

To all Calderdale GPs (including Fringe)

Dear Colleagues

Implementation of changes in regulations for cremation certification

I'm writing to share information that new regulations under the Coronavirus act 2020 were enacted on 26 March, which change the requirements for completion of forms for cremation. This reached us from the Ministry of Justice with a mention that further guidance is underway, and came from

coroners@justice.gov.uk

and is as follows:

In England and Wales, a confirmatory medical certificate (Cremation Form 5) is no longer required for cremations. A Medical Certificate (Cremation Form 4) and an Authorisation of cremation of deceased person by medical referee (Cremation Form 10) are still required.

A copy of section 19 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 giving further details can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/section/19/enacted>

A copy of the enactment regulations of 26 March will be viewed at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/361/made/data.pdf>

- a. The requirement to complete the confirmatory medical certificate (form Cremation 5) is suspended. Cremations should be authorised on the basis of form Cremation 4 only.
- b. Form Cremation 4 remains unchanged and a PDF version continues to be available on our website. It can be submitted electronically and an electronic signature includes being sent from the secure email account of the person completing the form Cremation 4.
- c. The requirement for form Cremation 4 to be completed by the attending medical practitioner is suspended. Any medical practitioner can now complete form Cremation 4, even if they did not attend the deceased during their last illness or after death, if the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - i. The medical practitioner who did attend the deceased is unable to sign the form Cremation 4 or it is impractical for them to do so and,
 - ii. A medical practitioner has seen the deceased (including audiovisual/video consultation) within 28 days before death, or has viewed the body in person after death.
- d. Examination of the body is not required for completion of form Cremation 4 if the deceased was seen by a medical practitioner (including audiovisual/video consultation) in the 28 days before death.
- e. When a medical practitioner who did not attend the deceased completes form Cremation 4, the following applies:
 - i. Question 5. 'Usual medical practitioner'. Where the certifying doctor did not themselves attend the patient either during their illness or after death, the certifying doctor should provide the GMC number and name of the medical practitioner who did attend at Question 9. This should also include the date when the deceased was seen and a report of the record made by the attending doctor.

ii. Question 6. 'Not applicable' is acceptable.

iii. Question 7. 'Not applicable' is acceptable.

iv. Question 8. 'Not applicable' is acceptable. As at (iii) above, if the form Cremation 4 is being completed on the basis of another medical practitioner having seen the deceased after death, the date, time and nature of their examination should be recorded at Question 9.

I would like to add a personal request that you exercise care in reading the questions on form 4, and variations in this notice, and ensure that all parts of all questions are answered in full in order to avoid delay and distress in the arrangement of cremations. Forms may reach the crematorium as little as 2 days before a cremation and the doctor responsible for signing may not be easily available at that point. Your staff should understand that it may be a matter of urgency if they receive a call from the crematorium for information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Howard Barnes', written in a cursive style.

Dr Howard Barnes OStJ FRCP(Ed) FFPH MRCP GMC # 1326835
Principal Medical Referee, Parkwood Crematorium