

# Urgent Burials: A Guide for GPs

Rapid burials are so important for people of faith. In all effort to help speed necessary processes, here are some top tips to help GPs to complete an MCCD proposal for Medical Examiner (ME) approval at speed:

## Verification of death

- ♥ There is no need to see the person within 28 days of death as long as you have met them in life and feel in a position to propose the cause of death by your knowledge of them and through their clinical notes.
- ♥ Some of community nurses are trained in verification of death, but not all. If they don't have capacity, then this will be the duty of the GP.
- ♥ If you are called on to verify in hours, please do so. People will understand if you cannot do so immediately due to GP appointments, but in hours it is your duty to do this as soon as you are able to. Families will be so grateful.

## Thinking ahead and planning

When death can be anticipated please do think in advance:

- ♥ What cause of death would you propose?
- ♥ What supporting information from the clinical notes would be helpful to the ME? Your practice staff can assemble the supporting information in advance of the death.
- ♥ If the death is anticipated, you can discuss the patient with the ME prior to death if guidance is needed.
- ♥ You can pre-populate the MCCD if you feel happier to do so. It is easier to do critical paperwork when not under pressure. The only thing outstanding would be the time and date of death, to be completed in the event of the death.



## No mistakes

- ♥ Ensure you are using the right MCCD book (double sided).
- ♥ Ensure you have useful supporting information (e.g. clinic letters) for your proposal of cause 1a/b/c, and for any conditions contributing to but not causing the death (2).

## If death over the weekend is likely

- ♥ Take the certificate book home with you, if you can scan and send from home. Leave your number with the professional care team (DNs/Pal Care Team) so that they can alert you if death does occur over the weekend. They will need to send you the verification of death documentation.
- ♥ Do ensure that you take the supporting information home (including downloading the previous 3-6m of consultation history) so that you can complete the referral to the ME with all the supporting evidence.
- ♥ Ensure you have the email of the Medical Examiner's office:  
**bhрут.medicalexamineroffice@nhs.net** (Tel: **01708 504343**)
- ♥ Ensure that the email subject heading states: **"URGENT: Religious burial"** so that the ME Office picks up and processes urgently, and tick the 'faith death' box at the top of the ME referral form.
- ♥ Leave a direct contact number in case the ME needs to discuss with you.