Standards for Mortuary Services

Scoping report

January 2019

1. **Title**
Standards for mortuary services

2. **Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards and indicators**

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is the national health and social care improvement organisation for Scotland. It provides the expertise and resources to produce health and social care standards which are developed, informed and shaped with those who commission, deliver and use services.

The role of standards is to:

- provide a statement or statements of an expected level of service which demonstrates delivery of person centred, safe and effective care
- promote understanding, comparison and improvement of care, and
- support national consistency and/or local improvement.

3. **Background**

Following a campaign by the Whyte family and Richard Lochhead MSP to review the provision and standards of mortuary services across Scotland, the Scottish Government convened a Mortuary Review Group. The Review Group’s remit was to clarify responsibilities within mortuary services, including details of those mortuary facilities not provided by NHS boards, and confirm that a consistent level of service is being provided across Scotland.

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The Mortuary Review Group made a number of recommendations for mortuary services. One of the recommendations states that Healthcare Improvement Scotland should be commissioned to develop national mortuary standards, aligning with Healthcare Improvement Scotland’s *Management of Post-Mortem Examinations Standards* (2016)\(^2\) and the SHPN 16-01 advice\(^3\).

Healthcare Improvement Scotland will convene a group to develop the standards. The group will ensure that the standards are fit for purpose, informed by expert opinion and best practice, and designed to improve the quality of care provided by mortuary services across Scotland.

4. **The scope of the standards**

4.1 **Population that will be covered**

- The population of Scotland.

4.2 **Healthcare and/or social care setting**

- All mortuary services in Scotland, whether directly provided by an NHS board, local authority or Police Scotland.

4.3 **Areas for standards development**

a. Areas that will be covered:

- Leadership and governance
- Information and support
- Education, training and information
- Addressing the needs of the bereaved
- Dignified and respectful care of the deceased

b. Areas that will not be covered:

- Management of hospital post-mortem examinations
- Facilities
- Management of funerals (in the event of no next of kin)

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5. Related development sources

5.1 Key sources


5.2 Related Healthcare Improvement Scotland Standards or Indicators


6. Timelines

The standards for mortuary services are due for publication October 2019.

7. Proposed development group membership

The proposed groups to be represented during the development process for the mortuary services standards are:

- public partners
- third sector
- forensic pathology
- Scottish Government
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
- Local authority (Environmental health and safety)
- Police Scotland
- Health Facilities Scotland

Specialist or technical input will be sought from any organisation’s representative as appropriate during the development stage. There will also be opportunities for comment on the draft standards during the consultation period which will be promoted and circulated widely.
8. **Contact us**

For any enquiries please contact:

- Karen Ritchie, Deputy Director of Evidence
- Valerie Breck, Senior Project Officer
- Claire Henry, Administrative Officer

Email: hcis.standardsandindicators@nhs.net

For more information about Healthcare Improvement Scotland, visit our website: [www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org)

We are happy to consider requests for other languages or formats. Please contact our Equality and Diversity Advisor on 0141 225 6999 or email contactpublicinvolvement.his@nhs.net

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