

Cheshire Local Medical Committee

Upcoming National Changes re. Death Certificates: Update from General Practice Committee BMA

From midnight on 24th March 2022

- All deaths will need to be registered in person as the provision to register deaths by telephone will no longer be in force.
- A funeral director will no longer be able to act as a qualified informant.
- A medical practitioner who has not been in medical attendance during the deceased's last illness will no longer be able to certify the cause of death (to complete a medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD)).

To assist reverting from the emergency to normal working arrangements there are some transitional arrangements around MCCDs which allow those issued on or before 24 March 2022 under the emergency provisions to still be accepted by registrars. Fuller details will follow in due course.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FROM 25 MARCH 2022

While it has not yet been possible to amend primary legislation, which is why we need to revert to face to face registration, we have been able to put some secondary legislation into place, through an Electronic Communications Act (ECA) Order and a change to our regulations which will enable some new arrangements to take effect from 25 March 2022.

These are summarized as follows:

- To be able to issue an MCCD, the certifying medical practitioner will need to have been in attendance during the deceased's last illness and either seen the deceased within the 28 days prior to death (the extension to 28 days has been retained via a change to secondary legislation) or after death.
- The new arrangements will enable MCCDs to continue to be received electronically from medical practitioners but will additionally remove the need to subsequently receive a hard copy. As the e-copy will have the same legal status as the paper, this will mean they can also be electronically stored and the requirement for hardcopy MCCDs to be sent into GRO on a quarterly basis is also able to be removed. There is some ongoing work on how long the e-copies will need to be retained.

Advice from BMA
16 February 2022