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## **Enabling Safe Certification of Deaths in the Community Service – Frequently Asked Questions**

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**15 June 2020**

### **What do I include in the MCCD?**

'Probable or possible COVID-19' **is not acceptable**. With agreement of registrars in GM please write COVID-19 in 1a on the MCCD whether they are confirmed cases or not if you believe that the COVID type symptoms escalated and caused death.

Upon certification of death, it is mandatory to have the name and GMC number of the doctor that last reviewed the patient whilst alive. The date of this review is needed also. This is needed on the MCCD in the section 'Last seen alive by me.' Put a line through 'me' and then add the name of the doctor.

When signing the MCCD, you must amend the declaration where it says 'in medical attendance' to say 'NOT in medical attendance.' 'NOT' can be written just above the declaration. Again, this is only if you have not been one of the patient's treating clinicians.

### **What do I include in the Cremation Form?**

When completing the cremation form, you must include who saw the patient upon verification of death. This can be on page 2 in the box that requires notes on the examination of the body made at death. Include the title, name and GMC/NMC number of the verifying clinician.

Once the MCCD has been completed, it can be emailed to the appropriate registrar's office. The family should then be informed that they need to make a telephone appointment with the registrar to register the death. This allows for face to face contact to be minimised where possible.

## **What happens with cremation forms?**

Cremation no longer requires the confirmatory medical certificate (cremation form 5), but still requires the completion of the medical certificate (cremation form 4) which can be completed by anyone even if they are not seeing the patient after death.

## **Who liaises with the Funeral Directors?**

The family of the deceased/practice would liaise with the funeral director.

Following the registration of the death, the registrar will issue the 'green form' (release form) to the funeral director. The document authorises the release of the deceased to the funeral director and authorises the funeral to go ahead.

The crematorium form should be sent electronically to the nominated funeral director.

## **Is it safe to send information electronically to Funeral Directors?**

Information should be sent to the secure email address provided by the funeral director. If completing the Crematorium form 4, this should be completed, signed, (scanned if applicable) and sent to the secure email address.

## **When should a death be referred to the coroner?**

There are a number of circumstances where you will need to refer a death to the coroner. These include (but are not limited to):

If there is no doctor at all who can sign the MCCD - for example, because a patient who was previously well dies suddenly and unexpectedly at home - the coroner must be informed of the death.

If a patient dies with no statement of intent in place, and they have not been seen (including virtually) by a doctor in the previous 28 days and verifying GP can not issue MCCD.

Death due to: Poisoning, exposure to, or contact with a toxic substance, the use of a medicinal product, the use of a controlled drug or psychoactive substance, violence, trauma or injury, self-harm, neglect, including self-neglect, a person undergoing any treatment or procedure of a medical or similar nature, an injury or disease attributable to any employment held by the person during the person's lifetime, the persons death was unnatural but does not fall within any of the above circumstances, the cause of death is unknown

Further guidance can be found:

### **Guidance for registered medical practitioners on the Notification of Deaths Regulations'**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/851972/registered-medical-practitioners-notification-deaths-regulations-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/851972/registered-medical-practitioners-notification-deaths-regulations-guidance.pdf)

### **How do I contact my local registrar?**

Register offices are now closed to the public. Families should contact their local register office by calling one of the numbers below

Bolton	01204 331185
Bury	0161 253 6026
Rochdale	01706 924784
Manchester	0161 234 5005
Salford	0161 793 2500
Tameside	0161 342 5032
Trafford	0161 912 3026
Wigan	01942 489003
Stockport	0161 217 6007
Oldham	0161 770 8960
Glossop	01629 531503

### **Do I need to report COVID-19 death to Coroner?**

COVID-19 is an acceptable, direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)

COVID-19 is not a reason on its own to refer a death to a coroner under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, nor should it be referred under the Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987 (unless there is some other reason for the referral).

Please note that 'probable' or 'possible' COVID-19 is not an acceptable cause of death. With agreement of registrars in GM please write COVID-19 in section 1a on MCCD certificate whether they are confirmed cases or not if you believe that the COVID type symptoms escalated and caused death.

If the doctor has used such a term, without the support of another acceptable cause of death then, during the emergency period, rather than immediately reporting to the

coroner registrars should firstly try to seek a fresh MCCD from the doctor. Further advice should be sought from GRO in respect of any issues or difficulties relating to this issue

### **Is COVID-19 is a notifiable disease?**

COVID-19 is a notifiable disease under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010. This does not mean referral to a coroner is required by virtue of its notifiable status (this requires that the medical practitioner separately notifies Public Health England).

### **Does a GP from a practice still need to visit the crematorium?**

No

### **Who liaises with the family?**

The GP that verifies and certifies the death will inform the family of cause of death.

The verifying GP should provide the family with details of the next steps.

Please ensure the completed MCCD mirrors the information given to families regarding cause of death

### **What happens once the MCCD is completed?**

Registrars can now accept MCCD forms without referral from the coroner, provided it contains an acceptable cause of death and indicates that a medical practitioner has seen the deceased either within 28 days prior to death. The MCCD form should no longer be given to the family as there will be no face to face appointments with the registrar. The family, however, must be informed of the content of the MCCD.

Once completed, both sides of the form should be scanned by the certifying clinician and emailed to the appropriate local registrar. The family should be notified that they can contact registrar to register the death.

### **Can the family book the funeral?**

The registered GP is asked to act as a liaison point for the deceased family.

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