

National Medical Examiner update

May 2019

Welcome

We are continuing to make progress in shaping national and regional arrangements to support the medical examiner system. It has also been encouraging to hear from colleagues about your progress. Please continue to tell us about this and also to raise any concerns.

I am very pleased that over 200 people have now completed the medical examiner face-to-face training organised by the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) along with the online modules.

I was glad to participate in the most recent Implementing Medical Examiners conference on 25 April 2019, hosted by RCPATH. You can read a report of this event on the [RCPATH website](#).

From attending these events and speaking to people across England and Wales involved in the process of establishing medical examiner offices there is real enthusiasm that this programme will make a difference not only in the death certification process, but also in improving patient safety and establishing a key point of contact for the bereaved to raise concerns.

Dr Alan Fletcher, National Medical Examiner

What's included in this update:

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Recruitment to national and regional roles

We are currently recruiting a team of seven regional medical examiners for England, as well as a lead medical examiner for Wales. Details of these posts and how to apply can be found on the NHS jobs website via the links below:

- [Midlands](#)
- [North West](#)
- [East of England](#)
- [North East and Yorkshire](#)
- [South East](#)
- [London](#)
- [South West](#)
- [Lead medical examiner for Wales](#)

The deadlines to apply are 30 May 2019 for the post in Wales, and 2 June 2019 for the regional posts in England.

We hope to confirm these appointments in July and expect to recruit regional medical examiner officers in England, and a lead medical examiner officer for Wales, after this.

In Wales, NHS Wales Shared Service Partnership have recently appointed Andrew Evans as their Programme Director for the Medical Examiner Service. Andrew will take up this post full time from 10 July 2019.

Arrangements for funding and reimbursing trusts and health boards for establishing medical examiner offices

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has previously set out [the government's financial commitment to the medical examiner programme](#) and to ensuring that its establishment will be cost neutral for the NHS.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with DHSC to determine payment arrangements while the medical examiner system is in its non-statutory phase.

Our proposed arrangements are that expected funding requirements will be agreed with individual trusts as they set up their medical examiner office. These will be based on expected service costs based on the pilots and the national model.

A series of quarterly payments will be made throughout the year, commencing the quarter after an office is established. Reconciliation will then take place at year end to ensure that actual income and costs are accurately reflected.

For trusts that have already established medical examiner offices, there may be some adaptations required to meet the national model. The office of the National Medical Examiner will support trusts with this.

Where trusts have not already set up a medical examiner service, they are requested to work with the office of the National Medical Examiner so that expected costs and income can be agreed at the start.

We'll shortly write with full details in a letter to chief executives, finance directors and medical directors of trusts in England. We'll communicate separately in Wales through Welsh Government and NWSSP.

We will also publish these details on our [webpage](#).

Registering your interest in taking part in our digital pilot

We are developing a digital system to support medical examiner offices with the administrative elements of their work that can also be used for the creation and storage of confidential records to contribute to the death certification process.

We're now ready to pilot this system (the private beta phase) and will be inviting a number of NHS trusts and Welsh Health boards to test it in their medical examiner office. If your trust or health board has established a medical examiner office, or is very close to setting one up, and would like to take part in this pilot, please register your interest by emailing nme@nhs.net using the subject line "Digital pilot".

Extending the medical examiner service to community deaths

The current focus is on developing medical examiner services within acute trusts and then extending this out to all deaths across secondary care. However, it is planned that the medical examiner service will cover all deaths, wherever they occur, by March 2021.

During the non-statutory phase of implementation there will continue to be a requirement to view the body and to complete the relevant forms where disposal is by means of cremation.

The arrangements that we put in place for extending the medical examiner service to community deaths will take account of this. This will be undertaken after careful mapping and collaboration. We'll shortly publish full details about this on our [webpage](#).

National medical examiner office contacts

Helen Hill has been appointed Co-ordinator for the National Medical Examiner Office, and is your point of contact for enquiries about the National Medical Examiner's diary helen.hill6@nhs.net.

For general enquiries please continue to use nme@nhs.net

Further information

Further information about the programme can be found on our [National medical examiner system](#) webpage.

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