

Changes to death certification

Written by:

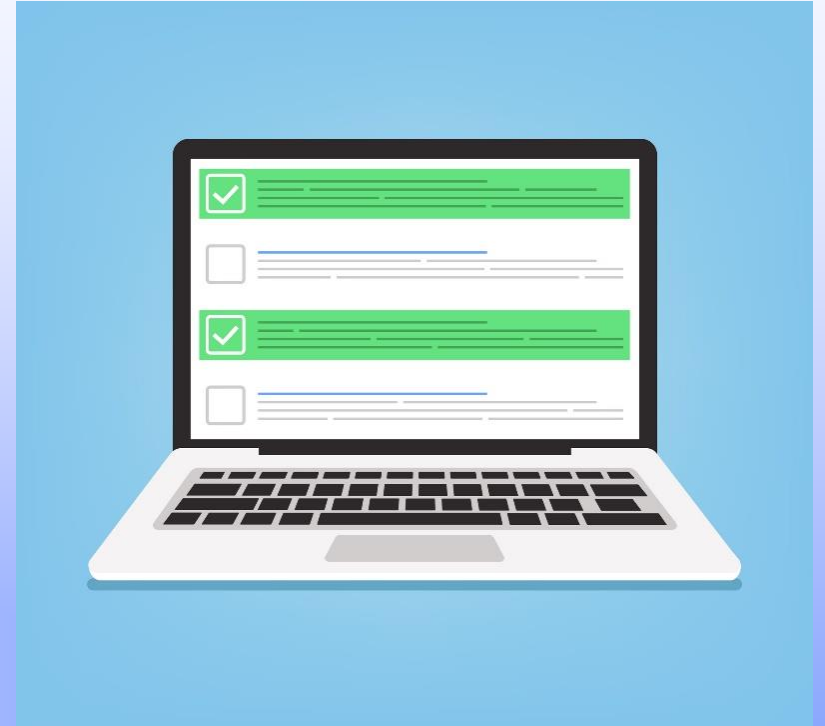
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Administration to be done when someone dies

- Verification of death
- Decision on whether to refer to the coroner
- Medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD)
- Cremation form



Seeing the body after death

**There is now no requirement to see
a body after death, under any
circumstances**

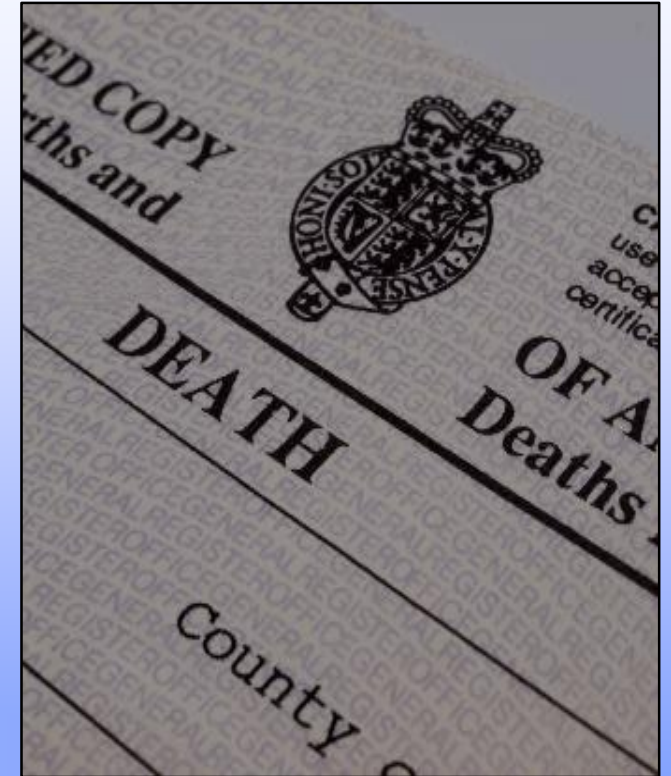
Verification of death

- Does not need to be done by a doctor
- Any competent person can verify death
- This includes nurses and some other healthcare professionals who have been trained to do so



Issuing the MCCD

- Can be done by a doctor who didn't know the patient in life if:
 - the usual GP is unavailable
 - the GP who signs the MCCD knows the cause of death 'to the best of their knowledge and belief'
 - a doctor has seen the patient (in person or by video) within the 28 days before death or after death.
- Should be signed, scanned and emailed to the registrar
- Covid-19 can be put on the death certificate on clinical balance of probabilities, without testing.



