



DEATH CERTIFICATION REFORMS

Dr Alice Braga MBChB Hons MRCP FRCA RCPATHME

About Me

- Graduated in 2000 from University of Bristol Medical School with Honours
- Undertook PRHO/SHO training in Gloucestershire and London
- Member Royal College of Physicians 2005
- Commenced Anaesthetic training in Severn Deanery
- Fellow Royal College of Anaesthetists 2010
- Appointed Consultant in Worcestershire May 2017
- ME service Dec 2017
- Royal College of Pathologists (Medical Examiner) August 2020
- Facilitator F2F training October 2020
- NCEPOD advisor 2023-2024 'Planning for the End' published 14/11/24

WHY I BECAME AN ME



What I'm going to cover

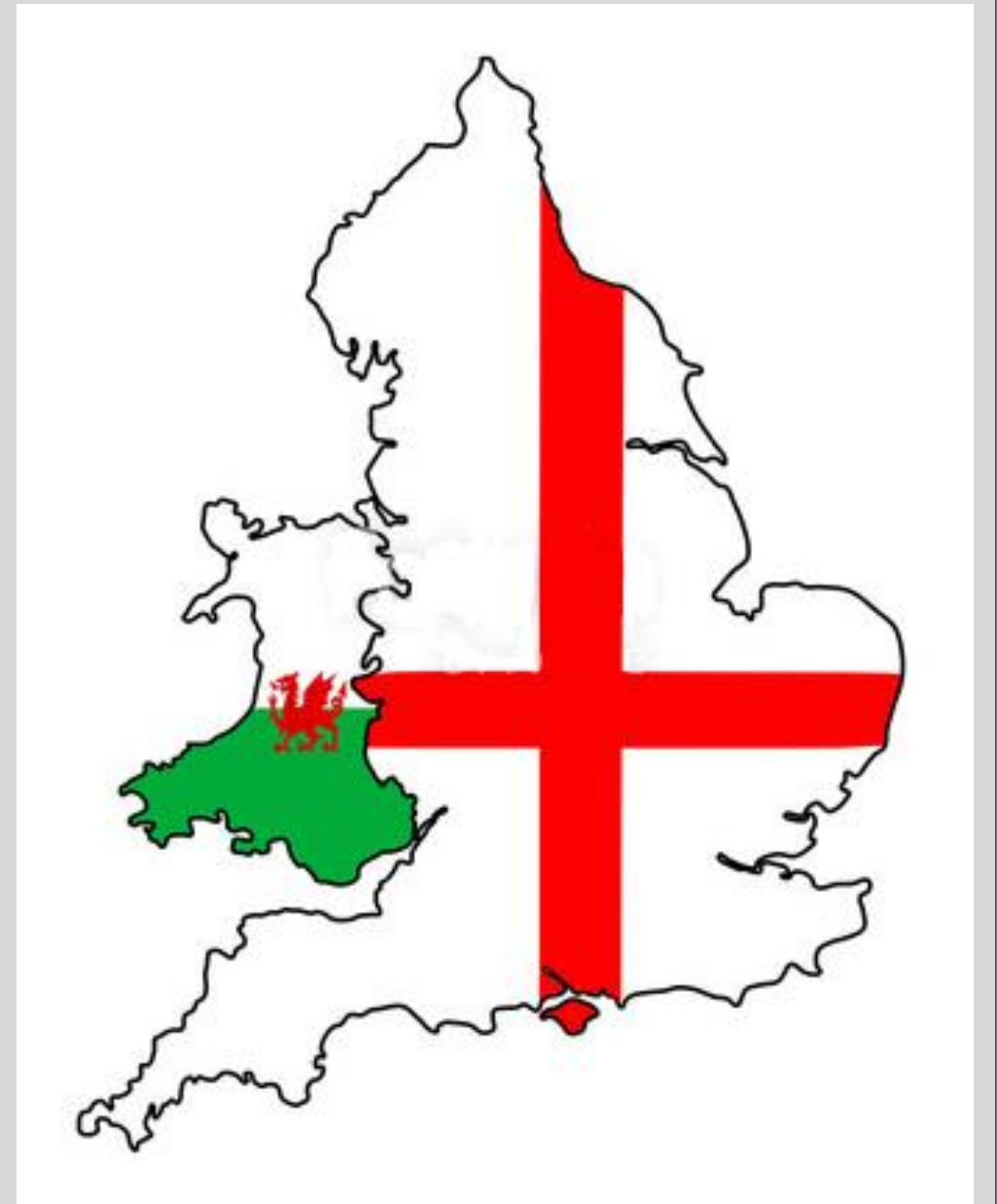
- Previous system
- Legislation
- New system
 - Role of Medical Examiners and the NME
 - Why they've been introduced
 - Changes to death certification
 - Changes to registration of deaths
 - Changes to cremation forms
- Where to find out more
- Questions

