

Statutory Medical Examiner System - Leeds Primary Care Network

Introduction to the Medical Examiner Service:

Acute trusts in England and local health boards in Wales were asked to set up medical examiner offices to initially focus on the certification of all deaths that occur in their own organisation on a non-statutory basis. The role of these offices is being extended to include all non-coronial deaths, wherever they occur including the community.

A medical examiner office has been established in Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust over the last year and is now at the initial phase of implementing processes with other healthcare providers across our jurisdiction. The service aims to have processes in place to facilitate the work of medical examiners by **31 March 2023**.

The purpose of the medical examiner system:

- Provide greater safeguards for the public by ensuring proportionate scrutiny of all non-coronial deaths
- Ensure the appropriate direction of deaths to HM Coroner
- Provide a better service for the bereaved and an opportunity for them to raise any concerns to a doctor not involved in the care of the deceased
- Improve the quality of death certification
- Improve the quality of mortality data & learning from deaths

What is a Medical Examiner?

Medical Examiners are senior medical doctors who are contracted for a number of sessions a week to undertake medical examiner duties, outside of their usual clinical duties. They are trained in the legal and clinical elements of death certification processes.

A medical examiner must always be independent of the case and cannot know, or have treated, the deceased patient on which they are carrying out scrutiny of the circumstances of death.

What is a Medical Examiner Officer?

Medical Examiner Officers (MEOs) are a vital part of any Medical Examiner Service. As most Medical Examiners will work part time in the role, MEOs will provide the continuity and oversight that the service requires to have the maximum benefit.

Coming from a range of backgrounds, MEOs will be involved in all stages of the ME service, from talking to attending physicians, advising on the wording of death certificates and explaining this to bereaved families, as well as answering any questions they might have.

As a Team we:

- Agree the proposed cause of death and the overall accuracy of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) with the doctor completing it
- Discuss the cause of death with the next of kin/informant and establish if they have questions or any concerns with care before death
- Act as a medical advice resource for Her Majesty's Coroner
- Inform the selection of cases for further review under local mortality arrangements and contribute to other clinical governance procedures.