

NHS Chief Executives

In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



8 May 2014

Dear Chief Executives

INFANT CREMATIONS AND THE MORTONHALL INVESTIGATION REPORT

The Director General for Health and Social Care has asked me to write to ensure you are aware of the recent publication of the Mortonhall Investigation Report. The City of Edinburgh Council published the report of Dame Elish Angiolini's investigation into events at Mortonhall Crematorium last week. You may have seen some of the media coverage which followed publication.

The report is extensive and thorough, and fully investigates practices at Mortonhall Crematorium and in related organisations. There are a number of recommendations and learning points for the NHS in Scotland. In particular Dame Elish concludes that there is overwhelming evidence that foetal bones do survive cremation, at least from 17 weeks gestation.

The Scottish Government's Infant Cremation Commission will take account of the Mortonhall Investigation's recommendations in the course of its work, and Government will take forward any recommendations Lord Bony and his Commission make. (The Government's response to the Infant Cremation Commission report will be published in due course, after the Commission has completed its work.) In the meantime, I would encourage you to consider the Mortonhall Investigation Report, and ensure practices are updated where appropriate or necessary. The report is available in full on line at the following link:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20004/council_and_democracy/957/mortonhall_investigation_report/2

I have copied this letter to all Medical Directors, and I would be grateful if this could be disseminated to all relevant staff across the NHS.



Donald Henderson
Head of Public Health