

Death certifications

Disclaimer: Read the disclaimer at medimaps.co.uk/disclaimer
References:
1. Wessex LMC, Certification - Deaths
2. Lincolnshire LMC, Confirmation of Life Extinct
3. Patient.co.uk
4. BMA Confirmation and certification of death
5. Coroner's office and Ministry of Justice.
6. Coroner email Aug 2022

- The 28 day rule no longer applies. Any medical practitioner who has attended the deceased in life can issue MCCD if they are able to state clear cause of death.
- All non coronial deaths will be subject to Medical Examiner (ME) review.
- Send a form to ME with the cause of death listed.
- Once MCCD (APC) has been completed by GP, scan both sides and forward to ME office for ME countersignature following which the ME will send it to the Registrar Office.

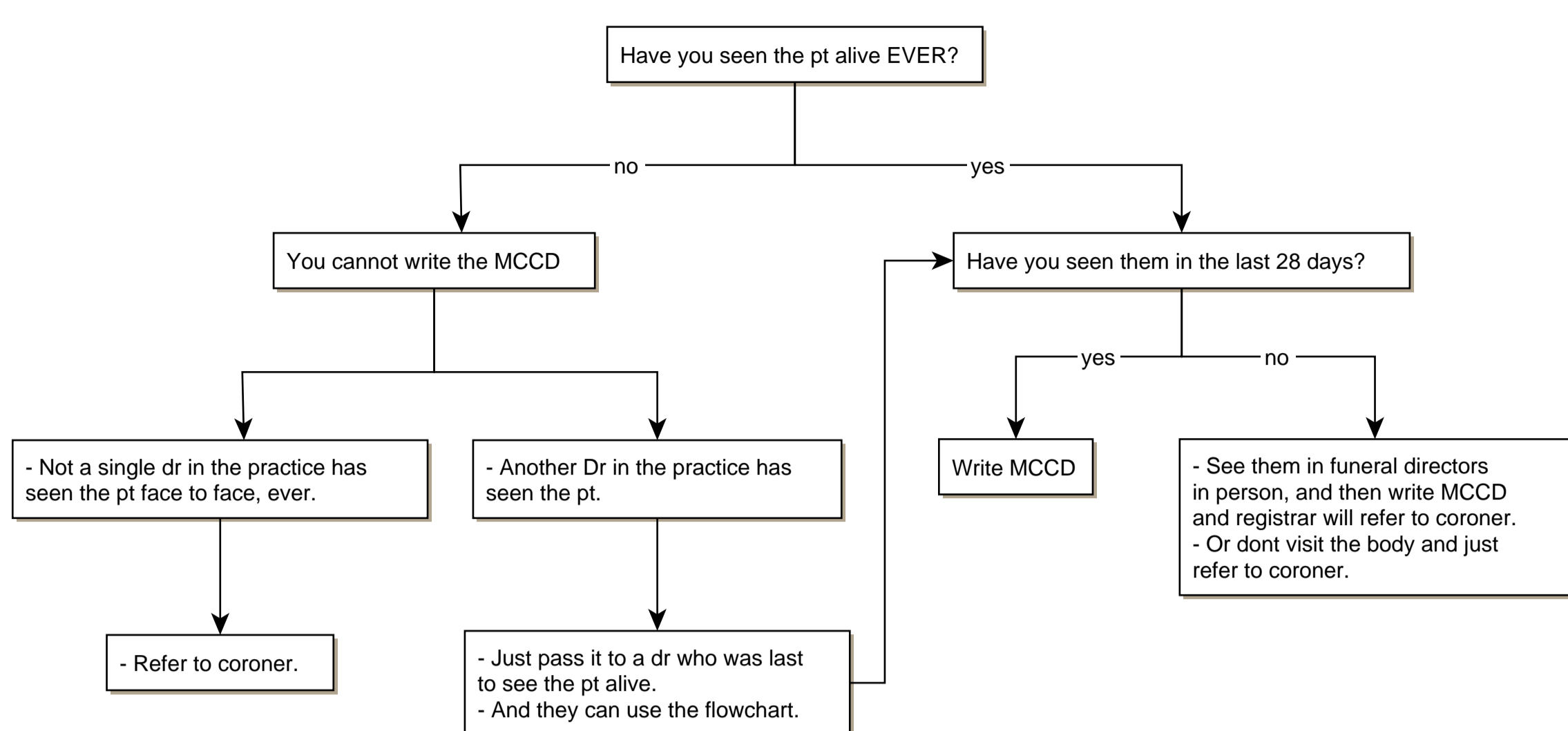
8th Sept 2024 regulation

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The Coronavirus Act 2020, which introduced easements to death certification processes and cremation forms, expires at midnight on 24 March 2022.
The following provisions are continuing after 24 March 2022:
- The period before death within which a doctor completing the MCCD must have seen the pt will remain 28 days.
- You can send MCCDs to registrars electronically.
- Form Cremation 5 will not be re-introduced.

March 2022 UPDATE =

The following emergency provisions are changing after 24 March 2022:
- The provision temporarily allowing any medical practitioner to complete the MCCD, will be discontinued.
- Informants will have to register deaths in person, not remotely.
- If a reporting doctor has never seen the deceased in life, they cannot issue the MCCD.
- 'Seen' means face to face or via video call.
- Seeing them after death will not allow you to write the death certificate if you have never ever seen the pt while alive.



No one ever seen pt

- The ruling for a fast track request to be done, would be if there is no dr within the surgery that has ever had face to face or video link contact with pt.
- The only other time that the Coroner would consider a fast track request was if the dr was on annual leave for an extended period.

How quick to write MCCD

- The MCCD should be issued and as soon as possible after the death.
- This then allows relatives to register the death within the statutory 5 calendar days following the death.
- Day 1 is the date of death.
- The 5 day ruling does not apply to any death referred to the Coroner irrespective of outcome, Form A, B or request.

Death certificate and crem form

- Write by video next to days/hrs before death you saw the pt.
