Overview process for death certification

Verified death

Medical examiner/ officer advice
To APs, HMC/ Coroner's offices

Concerns (if detected)
Passed on during ME scrutiny
Clinical governance concerns referred to relevant healthcare organisation

APs, MEs, HMC and register office work together to facilitate urgent release of body if required and where possible

Direct referral to HMC

No

Yes

Discuss and amend cause of death if required

If representative of deceased provides information suggesting cause of death may need revision, registrar consults ME

Confirmation of disposal

Attending practitioner
AP reviews health record with a view to establishing cause of death for AP Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (AP MCCD)

Medical examiner scrutiny
Review of medical records, ME and MEO note conclusions Discussion between AP and ME/MEO (not for ME MCCD).

ME/MEO offer discussion with representative of the deceased – explain cause of death and opportunity to raise concerns

Either cause of death agreed and proceed to complete MCCD, or notify HMC if cause of death not agreed

MCCD
ME/MEO sends completed MCCD with cause of death to registrar

Note: AP MCCD signed by AP and ME

ME MCCD signed by ME only

Registration of death

Disposal
There is also scope for a registrar to issue a disposal form before registration

Notifiable deaths to HMC from AP or ME

HMC sends CN1A form with relevant information to AP and ME for AP MCCD

Only if no AP available (confirmed by referring practitioner) HMC sends CN1B form with relevant information to ME for ME MCCD

HMC sends CN2 form to registrar

HMC sends form 99 or 120 and 121

Disposal order

HMC can also issue a disposal order after opening an investigation, which then may or may not proceed to inquest

Coroner decision: no duty to investigate

Coroner decision: discontinued
Natural causes of death established with or without post-mortem examination

Coroner preliminary enquiries
Enquiries by HMC office to determine if there is a duty to investigate

Coroner decision: duty to investigate
Investigation opened. Includes post-mortem examination if requested by HMC

Coroner: inquest

Key processes carried out by:

From 9 September 2024

- AP (attending practitioner)
- HMC (HM Coroner's office)
- Registration services
- Medical examiner office: MEs (medical examiners) and MEOs (medical examiner officers)
- Concerns – further action or review by relevant healthcare provider depends on nature of concern. Referral by ME/MEO to established clinical governance processes where appropriate