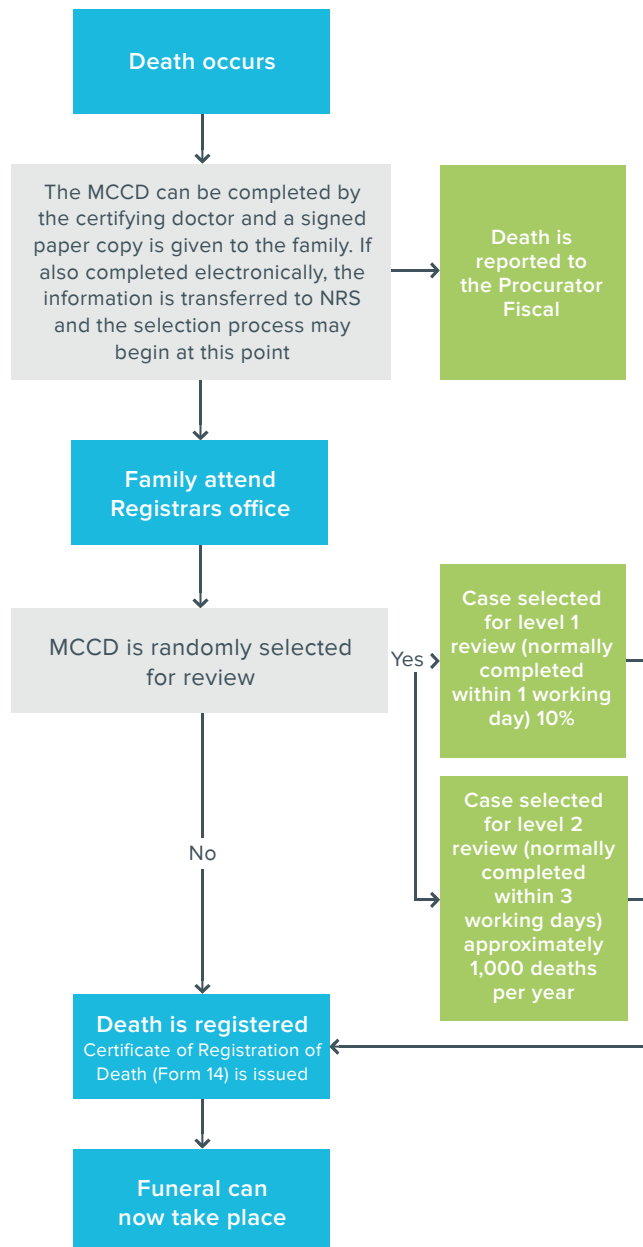


New arrangements for death certification and registration flowchart



Some helpful do's and don'ts when speaking to bereaved carers and families**

Do:

- Acknowledge their grief
- Take time to listen - attentively
- Suggest a quiet place to sit together
- Use the name of the person who has died
- Share resources, leaflets, and contacts
- Remember everyone is different

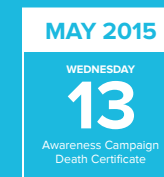
Don't:

- Say you know how they feel - you can't
- Talk about your own experiences
- Use platitudes like 'time is a great healer'
- Rush the conversation
- Promise what you cannot deliver
- Forget that you need support too
- Forget to ensure that any expressed complaint is properly managed

** Content based on that developed by Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland ©CBCS 2014 www.crusescotland.org.uk

Death Certification is Changing

Information for staff on communicating with families when issuing a death certificate



What is changing?

A national review system of medical certificates of cause of death (MCCDs) begins on Wednesday 13th May 2015 to provide independent checks on the quality and accuracy of the completion of MCCDs. The reviews will be carried out by the Death Certification Review Service under the auspices of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. This leaflet provides an overview of the process, and can help you to prepare for conversations with families.

What form will the reviews take?

There will be two main categories of review.

Level 1 Review

- Is expected to be completed within **1 working day**.
- Will apply to about **10%** of deaths not reportable to the Procurator Fiscal or involving stillbirth.
- Will involve a Medical Reviewer (MR) who will review the MCCD and have a conversation with the certifying doctor.

Level 2 Review

- Is expected to be completed within **3 working days**.
- Will apply to **approximately 1,000 deaths per year**.
- Will involve the MR's review of the MCCD, conversation with the certifying doctor, and also review of appropriate clinical records + / - a conversation with other healthcare staff or the family or carer of the deceased.

What does this mean for me?

As a certifying doctor you are expected:

To explain the content of the MCCD to bereaved families and friends (in line with the 2014 Vale of Leven Hospital Inquiry Report recommendations).

To advise families that the certificate may be selected for review (where the death does not involve a stillbirth or is reportable to the Procurator Fiscal). Also, to be aware that applications for advance registration may be considered in special circumstances.

To ensure you can receive and respond promptly to calls from the MR to discuss a selected case. Alternatively, if you are going to be unavailable, to ensure that an appropriate alternative member of the clinical team is available and has the information to do so.

* Content based on guidance from the Irish Hospice Foundation (www.hospicefoundation.ie). See also video at www.hospicefoundation.ie/education-training/video-wall/communication

Five steps*

to a supportive conversation when giving bereaved families or carers an MCCD

1 Prepare yourself

Ensure you are calm and undisturbed by phones or pagers. Find a quiet place away from the place of death; know the name, clinical and family history of the deceased; and find a colleague who can accompany you.

2 Make a connection

Take your time, introduce yourself, and sit down. Ascertain who they are and their relationship to the deceased. Check what they know about what has happened. Explain that you are going to give them the MCCD and ask if they would like you to explain what it says.

IF NOT GO STRAIGHT TO STEP 5.

3 Give the 'headline' information

Gently and slowly explain the cause of death on the MCCD in manageable chunks without jargon.

4 Acknowledge any shock and identify concerns

Let them absorb the initial explanation of the final cause of death. Wait until they are ready to speak before you give any more detail. Focus on what they need to know rather than telling them everything that happened clinically. Check for understanding and questions. If any complaints are raised, offer the opportunity to discuss them with a senior doctor.

5 Follow up with practical advice

Tell them about the possibility of the MCCD being selected for review. Emphasise that the review process is of the content of the MCCD, and not the care of the deceased. Advise who they can contact for more information later; share leaflets and helpful contacts.