- No part 2 required for cremation. Part 1 can be done electronically. Download to desktop to allow electronic signature in Adobe, and sent to undertaker.
- In terms of signature, either print out and sign and then rescan OR an e-signature included on the form OR draw out your signature. Sending the form from an official email address without a signature, is not acceptable.
- COVID-19 is an acceptable cause of death. No need for +ve swab results.
- No need to refer if Covid-19 unless another reason for doing so.
- Scan both sides of the MCCD and send to registrar office.
- The MCCD should not be handed to the relatives. The practice or relatives can book an appointment by going to Wessex Council website. Register a Death and book an appointment online. We will then contact the informant by telephone at the time of their appointment. Keep original MCCD to post to registrar office.
- Only circle the 'Seen after death by medical practitioner' if it was a doctor that saw them (a nurse or paramedic does not count).

- Dr signing the crem form should have treated the deceased during their last illness and to have seen (F2F or video) the deceased within 20/7 prior to death OR viewed the body in person after death, and to be able to state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief.

Verification of death

Verification of death (extinction of life)
- Can be done by video (see local links link1, link2, link 3), (national link)
- Can be done by ANY suitably qualified person (it doesn't have to be a doctor). This includes:
- Nursing home staff
- Nurses or paramedics.
- During Covid, a funeral director or family member (note funeral director Association has informed undertaker s not to do it for insurance reasons).

Died outside of the 28 day period

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Bottom line - Can go to see the body in mortuary in person, so that you will be able to do the MCCD (as long as you can give cause of death) and Crem form 4 (see email below clarifying this is legal), but must have seen the pt at least once ever when they were alive.
OR
Do not go to see the body and do the steps below:
MCCD:
There is the provision to do the MCCD and send it to the registrar and then they can refer to the coroner, but in Wessex we usually fill out the online form to let the coroner know ourselves. The coroner's office then nearly always tell the GP to write out the MCCD, meaning the coroner has decided no PM and has filled out a Form 100A.
CREM FORM 4:
No need to see the body if coroner issued Form100A i.e. if the coroner has telemailed us telling us to go ahead with the MCCD.

