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Registration Service
Place and Economy
Cambridgeshire County Council
Lawrence Court
Princes Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3PA

To: all Cambridgeshire GP Surgeries, All Cambridgeshire Hospitals, and Cambridgeshire Funeral Directors

Dear Colleagues,

Introduction

This newsletter aims to keep you up to date of relevant developments within the Registration Service and provide useful reminders of how we value support with bereaved families – especially with so many medical practitioners often working in multiple locations and a wide variety of hours. Please read through the whole document, and share with all relevant colleagues in your establishment.

Contact details

Please complete the email attachment by 31 March 2018, with your contact details, the names of doctors, their signatures and GMC number. We are also asking for an emergency telephone number for us to use during normal office hours when we cannot get through via the usual telephone number. Please return to us by email to the email address above ideally or post to the Lawrence Court address.

Death Registrations

The basics

The current target is to achieve Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) registrations within 5 calendar days is 90%; the latest figures show that to September 2017 we achieved 80%. So, we request your cooperation in helping the target to be achieved which is a great benefit to the relatives. Unless an inquest will be taking place, or a post mortem means there may be a delay, a death **must** legally be registered within 5 calendar days from the date it occurred. In most cases the person registering the death will be a relative of the deceased or someone who was present at the death. An “executor” of a will is not legally able to register a death unless they are a relative, were present at the death or are personally making all the funeral arrangements. Please note that for death registrations “common-in-law” spouses or “life partner” are not legally recognised as being a relative.

It is therefore really important that if a medical practitioner is able to issue an MCCD they do so accurately and as soon as possible. If the death has to be referred to the Coroner then it is equally as important you do so as soon as possible, to ensure any delay in registration is kept to a minimum. **Please ensure you tell the relatives if you are referring the death to the Coroner.**

Completing an MCCD

Every week we unfortunately have to keep some bereaved customers waiting, often adding to their distress, due to information omitted or illegible on an MCCD. On some occasions we have to send the family away as we are perhaps unable to contact the person who issued the certificate or the surgery, or find the case has been referred to the Coroner and the investigation is still on-going.

To help us reduce the frequency of these distressing situations please find attached a simple checklist and an example MCCD which we hope will be of use. It is also worth noting that inside every book of MCCDs there is the same information, so it should always be available when issuing a certificate. If the death has to be referred to the Coroner then it is equally as important to make that referral as soon as possible, to ensure any delays are kept to a minimum. It is now acceptable to use ‘old age’ alone for deaths of people over 80 years of age. **Please note you can only sign a MCCD if you have been in medical attendance upon the deceased during the last illness. We will be monitoring MCCDs and contacting the surgery should we find issues with their completion as this delays the registration.**

Process for the bereaved

The bereaved can contact their chosen Funeral Director and begin to make arrangements before a death has been registered, however they need to ensure that sufficient time is allowed between the date of death and the proposed funeral date to allow time to attend an appointment.

Here is a summary of the process that will apply where the informant is attending an appointment in Cambridgeshire to register, depending on whether or not the death is referred to the Coroner – and the outcome of any such referral:

1. Medical practitioner issues MCCD, no referral to the Coroner

The bereaved will need to make an appointment to register the death within 5 calendar days, and will need to collect the MCCD from where it is issued and bring it to the appointment.

2. Medical practitioner issues MCCD having referred to the Coroner and been informed a “Part A” will be issued

You need to ensure that the bereaved have been informed by you that the death has been referred to the Coroner. The bereaved will need to make an appointment to register the death no earlier than two working days after the date that you have referred the case to the Coroner. This will allow the Coroner time to issue a Part A. The bereaved will need to collect the MCCD from where it is issued and bring it to the appointment. The coronial Part A will be sent straight to the Registration Service.

3. Medical practitioner is not able to issue MCCD and has referred the case to the Coroner. A Part B will be issued following confirmation of the cause of death via post mortem

You need to ensure that the bereaved have been informed by you that the death has been referred to the Coroner. The Coroner will contact the bereaved and make the appointment for them to register the death as soon as possible. The coronial Part B will be sent directly to the Registration Service. Please note that even if interim death certificates have been issued for any reason it is still a legal requirement that the death is registered.

4. Medical practitioner is not able to issue MCCD and has referred the case to the Coroner. An inquest is required.

On the conclusion of the inquest the Coroner will issue documents directly to the Registration Service. The death will then be registered without the next of kin needing to attend. Following registration the bereaved will be provided with relevant information, including how to purchase copies of the death certificate.

