

Medical Examiner Southampton (MES)
Hosted by University Hospital Southampton (UHS)
Preparation for Statutory System April 2024

January 2024

**To all Practice Managers and General Practitioners:
Southampton City and Hampshire**

Dear Colleagues,

Community Roll Out of The Medical Examiner System

Independent Medical Examiner Southampton, hosted by UHS will become a national statutory requirement by April 2024 when all **non-coronial** deaths, both hospital and community will need to have independent and proportionate scrutiny with no exception. The national proposed changes are primarily in place to safeguard the public as well as ensure robust reporting of all deaths and subsequent certification.

Medical Examiners (ME) are Hospital Clinicians and General Practitioners, who are employed in UHS and are supported by Medical Examiner Officers (MEO) providing scrutiny of **all** deaths, both hospital and community prior to registration.

The ME provides proportionate scrutiny to arrive at an independent conclusion. If they then agree with the proposed cause of death made by you as the attending GP, there is no further need for discussion. However, if there any queries then a brief discussion may be needed (see attached current flow chart: MES Community referral version 8 110124).

Our ME can offer advice around the complexities of death certification, which we realise can be very difficult for practitioners to navigate.

Although we are mindful that currently you are under immense service pressures, we are asking all of you to start the process of referring/discussing at least a sample of your community and care home deaths with Medical Examiner Southampton (MES) over the next 3 months, January to end March to allow yourselves and your staff to become familiar with the new process.

Please let us know your preferred commencement date.

The process is currently running across the Solent based GP practices, Southampton City and a few practices across Hampshire and New Forest. Feedback so far has allowed us to adapt in an endeavour to make the process more efficient. We have and will continue to work with the LMC to ensure this is the case. **Please refer to the LMC news update on 5 January 2024 where the team have summarised the proposed Death certification reforms that are planned to be heard in parliament by April 2024.**

The ME will need access to a certain level of patient information and proposed cause of death to provide proportionate scrutiny of the case. We have worked to create an Ardens template to collect this information easily from the GP record. This will need to be sent across via email from an administrator's account.

Ardens templates: System 1 and EMIS Web

System 1 Practices

Please use the Ardens Template for death documentation and attach the last 3 months clinical information to allow proportionate scrutiny. Individual primary care practices can request smartcard details for the ME/MEOs which will also allow MES to directly access the patients notes once notified of a death.

EMIS WEB Practices

Please use the Ardens Template for death documentation. You can find the template by going into 'Documents' then 'Add Letter' and search for 'Medical Examiner'. Please add the last 3 months of consultations manually whilst populating the letter template.

In time, MES will have direct access to System 1 and read only access to EMIS WEB. This is currently under negotiations at the ICS level, so please bear with us as we use the existing system.

MES - Meet the team

CMO UHS and Responsible Officer for MES

- Paul Grundy

Director of Patient Experience

- Jennifer Milner

Head of Patient and Family Relations

- Debbie Watson

Medical Examiner Officers (MEO)

- Clare McCormick
- Megan Newman
- Sarah Rudman
- Tracy Sainsbury

Regional Team

Zoe Helmsley, Consultant Geriatrician, Portsmouth
 -Regional ME
 Amanda Martin, Portsmouth,
 -Regional MEO

Registrar of Births and Deaths

- Nicky Maynard

Crematorium Registrar

- Mike Barker

- **Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Senior Coroner:**

- Mr Christopher Wilkinson

- **Lead Medical Examiners**

- Harnish Patel, Consultant Geriatrician
- Paul Wharton, GP Lordshill Health Centre

Medical Examiners

- Sarah Bell, GP, Living Well Practice
- Lucy Dennison, Specialty Doctor Geriatrics
- Laura Edwards, GP
- Jonathan Fennell Consultant Intensivist
- Bryan Green, Consultant Histopathologist
- Suvitesh Luthra, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon
- Nick Maskery, Consultant Emergency Care
- Tom Pierce, Consultant Intensivist, Coronary ICU
- John Pappachan, Consultant Intensivist, PICU
- Sarah Robinson, Consultant Emergency Care
- Philip White, GP Urgent Care

**Medical Examiner Southampton (MES)
Community Death Reporting: Southampton City, Solent NHS Trust & Hampshire GP Practices**

Contact details:
MEO Office - 023 8120 3564 | Secure email: medicalexaminer@uhs.nhs.uk
MES opening hours: Monday to Friday 8.30am-4.30pm (not Bank Holidays)

**Did you attend the deceased 28 days prior to death – in person or by video (not telephone)?
Do you know the cause of death?
Was the death entirely a natural cause?**

YES

NO

GP/practice/hospital doctor advises patient's next of kin (NOK)/ representative that Medical Examiner Southampton (MES) will review the death and will contact them following this. Establish whether patient is to be buried or cremated.