Seeing body after death

7th April 2020
A) Thank you for your email.
It is correct that, in order to complete the MCCD, the certifying doctor, or another doctor they know of, needs to either have seen the patient in the 28 days prior to death or, alternatively, have seen their body after death. It is not a requirement to have done both.
If a doctor has attended the deceased within 28 days of death (including video/visual consultation) or the deceased was not seen after death by a doctor, the MCCD can still be completed. In this case, however, the registrar will be obliged to refer the death to the coroner before it can be registered.
Best regards,
Coroners, Burial, Cremation and Inquiries Team, London.
Q) Dear Coroner's office
I hope you can clarify a simple question which is perplexing myself and every other GP I have ever asked in the past. Maybe now is the time I can get clarity.
Hypothetical scenario:
I saw a patient at a GP practice who is unwell. 35 days later they die from the illness as expected.
There is a general understanding that since I did not see the patient within 28 days (previously 14 days) before they died, I must refer the case to the coroner. However, the guidance text seems to suggest otherwise.
1. Medical certificate of cause of death Guidance on the medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) is here.
a. Any medical practitioner with GMC registration can sign the MCCD, even if they did not attend the deceased during their last illness, if the following conditions are met:
i. The medical practitioner who attended is unable to sign the MCCD or it is impractical for them to do so and,
ii. the medical practitioner who proposes to sign the MCCD is able to state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief, and
iii. a medical practitioner has attended the deceased (including visual/video consultation) within 28 days before death, or viewed the body in person after death (including for verification).
So if I go to see the body on day 36 in the undertakers mortuary, then I can come back to the GP practice, fill out the MCCD, and then the Crem form 4, without getting anyone else involved. It is all within the law.
In fact if I had seen the body 60 days before they died, as long as I have 'viewed the body in person after death', then I would still never have to refer to the coroner's, obviously as long as I am confident of the cause of death.

