



Office of H.M. Coroner

The Medico-Legal Centre, Watery Street, Sheffield S3 7ES

HM Senior Coroner:
Christopher P. Dorries OBE

South Yorkshire (West)
(0114) 2738721

29 August 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Reporting deaths to the coroner – advance notice of important changes

The Government have announced new legislation which, for the first time, places a duty upon doctors to refer certain deaths to the coroner. A link to the Statutory Instrument, which takes effect from 1st October 2019, can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/1112/made>.

This does not bring any changes to the types of death that you will be used to referring, however, there will be an expectation that deaths are reported in writing rather than on the telephone as commonly happens now. In view of this, I shall be introducing an online referral system over the next few months and this letter is to give you advance notice of the new process.

I know that it has often been difficult for doctors to get through to my officers on the telephone at busy times and I very much hope that this change will be an improvement to the current system, making referral easier and taking less of your time as well as assisting you to meet the legislative requirements.

Deaths will be referred via an online portal, which will be accessible to you 24/7. The portal will request the same information about the death as the current process of speaking to a coroner's officer. Once completed, the information will drop directly into the coronial case management system.

I will write to you again with more details on how to access the portal and with dates when the new process will commence. There will be a 'transitional period' when you can contact the office in the current way and a member of staff will talk you through a referral via the portal if you are in need.

If your practice is involved in the Medical Examiner Scheme you may continue to refer to the Medical Examiner through the current mechanism, or refer to my office through the portal as you choose. If you choose the latter your referral will be shared immediately with the Medical Examiner's office and you would continue to deal with the ME in the normal way.

I would be very grateful if you would pass this information onto any other professionals in your area so they are aware of the future change. This letter is being sent to all relevant surgeries and organisations in the Sheffield and Barnsley region.

I will be in touch again in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Professor Christopher Dorries OBE
HM Senior Coroner