Previous System

- MCCD written by attending practitioner (AP)
 - Attended during last illness
 - And within 28 days *or* after death
- Non-statutory medical examiner service
- Registrar reviewed cause of death
- AP, ME or Registrar could refer to Coroner
- Uncertified deaths
- 5 day target for registration
- Crem form 4 for cremations

Non-Statutory ME system

- Pilot schemes 2008
- Hospital deaths since 2019
- 100% for several years
- Community deaths since 2022
- 80%+ before statutory system
- Over 1 million deaths scrutinised



Death Certification Reforms

- 2000 shipman convicted of murdering 15
- Likely he killed over 200
- Signed the MCCDs of those he killed
- 2001 Public Enquiry
- Third report 'Death Certification and the investigation of deaths by coroners'
- Luce 2003 and Broderick 1971



Sir Robert Francis QC 2013

- MCCDs inaccurate/incomplete
- Approach families
- Responsible Doctors





Dr Bill Kirkup 2015

- Jan 2004-
June 2013
- Furness GH
- 3 maternal
- 16 babies
- Immediate ME
- Stillbirths

Primary Legislation



Coroners and Justice Act 2009



Health and Care Act 2022

Secondary Legislation

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2024 No. 000

MEDICAL PROFESSION, ENGLAND AND WALES
CORONERS, ENGLAND AND WALES

The National Medical Examiner (Additional Functions) Regulations
2024

Made - - - -
Laid before Parliament
Coming into force

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2024 No. 000

MEDICAL PROFESSION, ENGLAND AND WALES
CORONERS, ENGLAND AND WALES

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Regulations 2024

Made - - - -
Laid before Parliament

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2024 No. 000

MEDICAL PROFESSION, ENGLAND AND WALES
CORONERS, ENGLAND AND WALES

The Medical Examiners (England) Regulations 2024

Made - - - -
Laid before Parliament
Coming into force

The Secretary of State makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 19(4) and 176(3) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009(a).

MOJ regulations laid May 2024

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2024 No. 668

CORONERS, ENGLAND AND WALES

CREMATION, ENGLAND AND WALES

MEDICAL PROFESSION, ENGLAND AND WALES

**The Cremation, Coroners and Notification of Deaths (England and Wales) (Amendment)
Regulations 2024**

Made

20th May 2024

Laid before Parliament

21st May 2024

Coming into force

9th September 2024

GRO regulations laid sept 2024



Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

What are Medical Examiners

- Senior doctors from any specialty/GP
- Independent, part-time
- Trained by RCPATH
- Review every non-coronial death in E&W
- Appointed and employed by acute trusts/NHSWSSP
- Any ME reviews any death
- Centrally funded
- Work with MEOs
- Weekend and bank holiday cover

Benefits of an ME system

- Independent scrutiny of all deaths
- Greater transparency/reassurance/safeguards
- Equal scrutiny for burials and cremations
- Provide bereaved families with opportunities to ask questions and raise concerns
- Improve quality/accuracy of MCCD
- Improve mortality data
- Ensure appropriate coroner referral
- Feed into governance pathways to support learning and improve care
- Provide support with complex cases

MEs seek to answer three questions

What did the person die from?

Does this need to be reported to the Coroner?

Are there any clinical governance concerns?

MEs follow three mandatory steps

Proportionate review of medical records

Interaction with the attending doctor/s

Interaction with bereaved family

National Medical Examiner

- NHSI/NHSE National Patient Safety Team
- Professional and strategic leadership
- Set quality standards
- Collaborative, standardisation
- Regular Bulletin
- NME Guidance
- Good Practice series
- Annual Report

Dr Alan Fletcher
National Medical Examiner (0.6 FTE)

Nick Day
*Policy and Programme Lead,
Medical Examiner System*

Helen Hill
*Office
Co-ordinator
for National
Medical
Examiner*

Rajiv Prinja
*Finance
Systems
Analyst*

Regional Medical Examiners (0.4 FTE):
East of England – Ellen Makings
London – Mette Rodgers
Midlands – Ben Lobo
North East and Yorkshire – Graham Cooper
North West – Huw Twamley
South East – Zoe Hemsley
South West – Golda Shelley-Fraser

Regional Medical Examiner Officers (0.4 FTE):
East of England – Siobhan Costello
London – Laura O'Donoghue
Midlands – Siobhan Costello
North East and Yorkshire – Debbie Peacock
North West – Margaret Butler
South East – Amanda Dooley
South West – Becky Protopsaltis

Name of deceased.....

Date of death as stated to me..... day of Age as stated to me.....

Place of death.....

