

Death Certification and Muslim Burials

Sheffield
LMC



GUIDANCE FOR SHEFFIELD GPs

November 2019

In response to a number of incidents where families had experienced added distress in trying to obtain the necessary legal paperwork to expedite their relative's burial, in 2010 the LMC entered into discussions with the Sheffield Muslim Burial Forum, Sheffield GP Collaborative and the Coroner, regarding a proposal for assisting with the problem of obtaining death certificates for Muslim families in expected deaths out of hours.

In a situation where the GP is aware of an expected death / palliative situation in a Muslim patient, then the GP should complete an electronic GP Collaborative 'Special Notes Form' which should be sent on to the GP Collaborative. This form should state whether or not the GP would be prepared to be contacted out of hours in the event of an expected death.

Where the GP has indicated that they can be contacted, the GP Collaborative (not the relatives or the police) will contact the GP directly and make them aware of the need for a death certificate. The GP can then arrange for the certificate to be collected at an appropriate time and place.

Please note that this:

- **is a voluntary arrangement that some GPs, out of their good nature, may wish to offer at a time of distress for Muslim families;**
- **does not apply to deaths that were unexpected or which occurred in suspicious circumstances. These must proceed through the normal Coroner's office channels.**

Emergency Burial Service

The Register Office offers a service on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 9 am to 5 pm and is accessed via Tel: 07802 864178 or 07764 661143. Only one of these numbers is operational at any given time, so GPs are advised to try both numbers if they do not get an answer or option to leave a message on their first attempt.

The service offered is to issue the Green Form 9 to facilitate a funeral at short notice for a burial or cremation in this country. The family would then need to return to register the death in the following week.

The service would not allow repatriation - families would need to contact the Coroner in that instance. As with GPs, the Registrar **cannot** authorise a funeral if the death is one where the coroner needs to be involved.

Coroner's Officers On Call Service

The Coroner's Officers have an on call phone which operates after 4 pm and before 8 am Monday to Friday and all day Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays – (0114) 2736951.

If this diverts to an answerphone during these times, GPs are advised to leave a message / contact details and they will receive a call back. Outside of these times GPs should contact the Coroner's Office.

Further Information

General Practitioners Committee (GPC) guidance *Confirmation and certification of death* is available via:

<http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/gp-practices/service-provision/confirmation-and-certification-of-death>

Sheffield LMC guidance *The Notification of Deaths Regulations 2019* is available via:

[http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/The%20Notification%20of%20Deaths%20Regulations%202019%20\(Oct19\).pdf](http://www.sheffield-lmc.org.uk/website/IGP217/files/The%20Notification%20of%20Deaths%20Regulations%202019%20(Oct19).pdf)