If you have a question or concern about the process or specific case, please feel free to contact the office on the number above.

FOR CASES REQUIRING CORONER REFERRAL
GP to complete referral to HM Coroner
Please refer to the RCPATH list of reportable deaths.

GP/Dr to send **fully completed referral form** and **proposed cause of death** to MES office via email.
Medical Examiner referral forms are located at
ARDENS Death Notification Templates (S1 TPP & EMIS Web)
Please include at least 3 months of the most recent consultations
Electronic patient record should be kept open to allow read only access for scrutiny. ME & MEO conduct initial scrutiny and call nominated contact (NOK) to establish if they have any questions or concerns.

EMIS WEB
Please fill out the death documentation template
In 'Documents': create a letter using the Medical Examiner Referral Form.
Please ensure that you tick 3-6 months of the most recent consultations.

CORONER DECISION

Proposed cause of death, MCCD wording and/or requirement for coroner referral **agreed** by ME/MEO following initial proportionate scrutiny.
No concerns raised.

Concerns raised / proposed cause of death/requirement for coroner referral not agreed by ME/MEO following initial scrutiny :
Discussion with assigned GP takes place by teams or by phone and all aspects agreed/concerns discussed.
Where referral needed, HM Coroner will be notified by GP

100A - no further action communicated to GP
MES referral form, 100A and completed MCCD to be sent to MES office via email

Inquest or Coroner's post-mortem:
MCCD cannot be issued.
HM Coroner will take forward – MES service stops

MES provide confirmation to the practice via email that cause of death (COD) has been accepted.
Write MCCD & email to MES. Follow your current process with respect to cremation forms and liaison with funeral directors. Do not give MCCD to the family. Keep original for 4 weeks then dispose.

Where concerns are answered and cause of death is agreed, completed MCCD to be sent to MES office via email. **Do not give MCCD to the family.**
Keep original for 4 weeks then dispose.

100A cause of death, MCCD wording agreed by ME following proportionate scrutiny.
No NOK concerns.

MEO to check MCCD prior to sending to registry office.

MES to call NOK/representative to confirm COD and explain registration process. Concerns about COD to be flagged to MES for follow up.
Concerns about care to be directed to the relevant practice or Solent PALS team

Proposed actions:

Although the statutory deadline is not until April 2024, we would suggest that an early start would allow time for all practices to come on board slowly and make necessary adjustments to your processes to allow for these changes. We therefore request that all practices:

- 1) Locate the Ardens template Death Notification Templet and respective referral forms
- 2) Begin to discuss start dates within your individual practices and/or PCN and
- 3) Inform our service via a quick email when you intend to start referring in

Helpful step by step tips for both the primary care team and care home staff advising family members or next of kin:

- Inform them that the cause of death (COD), if known, will need to be communicated to MES together with a copy of the patient notes by the responsible GP.
- If COD agreed by ME/MEO, the MCCD can then be issued by the GP, electronically sent to MES who will give it a final check and send it electronically to the registrar's office.
- The family/NOK then make an appointment online with the registry office to complete registration. This process can take up to 48 hours.
- The MCCD will not be given to the family/NOK by the GP practice. The GP practice will retain the paper copy of the MCCD for 4 weeks and will then be destroyed.
- If cause of death not known/or for certain cases e.g., recent falls or treatment associated deaths, then the case will need to be referred to the coroner who will provide subsequent liaison. This process can take up to 5 days.
- If the coroner agrees to the proposed cause of death by the GP, they will issue a form 100a which allows the GP to write the MCCD and send to MES. This process can take up to 5 days.

We realise this will involve some changes both for admin teams and clinicians. We intend to be supportive and mindful of the challenges the NHS is facing at this time and particularly that you are as General Practice on the frontline. Thank you for your collective consideration and thank you for all the work you do, we appreciate these are tough times. Please do ask the team if you have any questions.

Dr Harnish Patel,



Lead Medical Examiner
On behalf of MES

Mr Paul Grundy



CMO, UHS

For reference:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medical-examiners-in-england-draft-regulations>

[Medical certificate of cause of death: draft regulations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/medical-certificate-of-cause-of-death-draft-regulations)

[Additional functions of the national medical examiner: draft regulations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/additional-functions-of-the-national-medical-examiner-draft-regulations)

Enc. RCPATH Cause of death guide