas at the level recommended by the review. Is that correct?
7. To the extent that the results of the internal review and the current provision of staff to each Coroner Area do not match up, can you explain how the Met decided on the numbers of staff to provide to each Coroner Area?
8. How are Coroner Officers provided by the Met to London's Coroner Areas selected for the role?
9. How many Coroner Officers provided by the Met to Coroner Areas in London are currently subject to a disciplinary or HR proceeding, and how many were so subject at the time they were assigned to the Coroner Service?

Yours sincerely,

**Sir Robert Neill MP**  
**Chair**  
**Justice Committee**