

## GP Guidance for Coroner's Referrals

If you can issue an MCCD (Medical Certificate of Cause of Death), on the balance of probabilities, for a patient that has recently died but feel a Coroner's referral is required. Prior to submitting an electronic referral to the Coroner's office, please take time to read the following guidance:

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Is a referral required?</b>
I have seen the deceased in the 14 days prior to death and have (or will be) seeing the body after death to complete the cremation paperwork.	<b>NO</b> – unless cause of death triggers a referral (see below)
I have seen the deceased in the 14 days prior to death but will not be seeing the body after death	<b>NO</b> - unless cause of death triggers a referral (see below)
I have <b>NOT</b> seen the deceased in the 14 days prior to death but have seen and treated them within the 6 months prior to their death. I <b>WILL BE</b> seeing the body after death to complete the cremation paperwork.	<b>NO</b> - providing the MCCD is issued after the body has been viewed or unless cause of death triggers a referral (see below)
I have <b>NOT</b> seen the deceased in the 14 days prior to death but have seen and treated them within the 6 months prior to their death. I <b>WILL NOT BE</b> seeing the body after death as the patient is for burial.	<b>YES</b> – referral is required to facilitate death registration
I have <b>NOT</b> seen the deceased in the 14 days prior to death and <b>HAVE NOT</b> seen or treated them within the 6 months prior to their death but have seen and treated them over 6 months ago. I may or may not be seeing the body after death.	<b>YES</b>
I have never seen or treated the deceased prior to their death and neither have any of my colleagues currently in the surgery (at time of referral). However, one of our colleagues, who is away from the surgery for a few days or on annual leave for the next <b>1-2 weeks</b> , has seen them in the 14 days prior to death and would be able to issue an MCCD on their return.	<b>NO</b> – an MCCD cannot be issued by a doctor that has never seen/treated a patient in life, except in very exceptional circumstances. You will need to wait for your colleague to return so they can issue the MCCD.  <b>PLEASE NOTE - If the GP is away for more than 2 weeks, a referral will be required.</b>

Neither I nor any of my colleagues currently employed at the surgery have ever seen or treated the deceased prior to their death but we feel death is expected/natural and a post mortem unnecessary. We would be willing to issue an MCCD.	<b>YES</b> – In exceptional circumstances, the Coroner can authorise a doctor to issue an MCCD even when they haven't seen the deceased in life.
I want to include a fracture (i.e. fractured neck of femur) in the cause of death on the MCCD	<b>YES</b> – regardless of where the fracture appears on the MCCD.
A disease or illness related to the employment of the deceased (asbestosis, mesothelioma, farmer's lung, pigeon fancier's lung) has caused or contributed to their death and I intend to include this on the MCCD.	<b>YES</b> – regardless of where the disease/illness appears on the MCCD.
A traumatic bleed on the brain (i.e. subdural haemorrhage/haematoma) has caused or contributed to the death of my patient and I intend to include this on the MCCD	<b>YES</b> – regardless of where it appears on the MCCD.
A spontaneous, naturally occurring, bleed on the brain has caused or contributed to the death of my patient and I intend to include this on the MCCD	<b>NO</b> – This does not require a referral providing you include the word <b>“spontaneous”</b> in the cause of death.
I want to include any other form of injury or unnatural condition on the MCCD	<b>YES</b> – regardless of where it appears on the MCCD.
The deceased has had surgery or a procedure in the <b>last 12 months</b> which may have caused or contributed to their death and I intend to include this on the MCCD	<b>YES</b> – regardless of where it appears on the MCCD.

**\*\*Please note it is the responsibility of the referring doctor to provide the Coroner's Office with adequate circumstances of the death when making a referral. Any referrals submitted with “not known” or just “unexpected” in the circumstances box will be returned to the referring GP and NOT actioned until a more detailed referral is submitted\*\***

**\*\* If you have referred a death to the Coroner and received a response saying the Coroner is content for you to issue an MCCD and he/she will provide supporting paperwork to the Registrar, you will need to circle number 4 on the front of the MCCD, circle Part A on the reverse and place your initials on the line underneath\*\***



## **Guide for Notification of Deaths**

### **HM Senior Coroner for Oxfordshire**

This guide supersedes previous local guidance and reflects the national position in respect of England and Wales in accordance with the Notification of Death Regulations 2019, which should be referred to. The Regulations came into force on **1<sup>st</sup> October 2019**.

Helpful guidance is set out in the Ministry of Justice 'Guidance for Registered Medical Practitioners on the Notification of Deaths Regulations 2019' which contains further explanation and examples. A link to the electronic version of this document is below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831100/notification-deaths-regulations-2019-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831100/notification-deaths-regulations-2019-guidance.pdf)

**A death must now be notified to the Senior Coroner where there is reasonable cause to suspect that the death was caused or contributed to by the following circumstances:**

- The death was due to poisoning including by an otherwise benign substance
- The death was due to exposure to, or contact with a toxic substance
- The death was due to a medicinal product, the use of a controlled drug or psychoactive substance
- The death was due to violence, trauma or injury
- The death was due to self-harm
- The death was due to neglect, including self-neglect
- The death was due to a person undergoing any treatment or procedure of a medical or similar nature
- The death was due to an injury or disease attributable to any employment held by the person during the person's lifetime
- The person's death was unnatural but does not fall within any of the above circumstances
- The cause of death is unknown
- The registered medical practitioner suspects that the person died while in custody or otherwise in state detention
- There was no attending registered medical practitioner required to sign a medical certificate of cause of death in relation to the deceased person
- The attending medical practitioner is not available within a reasonable time of the person's death to sign the certificate of cause of death
- The identity of the deceased person is unknown

#### **Contact details for the Oxfordshire Coroner's Office**

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