

VOWLES, Sue (NHS SOMERSET CCG)

From: MURRAY, Alex (NHS SOMERSET CCG)
Sent: 30 March 2020 11:46
To: VOWLES, Sue (NHS SOMERSET CCG)
Subject: FW: Update for colleagues on Verification of Death, Death Certification and Registration procedures. March 2020.

From: jill.hellens@somersetlmc.co.uk [<mailto:jill.hellens@somersetlmc.co.uk>]

Sent: 30 March 2020 09:38

To: MURRAY, Alex (NHS SOMERSET CCG)

Subject: Update for colleagues on Verification of Death, Death Certification and Registration procedures. March 2020.

Good Morning all,

The increased numbers deaths expected in the coming weeks and months (modelling currently suggests a peak of between 300-400 deaths per week in Somerset at the height of the pandemic) will cause logistical challenges for the system. The LMC is represented on the 'Mortality Group' that meets to consider the practical aspects of this. Also represented are the Coroner, Public health, Civil Contingencies, Funeral Directors, Trust mortuary representatives and the Somerset crematoria. The changes below take account of regulations in the Coronavirus (Emergency) Act 2020, and the need to restrict face to face contact and unnecessary gatherings of any sort.

Verification

Funeral Directors report difficulties now when verification of death can sometimes take up to 8 hours. At present this is a problem mainly in the Out of Hours period. The need to streamline this is obvious, and in London there is a mobile 'verification unit' involving a doctor and the police who travel around to verify deaths. The best way to approach this locally is being considered, but there may be a similar unit established in Somerset. As the number of deaths increases, it is likely that the military or fire service will be involved in collecting bodies.

Issuing of Death Certificate (MCCD)

In terms of who can complete the MCCD form, the following guidance was issued by the General Register Office last week:

- If the doctor who attended the person before death is unavailable, another doctor can sign the MCCD for **all** natural deaths, including those due to Covid-19 (Although a notifiable disease, Covid-19 deaths do not need to be reported to the Coroner).
- This will only be when the certifying doctor is able to access the deceased's notes and the information supports a natural death.
- There is still a requirement for the deceased to be seen after death or within 28 days prior to death by a doctor. Consultations by video (such as Skype, AccuRx) are allowable in this context, but phone consultations are not.
- If a practice nurse has seen a patient during the preceding 28 days for a long-term condition review, for example, this will qualify for having been 'seen by a doctor'.
- The same MCCD form will be used and amended as necessary

There is no need for the certifying doctor to have attended the deceased during their last illness so unless there is some other reason you do not have to refer the death to the coroner.

Registration:

Registration offices are currently closed, and the new regulations have extended the range of individuals able to register deaths to include funeral directors.

Colleagues are asked to fill out the MCCD in the normal way.

Covid-19 is an acceptable cause of death (whereas 'unascertained' is not).

Instead of giving the certificate to the informant, **BOTH SIDES** should be scanned or photographed and sent electronically in a single email to the secure local authority email address:

somersetregistrations@Somerset.gov.uk. Please add the name to the copy of the back of the MCCD in case it somehow becomes separated.

Please use this format in the title line: **MCCD, Surname, Forename, date of death.**

The relatives should be asked to ring 01823 282251 to make an appointment to complete the registration process over the phone with a registrar.

Colleagues completing MCCDs are asked to keep the paper copies as well so that these can be sent to be processed in the normal way when the 'emergency period' is over.

Cremation Forms:

The LMC update from 27.3.20 contained guidance on how the cremation form can now be completed by only one doctor. A link to that guidance can be found [here](#).

We will provide further updates as and when required.

Kind Regards

Jill

Jill Hellens

Executive Director

Somerset LMC

TEL: 01823 331428

Fax:01823 338561

www.somersetlmc.co.uk

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