Death Certification Review Service (DCRS) in Scotland

A guide to the service
Recording information when someone dies

Healthcare Improvement Scotland wants to improve the way doctors record information when someone dies.

We have set up a service to do this called the **Death Certification Review Service (DCRS)**.

The Death Certification Review Service is looking at how doctors record information when someone dies.

This review means that, for a while, there may be some delays with the paperwork for some people when someone dies.

This leaflet explains what we are doing.
The Medical Certificate of Cause of death

When someone dies a doctor will give you a certificate called a **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)**.

Then the family of the person who has died will register the death.

They do this by taking the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death to the local council registration office.

It can be taken to any registration office in Scotland.
This must be done within 8 days of the death of the person.

You normally need to make an appointment. You should ring the registration office as soon as possible.

After the registration you will be given a form called a **Certificate of Registration of Death**. This is often called a ‘Death Certificate’.

You will need this so the person can be buried or cremated.
The Death Certification Review Service (DCRS)

We review some of the Medical Certificates of Cause of Death to make sure they have been written properly.

We review about 1 in every 7 certificates.

There are 2 types of review:

- A Level 1 review takes 1 day to complete.
- A Level 2 review takes up to 3 days to complete.

The people who carry out the reviews are doctors.
If the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death needs to be changed they will let you know.

If a death is suspicious it may be reported to the Procurator Fiscal. We are not reviewing these certificates.

More information on this can be found at this website: www.copfs.gov.uk
What this means for you

You may not be able to register the death straight away if it is going to be reviewed by the DCRS.

The registry office will tell you how long the review will take.

You cannot have a funeral until the review is complete and you are given the Certificate of Registration of Death.

But you can plan the funeral.

The Certificate of Registration of Death can be sent to you or you can pick it up from the registrar.

If you need the funeral to go ahead quickly you can ask for an advanced registration.
Advanced Registration

**Advanced registration** means a funeral can go ahead before the review is complete.

You may get permission to do this for:

- **Religious reasons.** For example, where the person needs to be buried quickly because of their religion.

- **Compassionate reasons.** For example, because a delay would cause a lot of stress.

- **Practical reasons.** For example, maybe a family have travelled from abroad for the funeral.
Asking for an advanced registration
The registrar can help you to apply for this.

The person doing the medical review will make the decision.

It will normally take 2 hours to decide.

If you are not allowed
Sometimes you will not be allowed to have an advance registration.

This may happen if:
- The review is nearly complete
- The death is suspicious and needs to be reported to the Procurator Fiscal
- The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death needs a lot of changes
If you are allowed

If you are allowed to have an advance registration, we will still review of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

This may mean the death certificate has to be changed.

The registrar will tell you about this.
For more information about DCRS please contact us by:

The website: www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/deathcertification

Email: dcrs@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk
or hcis.dcrs@nhs.net

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