Last seen alive by me..... day of

- 1 The certified cause of death takes account of information obtained from post-mortem.
- 2 Information from post-mortem may be available later.
- 3 Post-mortem not being held.
- 4 I have reported this death to the Coroner for further action.

Please ring appropriate digit(s) and letter

- a Seen after death by me.
- b Seen after death by another medical practitioner but not me.
- c Not seen after death by a medical practitioner.

CAUSE OF DEATH

I (a) Disease or condition directly leading to death.....
 (b) Other disease or condition, if any, leading to I(a).....
 (c) Other disease or condition, if any, leading to I(b).....

II Other significant conditions
 CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEATH but
 not related to the disease or condition causing it.....

Approximate interval
 between onset and death

.....

The death might have been due to or contributed to by the employment followed at some time by the deceased

I certify that this death certificate is accurate

Signature..... Qualifications.....
 Residence..... Date.....
 Consultant responsible for the above-named patient.....

Attending Practitioner Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

For use by a Registered Medical Practitioner who has attended the deceased in their lifetime. This certificate is to be delivered by the relevant Medical Examiner as soon as practicable to the Registrar of Births and Deaths

Please refer to guidance for medical practitioners completing an MCCD on .GOV.UK

Unique ID: _____

Name of deceased (first, middle, and last)

Date of birth DD/MM/YYYY Age

NHS number (if available)

Date of death as stated to me DD/MM/YYYY

Place of death

CAUSE OF DEATH	Approximate interval between onset and death <small>(These particulars not to be entered in the death register)</small>
The condition thought to be the underlying cause of death should appear in the lowest completed line of part I	
I (a) Disease or condition leading directly to death	
(b) Other disease or condition, if any, leading to I (a)	
(c) Other disease or condition, if any, leading to I (b)	
(d) Other disease or condition, if any, leading to I (c)	
II Other significant conditions contributing to the death but not relating to the disease or condition causing it	

- Circle the appropriate digit*
- The certified cause of death takes account of information obtained from post-mortem
 - Information from post-mortem may be available later
 - Post-mortem not being held
 - This death was reported to the coroner whose duty to investigate under s1 CJA2009 was not engaged

- Circle the appropriate digit*
- Was the deceased pregnant within the year prior to their death?**
- Not applicable
 - Pregnant at the time of death
 - Pregnant 1-42 days before death
 - Pregnant 43 days to a year before death
 - Not pregnant
 - Unknown
- If the deceased was pregnant within the year prior to their death, did the pregnancy contribute to their death?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Unknown

This death may have been due to, or contributed to, by the employment followed at some point by the deceased Yes No

I may be in a position to give, on application by the Registrar General, additional information as to the cause of death for the purpose of more precise statistical classification

APC 1
Form 66

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- This death was reported to the coroner whose duty to investigate under s1 CJA2009 was not engaged

Circle the appropriate digit

Was the deceased pregnant within the year prior to their death?

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- Pregnant at the time of death
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 - No
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APC 1
Form 66

Ethnicity

Circle the digit of the ethnicity as it is recorded in the patient record. If there is no match with the list, or there is no ethnicity recorded, please circle '19. Not known.'

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British | 9. Asian or Asian British: Indian |
| 2. White: Irish | 10. Asian or Asian British: Pakistani |
| 3. White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 11. Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi |
| 4. White: Any other White background | 12. Asian or Asian British: Chinese |
| 5. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean | 13. Asian or Asian British: Any other Asian background |
| 6. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African | 14. Black, Black British, Caribbean or African: Caribbean |
| 7. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian | 15. Black, Black British, Caribbean or African: African |
| 8. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background | 16. Black, Black British, Caribbean or African: Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background |
| | 17. Other ethnic group: Arab |
| | 18. Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group |
| | 19. Not known |

Implantable medical devices

Did the deceased have any implantable medical devices fitted during their lifetime? Yes No

If yes, provide details of the device and its location

If yes, has the device been removed?

For the attending practitioner to complete

Full name Qualifications (as registered by GMC) GMC number

Declaration: I confirm that I attended the deceased before their death and that the cause of death is as stated in this certificate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Date DD/MM/YYYY.....

For the medical examiner to complete

Full name Qualifications (as registered by GMC) GMC number

Declaration: I am a duly appointed medical examiner and following scrutiny I confirm that the cause of death is as stated in this certificate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Date DD/MM/YYYY.....

Ethnicity

Circle the digit of the ethnicity as it is recorded in the patient record. If there is no match with the list, or there is no ethnicity recorded, please circle '19. Not known.'

- | | |
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Signature Date DD/MM/YYYY.....

For the medical examiner to complete

Full name Qualifications (as registered by GMC) GMC number

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If yes, has the device been removed?

