

Dear Colleague

PROVISION OF THE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH (MCCD) TO REGISTRARS 7 DAYS A WEEK, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to request that all certifying doctors should provide the MCCD as soon as possible after confirmation of death.

Colleagues in hospitals and hospices should also aim to provide a signed and scanned copy of the MCCD electronically to the registrar seven days a week.

Background

This communication is intended to supplement both the CMO letter (SGHD/CMO(2020)8) issued on 24 March 2020 Guidance to Medical Practitioners for Death Certification during the COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent supplementary guidance issued to NHS Local Implementation Leads on 3 April 2020.

In recognition of the current need for the most up to date information regarding registered deaths as a result of presumed or confirmed pandemic COVID-19 disease/SARS-CoV-2 infection, local registration services across Scotland are now, as far as possible, moving to a seven days a week registration service. This is vital for monitoring the impact of the measures being undertaken to mitigate the effect and duration of the pandemic, and to provide additional registration capacity to respond effectively to potentially increased numbers of deaths. National Records of Scotland (NRS) can only provide up to date reports in real time, if deaths are registered by local authority registrars seven days a week. This process can be fast tracked if the electronic communication with the registrar takes place as soon as the MCCD is provided, seven days a week.

Colleagues in hospitals and hospices should also remain mindful of the vital importance that the timely provision of the MCCD/Form 11 to Registrars, seven days a week, has in facilitating the smooth process of registration of deaths and funeral processes.

**From the Interim Chief
Medical Officer
Dr Gregor Smith**

Date: 20 April 2020

SGHD/CMO(2020)12

For action

NHS Board Directors of Public Health
NHS Board Medical Directors
National Implementation Leads for Death Certification
Bereavement Co-ordinators of Health Boards

For information

NHS Board Primary Care Leads
National Records of Scotland
Police Scotland
Death Certification Review Service
COPFS
NHS Board and Special Board Chairs
NHS Board and Special Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Directors of Nursing
Chief Officers of Integration Joint Boards
Local Authority Registration Managers
British Medical Association
Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland
Medical Protection Society
Medical Defence Union
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland
Police Care Network,
NHS National Services Scotland (NSS)
Care Inspectorate
National Association of Funeral Directors
The National Society Of Allied And Independent Funeral Directors
Independent healthcare
Regional Resilience Partnerships (RRP)
Association of Registrars of Scotland

Further Enquiries to:

Clinical- Dr Mini Mishra
Email: Mini.Mishra@gov.scot

Policy

Email: burialandcremation@gov.scot

NRS - Rod Burns

Email: rod.burns@nrsscotland.gov.uk

This is to ensure that organisations managing funerals are able to cope with the increased number of deaths during the current pandemic. It is important that people do not delay funerals of their loved ones for public safety reasons and ensure that funeral directors, crematoriums and burial grounds can continue to offer as normal a service as possible for everyone during the current pandemic.

Local registrars moving where possible to a seven day a week registration service also provides citizens with greater opportunity to register the death of a loved one as soon as they are ready, within the statutory timeframes.

We do appreciate that there are factors beyond your influence, such as, the informant letting the administrative staff in hospitals, GP practices or hospices know which registration office the informant wishes to register the death, and the legal requirement on an informant to register a death within 8 days.

Action - Prompt Provision of MCCD and its electronic transmission to Registrars 7 days a week

All certifying doctors and their teams are asked to email the MCCD to the registrar, in accordance with the supplementary guidance issued on 3 April 2020 on the revised MCCD process as above, as soon as they are able. We are now asking you to provide this seven days a week, as far as possible e.g. by flexing administrative staff to work a few hours each day of the weekend or public holiday if they do not already provide such a service.

For deaths that occur out with the in-hours period for GP practices, GPs will continue to provide MCCD and report on the next working day after a weekend or public holiday, when they are notified by the informant, SAS or NHS 24.

Having the most up to date information on presumed or confirmed COVID-19 disease deaths, as completed on a MCCD/Form 11, allows all parts of the Health Service, Scottish Government, Local Authorities and other organisations to continue to plan and take action in response to the ongoing pandemic.

The timely registration of deaths that occurs following the provision of the MCCD is vital to help monitor and inform our collective response to the current pandemic.

We very much understand the current constraints that all in the health service are finding themselves operating within, but would greatly appreciate your patience and assistance on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Gregor Smith
Interim Chief Medical Officer

Paul Lowe
Registrar General, National Records for Scotland