

Dear colleagues

COVID-19 and death certification/notification processes

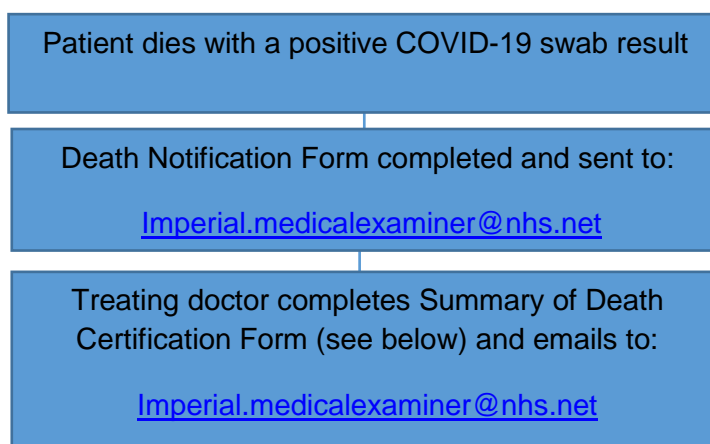
Firstly, I want to thank you for the incredible work that you are all doing to support our patients, their families and one another during this unprecedented time. I am hugely grateful for all that you have done so far in responding to coronavirus and for all that will follow in the coming weeks and months.

As you will be aware, we have already had a small number of our patients who have died having tested positive for COVID-19. Unfortunately, it is a sad reality that this number will increase over the coming days and weeks.

There are a number of steps that we need to take in order to ensure that we are able to accurately record, and report, the number of patients who have died having tested positive for COVID-19.

NHS England COVID-19 Death Notification Form:

This new form must be completed in real time for **any** patient that has died and has also tested **positive** for COVID-19. This should be completed and sent to the Trust Medical Examiner Service. The process to be followed is below:



Medical Examiner Service – Summary of Death Certification Form and timely completion of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)

You will be aware that we have implemented our Medical Examiner Service at the Trust in full. This service has an important role to play in supporting the bereaved and in ensuring that an accurate cause of death is recorded in all cases, not just those relating to COVID-19.

The Medical Examiner service cannot commence the scrutiny of the case without the Summary of Death Certification being completed; the form is available at this [link](#). The treating doctor must complete it as soon as possible after the patient dies. If we delay this process the bereaved are not able to register the death, and funerals may well be delayed.

Please also remember that there is a process in place for the **urgent out of hours issuance of an MCCD on religious grounds**, where the case does not require referral to HM Coroner. In these circumstances, please contact the Site Team. The Summary of Death Certification must still be completed.

Full details on the Medical Examiner service can be found at this [link](#). If you need support or clarity then please contact: ian.bateman@nhs.net

COVID-19 Cause of Death

The new NHS England Death Notification Form must only be completed for patients who have died with a **positive COVID swab result**.

As we all know the MCCD should be completed "to the best of your knowledge and belief" based on the information available at the time of death. The test is not beyond reasonable doubt.

We have been advised that an MCCD can record Pneumonia - COVID-19 as a cause of death without positive swab confirmation. The Medical Examiner Service will support the identification of an appropriate cause of death. If the COVID-19 swab result is outstanding, but you are recording the cause of death as Pneumonia – COVID-19, then initial Box B on the back of the MCCD. Doing this allows for more precise information about the cause of death to be provided later.

My office will then track these cases to ensure that where the swab result is positive the NHS England Notification of Death form is completed for you, and the Registry service is advised of the outcome of the test result – including where it is subsequently negative.

I recognise that these processes are transactional and administrative, and there is a risk that we lose sight of the patient to which they relate. However, they play an incredibly important role in supporting the bereaved, ensuring that we are transparent with the public, while also supporting the epidemiological work associated with this virus.

Thank you for all that you are doing to support our patients and their loved ones during this difficult time.



Prof Julian Redhead
Medical Director