

Changes to the medical examiner system and death certification process

A new medical examiner system is being rolled out in England and Wales over the next few months prior to it becoming a statutory requirement on 9 September 2024. GP practices in mid and south Essex will be implementing it at different times over the next few months. The medical examiner system will provide independent scrutiny of all deaths that aren't referred to the coroner.

Medical examiners review medical records and work with doctors to complete a medical certificate of the cause of death (MCCD), commonly known as the death certificate. They talk to the family about their experience of care and discuss and agree the proposed MCCD with them. The MCCD must be completed before the death can be registered and the body released to the family.

You can read more information about the medical examiner service and the medical certification of the cause of death here:

<https://www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/health/choose-well/medical-examiners-service/>

What these changes will mean

When the GP practice is notified of a death, information will need to be obtained to enable a GP to refer the death to the medical examiner office (or where appropriate to the coroner).

Information that will be required:

- Date/time and location of death.
- Occupation of the deceased (or last occupation if retired/not working at time of death).
- Next of kin details (name, relationship, contact details).

These details will be passed to the relevant GP who can complete the MCCD. The GP will complete a referral form to the medical examiner officer indicating how they intend to complete the MCCD.

The medical examiner will then carry out an independent review of the person's death. They will also have a discussion with the next of kin to establish whether they have any concerns and offer an opportunity to ask any questions relating to the cause of death or care/treatment.

The medical examiner will then contact the GP:

- If they agree with cause of death, the MCCD will be issued by GP.