

Information Following Bereavement

We are very sorry about your loss and offer our condolences.

This leaflet aims to give you some information about the next steps and statutory requirements.

Medical Cause of Death (MCCD) certificate.

After a patient dies, the General Practice (GP) arranges for a doctor to complete the *Medical Certificate of Cause of Death* (MCCD) which lists the cause of death that will be recorded on the Death Certificate by the Registrar.

If the MCCD is completed the GP practice will forward this to the Medical Examiner Office and you should expect a telephone call within the next few days.

Who are the Medical Examiners, and what do they do?

Medical Examiners (ME) are independent senior NHS doctors who work part time in this role who have undergone specialist training. They are assisted by Medical Examiner Officers (MEO) who also have specialist training. Their job is to give an independent view on causes of death and the care provided for deaths which are not referred to a coroner.

The ME will review relevant medical records and discuss the cause of death with the doctor who is completing the MCCD to ensure the cause of death is accurate.

The ME or MEO will then offer families and carers of the person who died an opportunity to discuss the cause of death and also the care the person received prior to their death. This will usually be through a telephone call and staff can explain any medical terms used in order to understand what happened.

Any concerns and comments made by you will be discussed by the ME and MEO and can be forwarded to the appropriate team to investigate further. You are still able to raise concerns directly and The ME can advise you how to do this. The ME will not conduct investigations themselves.

For more information please see www.england.nhs.uk/establishing-medical-examiner-system-nhs/
From April 2023 this will become a statutory requirement before any death is registered.

How can I contact the Medical Examiner office?

The ME office is located within the bereavement offices at both Kings College Hospital and the Princess Royal Hospital.

Email: kch-tr.meoffice@nhs.net

Telephone: 0203 299 8439 or 016898 63583

If you require assistance accessing services please contact the practice in the first instance who will notify the Medical Examiner Office.

What happens after I have spoken to the Medical Examiner Service?

Once you have spoken to the ME or MEO and the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) has been agreed, you need to register the death at the registry office. The ME Office will forward the MCCD electronically to the registrar. You do not need to pick up the original MCCD

To make an appointment or if you need further advice please contact the Bexley registry office;

<https://secure.kent.zipporah.co.uk/CeremonyPlanner.Kent.Live/Default.aspx> or phone 03000 41 51 51.

The Registry office is based at
Danson House
Danson Road
Bexley
Kent
DA6 8HL

Coroner Referrals

Under certain circumstances, for example if the death was sudden or unexpected or the cause of death has not been determined, the doctor must legally inform the Coroner.

The Coroner may decide to carry out their own independent investigation. This link explains more about coroners and the types of deaths they investigate.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notification-of-deaths-regulations-2019-guidance>

The Medical Examiner is able to advise if a coroner referral is needed, however if a referral is made to the coroner, the Medical Examiner will not usually be involved further

If the case is referred to the coroner you should expect a phone call from a coroner's officer within the next few days. You cannot register the death until the coroner has authorised this.

Bereavement Support Services

You may find the following organisation helpful in support following your bereavement:

CRUSE

Cruse Bereavement Care on 020 8304 5245
www.cruse.org.uk

Samaritans

The Upper Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell KT17 2AF 7 Church Street, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8AT 4b
High Street, Reigate RH2 9AY
Offers emotional support, befriending and a sympathetic ear for lonely, suicidal or despairing people of all ages.
Telephone: 116 123
www.samaritans.org