In scenarios 1 and 2 above, please encourage the bereaved to contact us on the day the death occurred, or the next working day, to make an appointment to register the death as quickly as possible. To make an appointment customers should call our Contact Centre on 0345 045 1363.

In scenarios 1, 2 and 3 further information about registering a death, the documents issued and fees for death certificates can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/register-a-death> and <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/bmd>

Cambridgeshire Registration Offices

A death that takes place in Cambridgeshire (this does not include the Unitary Authority of Peterborough) can be registered, by appointment, in any one of our offices. We therefore appreciate your support in ensuring bereaved families know about the need to register within 5 calendar days, and that to do so they may need to go elsewhere in the county. We strongly advise against customers turning up without an appointment, as they may have to wait some hours to be seen.

Please note that the Contact Centre, and our offices, are not open on any Bank Holiday.

To make an appointment customers can book online at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/births-deaths-and-marriages/deaths/registering-a-death/> or could phone our Contact Centre on 0345 045 1363, they are open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm. Locations and opening hours for all our Registration Offices are available on our website at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/bmd>. Please note that Cambridge and Huntingdon are full time whilst all our other locations are part time.

Registration Service Emergency Contact

To ensure that contact lists are easy to maintain (due to staffing changes in the Registration Service) please use the Contact Centre when they are open but our Registration Offices are closed.

The Registration Service can be called out of hours (when the Contact Centre is closed) by calling the Police on 101, but there are very few occasions where a death would need to be registered out of hours.

Due to the online booking system, a family can book a registration appointment for the next working day online and the “green” form is not required to be issued until registration and will not stop the body being collected nor any religious rites or rituals taking place.

Supplies of MCCDs

All Registration Services have to ensure that they have sufficient supplies of books. All numbers are recorded on receipt from the General Register Office, and we then have to record details as to who / when / where they are issued to. Each book contains a card that can be used to request a replacement, or you can e-mail cambsreg@cambridgeshire.gov.uk with New MCCD Request in the title, stating the doctor's full name, qualification and GMC number. Please note that as soon as the new books are received you must confirm receipt.

We would suggest it can be helpful for you to audit unused books on at least an annual basis, to ensure they are all accounted for and are all still current stock (occasionally we receive one that is so old and out of date we are unable to accept it). If you carry out a check and find you need new stock please use the email address above.

Marriage and Civil Partnership of persons with short life expectancy.

Ceremonies can be arranged at short notice if someone has a short life expectancy. The simplest option would be for the couple to give notice at the local registration office, and apply for a waiver of the 28 day waiting period which must be supported by a GP letter confirming the state of health of the ill person. The ceremony can be conducted at the registration office or an approved venue. If the person is housebound, and the GP is genuinely able to write a letter to confirm they are immobilised and unable to leave their location for the following 3 months, then we may be able to conduct a ceremony at home.

Current law provides for a marriage or civil partnership to take place in circumstances where one of the parties is seriously ill and not expected to recover and cannot be moved to a place where it could normally be solemnized. In these circumstances, the GP needs to write a letter to state:

- They are in attendance on the patient
- The patient is seriously ill and is not expected to recover
- The patient cannot be moved from the hospital/house to a place registered for marriage.
- The patient understands the nature and purport of marriage

The marriage cannot go ahead without this confirmation from the GP or hospital consultant.

Tell Us Once

We offer a service to bereaved families whereby we electronically notify all local and Central Government Departments of a death. The family receive a unique reference number and can continue online or by phone at their convenience within 28 days to give more specific details to each of the available departments. This is a very useful service, allowing all the information to be given once and saving the family many phone calls. More information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once>

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Coroner Service

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Jurisdiction covers both the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC) administrative areas. The office is based in Huntingdon. The contact number is 0345 045 1364, and the office is open Monday to Thursday 8.00am to 5.00pm and Friday 8.00am to 4.00pm (closed on Bank Holidays). Alternatively you may wish to contact the service by email: Coroners@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Future Changes

The Medical Examiner Schemes now have a planned implementation date of late 2019. CCC and PCC intend to provide a joint service organised alongside the existing Coroner arrangements. Plans are at an early stage and more information will be provided to you later in the year. Should you have any immediate queries please contact the Coroner Service by email: Coroners@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Feedback

If you have any feedback on this newsletter, or any suggestions how the Registration Service or the Coroner Service could improve working with yourselves or bereaved families please do let us know by e-mailing:

regadmin@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, and for your continued support when dealing with the recently bereaved.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Clover
Registration Service Manager, also on behalf of the Coroner Service
Enc. MCCD example, checklist and contact list pro-forma

