



Department
of Health

Introduction of Medical Examiners and Reforms to Death Certification Update Newsletter

November 2016 Issue

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Introduction of Medical Examiners and Reforms to Death Certification Newsletter.

Medical Examiner Strategic Programme Board

The SPB met on the 17 November. Consideration of the responses to the consultation and their implications is ongoing and we hope to update substantively soon.

Communication with Local Authority Chief Executives

We wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives on 17th October via the Department for Communities and Local Government's Permanent Secretary Newsletter. We asked some specific questions, in a survey, about their level of awareness of the reforms and the extent to which they have or have not put in place plans for implementation. We also asked Chief Executives to

comment on a draft checklist that local government advisors have been working on to support local authorities to develop a local plan to establish their local medical examiner services.

We understand that some of our stakeholders have wrongly assumed that the communication was a consultation from which they have been excluded. We would like to apologise

Important changes to the programme leadership

Kathryn Tyson left the Department on 24 October. Mark Davies, Director of Population Health, has taken up the role of SRO for the Death Certification Reforms Programme and will be chairing the Medical Examiner SPB.

Carolyn Heaney, current Programme Director, will be leaving the Department on the 22 December. Jeremy Mean will take up the role of Programme Director on her departure.

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Department of Health

for this misunderstanding. This was not a consultation and was specifically targeted at local authorities

because they will be responsible for setting up and running the Medical Examiner Service.

Communication Strategy

Department of Health Policy and Communications colleagues met on 2nd November to consider how communications can help achieve the required policy outcomes for Death Certification Reforms. A key outcome from the meeting was the need to establish a Communications Working Group (CWG) to support the work of the Medical Examiners Strategic Programme Board. The CWG membership will reflect that of the Strategic Programme Board. The initial workshop-style meeting will discuss the role of communications in supporting the reforms to death certification and introduction of medical examiners and identify, before the end of 2016, the areas where communications – as opposed to stakeholder engagement – will have maximum impact.

Meeting with Funeral Directors

Lord Prior met with Mark Pawsey, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Funerals and Bereavement on 27th October, accompanied by a delegation of funeral directors and bereavement services, to discuss the reforms to death certification. In relation to a concern raised about a weakness in the existing system involving verification of fact of death, Lord Prior has been able to confirm subsequently that the reforms will not change current practice on verification of the fact of death.

Please contact us at DeathCertification@dh.gsi.gov.uk if you have any questions, comments or would like to discuss any aspect of the Death Certification Programme

Infrastructure Projects Authority (IPA) Review Update

The IPA Gateway 0 Review produced a report including a number of recommendations that will improve delivery confidence for the Programme. An Action Plan has been developed, which the Programme Team are working through.

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Coming up next

A cross-government pre-discovery workshop is being arranged to discuss an IT/Digital strategy for potential digitisation of the Medical Examiner system. Participants will include DH Digital, NHS Digital, Government Digital Service, General Register Office, Office for National Statistics, Medical Examiner pilots, Local Government Association, National Panel for Registration, DH Finance, HM Treasury and the Welsh Government

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The next SPB meeting is scheduled to take place on the 12th December.