Discussion with the coroner

- The normal list of reasons for discussing with the coroner still applies, with the exception of not having been seen within 14 days; this is now raised to 28 days.
- Covid19 is not in itself a reason for referral to the coroner
- A death whilst in quarantine is not in itself a reason for referral to the coroner



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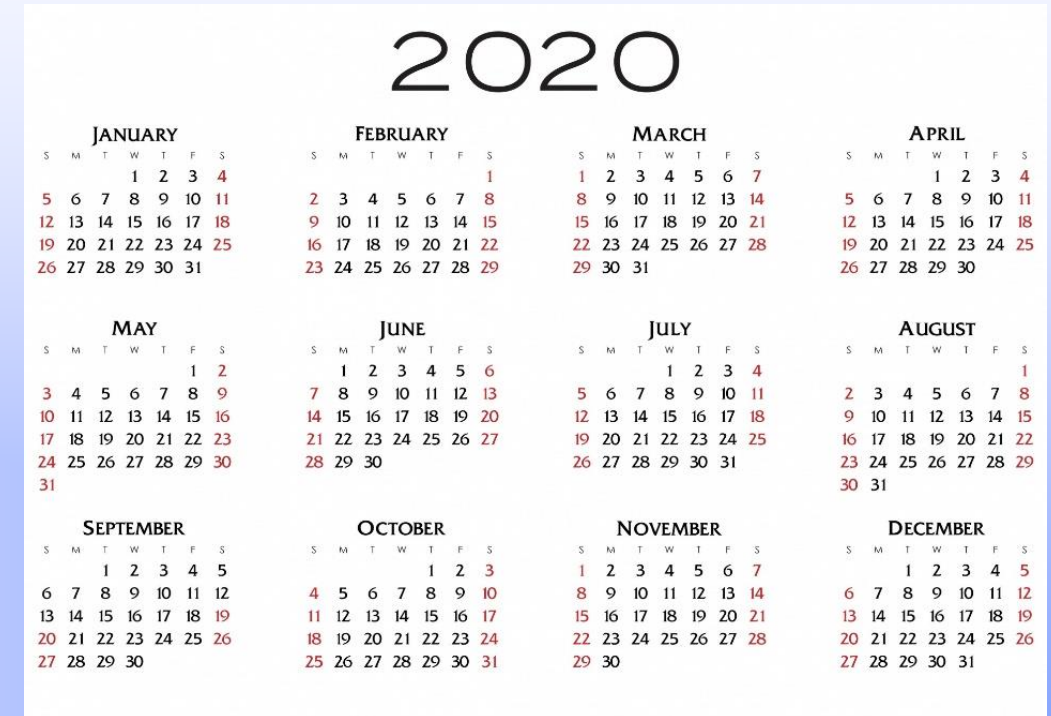
Cremation forms

- Cremation can now be authorised on the basis of one form, without the need for a second doctor
- Any doctor can complete the cremation form
- The cremation form can be completed in primary care if the patient has been seen by a doctor within the last 28 days of life (in person or by video) or after death, or there is supporting paperwork from the coroner as discussed in the next slide.

The image shows a screenshot of a medical certificate form titled "Medical certificate" in the top left. In the top right, it says "Cremation 4 replacing Form B" and "01.09". Below the title, there is a note: "This form can only be completed by a registered medical practitioner. Please complete this form in full, if a part does not apply enter 'N/A'." The form is divided into sections, with "Part 1 Details of the deceased" being the first section. Under this section, there are fields for "Full name" (a single-line text box) and "Address" (a larger text box). Below the address field, there are two sets of checkboxes for "Occupation or last occupation if retired or not in work at the date of death".

Patients not seen within the last 28 days

- If a patient dies without seeing a doctor in the 28 days before death, and has not been seen after death, you need to inform the coroner in writing.
- In the absence of any issues of concern they are likely to approve the completion of all the paperwork in primary care.



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What to do now?

- Make sure that your local care homes know that they can verify death if they have a member of staff who is competent to do so
- Find out the email address of your local registrar
- Cascade this information to the practice, particularly to admin staff who will deal with bereaved relatives



References

Marie Curie - Verifying and certifying a death

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/bereaved-family-friends/practical-legal/verifying-and-certifying-a-death>

BMA - Confirmation and certification of death

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/confirmation-and-certification-of-death>

GOV.UK – When a death is reported to a coroner

<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/when-a-death-is-reported-to-a-coroner>

Legislation – Coronavirus Act 2020

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted/data.htm>

National Association of Funeral Directors - Changes to cremation forms – information from the Ministry of Justice

<https://nafd.org.uk/2020/03/27/changes-to-cremation-forms-information-from-the-ministry-of-justice/>

APCC, Cremation Society, FBCA, ICCM - Coronavirus Act 2020 (Commencement No. 1) Regulations 2020

<https://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/wp-content/library/Joint%20Statement%20on%20Coronavirus%20Act%202020.pdf>



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Resources

Information about verification of death

These websites confirm that a doctor is not needed to verify death

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/confirmation-and-certification-of-death>

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/gps/nigels-surgery-13-who-can-confirm-death>

Downloadable cremation form which can be filled in online

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cremation-medical-certificate>

Detailed information on changes to death certification

Letter from the Deputy Registrar General

<https://s.docworkspace.com/d/ADkIPZr2-s8j48uavpKdFA>

Information on the training needed for nurses to verify death

<https://www.hospiceuk.org/what-we-offer/publications?kwrd=care%20after%20death&cat=72e54312-4ccd-608d-ad24-ff0000fd3330>

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/confirmation-of-death>

Information for those in Scotland or Northern Ireland

<https://www.themdu.com/guidance-and-advice/latest-updates-and-advice/certifying-deaths-during-covid-19-outbreak?Region=Northern+Ireland>

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/death_certification/questions_and_answers.aspx

Public Health England – Guidance for care of deceased with suspected or confirmed coronavirus.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>



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Thank you for listening

For more CPD eLearning resources,
please visit:

<http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/>