Form A

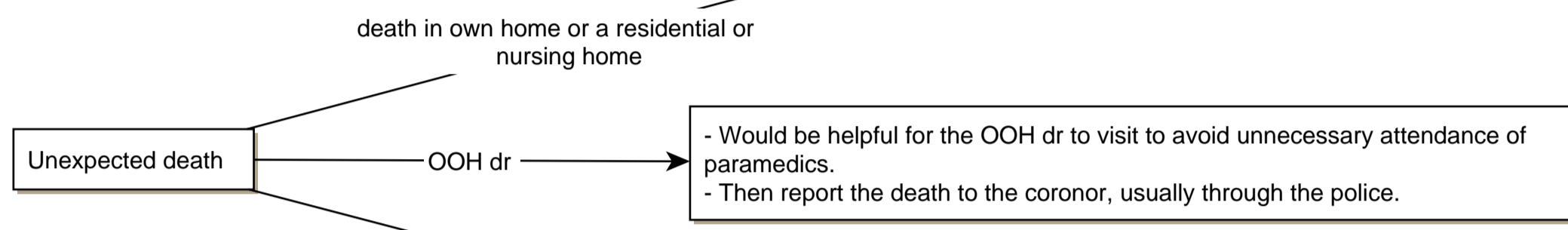
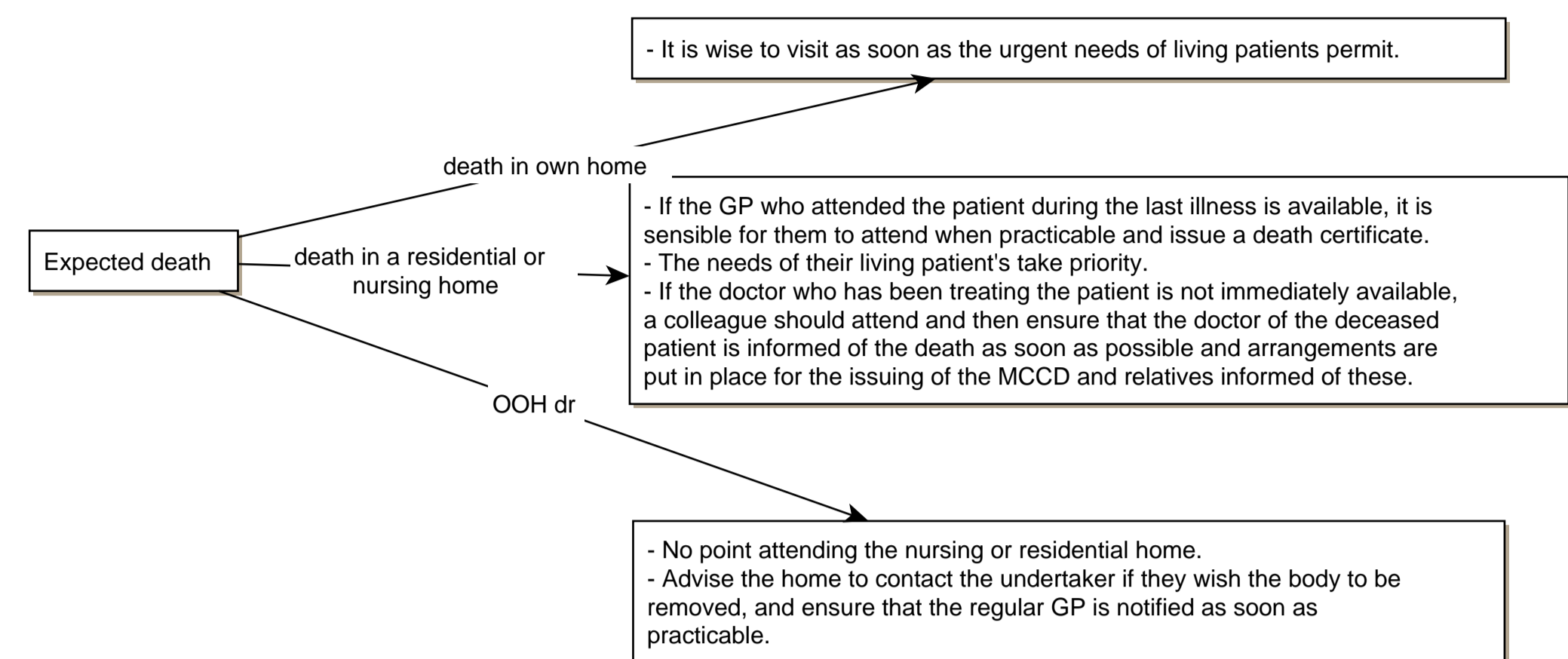
20th April 2020
A) Dear Dr,
The Coroners form A is to support your MCCD which you still have to issue to the Registrar. The Coroners Form A is attached so you can mirror the same cause of death which should mirror your MCCD.
Lead Officer Black Country Coroners Services
Q) Hello,
I hope you can help with a query about Form 100A.
If a GP refers a death to the coroner (e.g. it occurred outside the 28 day timeframe), and then the coroner's office contacts them a few days later and tells them to go ahead with the MCCD and that no post mortem will occur, does this mean you have completed a Form 100A? And if so, where do you send the form 100A?
Thank you

Circling on MCCD

6th April 2021
A) No it has to be seen by a Doctor after death and it has to be the issuing doctor
Kind regards
Coroner's Office Black Country Coroners Services
Q) Hello
Could I please clarify a question a colleague has asked me.
If a patient is seen by a district nurse or paramedic after death, is that sufficient for us to circle 'Seen after death by another medical practitioner but not me'
Thank you

Asking GPs to visit

- Under English law, GPs are not legally required to confirm death has occurred.
- COC state 'If the death was expected then any competent adult can diagnose death (nurse, paramedic) and there is no need to call a doctor just for that. While many GPs will respond to such a call they have no legal requirement to do so and there may be times when they have to prioritise the needs of their living patients.'
- Although GPs are not legally required to see the body before issuing a death certificate, they should do so.
- However, GPs are legally required to see the body before signing a cremation form.



Free from infection certificate

- If family wish to move body to another county for burial then they need a 'Free from infection' certificate.
- If a post mortem was performed then the hospital pathologist needs to provide the certificate.
- If the GP did the death certificate then they need to write a letter stating the patient is free from HIV, TB, Hep B and Hep C.
- You can charge a fee for this if you wish.

Old age

- Can use as sole cause of death if:
- > 80y.
- You have personally cared for the deceased over a long period (years or many months).
- You have observed a gradual decline in your patient's general health and functioning.
- You are not aware of any identifiable disease or injury that contributed to the death.
- You are certain that there is no reason that the death should be reported to the coroner.
- You have considered checking with relatives that they are satisfied with this explanation for the cause of death.