



Ministry of JUSTICE

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To all crematorium medical referees and cremation
authorities in England and Wales

10 July 2013

Dear colleagues

Department of Health Medical Examiner system and death certification reforms

I am writing, further to my letter of 14 June 2012, to ensure that you are aware of a further update to the timetable for implementation of the Department of Health's (DH) death certification reforms included in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009. We have recently received confirmation by the Secretary of State for Health that the aim is now for the new system to go live in **October 2014**. We understand that this further extension of the complex task of implementation will help to ensure the delivery of a stable new system.

As you may remember, the new system will include a medical examiner in every local authority area who will consider all deaths which are not investigated by a coroner. The new system will require corresponding changes to the existing cremation legislation, and the present system of medical certification for cremations will come to an end, including the role of crematorium medical referee.

The DH expects to run a public consultation on their changes this summer. The Ministry of Justice will consult some months afterwards on our plans for the associated changes to cremation legislation. We will of course inform you when our consultation is published and you will be most welcome to respond to it. Should you have any queries on the DH proposals may I suggest that you direct them to the DH mailbox deathcertification@dh.gsi.gov.uk

My team will as always be glad to respond to any day to day queries about the Cremation Regulations.

Yours faithfully

Judith Bernstein

Head of Coroners, Burials, Cremation and Inquiries Policy Team