For the attending practitioner to complete

Full name Qualifications (as registered by GMC) GMC number

Declaration: I confirm that I attended the deceased before their death and that the cause of death is as stated in this certificate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Date DD/MM/YYYY.....

For the medical examiner to complete

Full name Qualifications (as registered by GMC) GMC number

Declaration: I am a duly appointed medical examiner and following scrutiny I confirm that the cause of death is as stated in this certificate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Date DD/MM/YYYY.....

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For the attending practitioner to complete

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For the medical examiner to complete

Full name Qualifications (as registered by GMC) GMC number

Declaration: I am a duly appointed medical examiner and following scrutiny I confirm that the cause of death is as stated in this certificate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature Date DD/MM/YYYY.....

Changes for the AP

PREVIOUSLY:

Must have attended during last illness
And seen either within 28 days or after death

NOW:

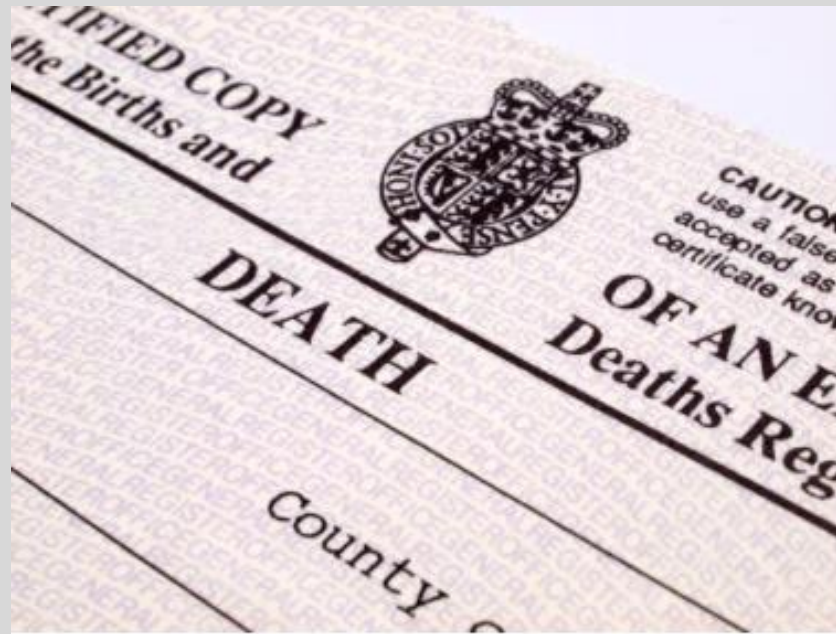
Any doctor who attended the deceased during their lifetime
No need to view the body after death

ME MCCD

- Exceptional circumstances only
- Cause of death known
- No AP available
- Senior Coroner has decided not to investigate
- Coroner refers to ME
- ME issues ME MCCD
- Avoids uncertified deaths

Changes to registration

- 5 days from MCCD
- Registrar copies COD
- Any queries go to ME
- MEs can:
 - Change spelling
 - Sign against crossings out
 - Complete circled
 - Amend place of death
- MEs CANNOT
 - Change the CoD
 - Move an entry
 - Expand an abbreviation



Changes to cremation forms

- Form 4 has been removed
- CMRs will stay for now
- Transitional phase - will review role

Authorisation of cremation of deceased person by medical referee

Cremation 10
replacing Form F

01.09

Please complete this form in full, if a part does not apply enter 'N/A'.

Part 1 Details of the deceased

Full name

For the future

- Digital case management system
- Digital MCCD
- Updated cause of death list

Cause of death list

June 2020

Author: Dr Suzy Lishman, Chair of the RCPATH Medical Examiners Committee.

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Summary of changes

- Deaths CANNOT be registered without scrutiny by an ME or Coroner
- Any doctor who attended during the patient's lifetime can complete the MCCD
- Changes to MCCD
- New ME MCCD for exceptional cases
- Cremation form 4 removed
- Registrars will not review causes of death



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Death certification reform and the introduction of medical examiners

Information about changes to the death certification process in England and Wales from 9 September 2024.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/death-certification-reform-and-the-introduction-of-medical-examiners>

Feedback from families

I didn't realise the role existed. I was surprised when the ME phoned me but thought 'pew, that's really good'.

It was almost like someone had been reading my thoughts - it was a difficult time and I had some concerns about care in the nursing home - I was really pleased the ME was there to talk to.

If the ME hadn't phoned, I don't know who else I would have spoken to. I wouldn't have contacted anyone else or made a complaint.

It's a brilliant role, and really makes a difference to families.

It's like a voice for the person who's died.

It gave me closure.

Because my concerns were listened to, it felt like my relative didn't die in vain.



QUESTIONS

Dr Alice Braga
alice.braga1@nhs.net