How to provide feedback or make a complaint about the Death Certification Review Service

November 2016
Introduction

The arrangements for death certification and registration have been extensively reviewed and in 2011 new laws were passed by the Scottish Parliament to:

- streamline the current process
- improve the accuracy of death certification, and
- provide improved public health information about causes of death in Scotland.

The Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011 introduces a number of changes to the current system. In particular, it introduces checks on the accuracy of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCDs) by setting up a new national review system.

From 13 May 2015, Healthcare Improvement Scotland is responsible for running the Death Certification Review Service (‘the service’), with the review of MCCDs carried out by experienced and trained doctors.

What is this booklet about?

This booklet explains how to provide feedback, make comments, and raise concerns or complaints about the service.

What is the difference between feedback, comments, concerns or complaints?

- **Feedback or comments** are an expression of someone’s view or experience of using the service which may lead to improvement.
- **A concern** is an expression which requires an immediate explanation, reassurance or action.
- **A complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction. It may relate to the standard of services that have been provided or to actions that have been taken. It may also relate to a failure to take action.

Who can complain?

Anyone who is dissatisfied with the standard of service provided by the service, or its actions or lack of actions, can complain. You can complain for someone else if you:

- have their agreement to complain, or
- are allowed by law to act for them.
How to provide feedback, make comments, and raise concerns or complaints

The service is committed to listening, understanding and taking action to make improvements.

There are a number of ways to communicate, both in writing and verbally, with the service and these are listed below.

- Any member of the team will be pleased to discuss feedback, comments, concerns or complaints and may be able to deal with matters straight away. You can speak directly with a member of the team by telephoning 0300 123 1898, 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.
- You can speak directly with the service feedback and complaints officer, Rachel Wyse, by telephoning 0300 123 1898, 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.
- Feedback, comments, concerns or complaints may be sent by email to dcrs@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk or through the death certification review service webpage: www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/death_certification.aspx
- To provide feedback, comments, concerns or complaints in writing contact:

  Rachel Wyse  
  Operations Team Manager  
  Death Certification Review Service  
  Norseman House  
  2 Ferrymuir  
  South Queensferry  
  EH30 9QZ  
  Telephone: 0300 123 1898  
  Email: dcrs@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk

The service will collect, record and disseminate information, themes and good practice gained from views and experiences to ensure they are used to improve service quality. This information will be shared with staff, where appropriate, and staff feedback and suggestions will be sought for further improvement.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

You can make a complaint up to 12 months after the event you are complaining about.
What can’t I complain about?

We can only deal with complaints about the death certification review service. We do not deal with complaints about:

- quality of clinical care
- registrar/local authority services
- National Records of Scotland
- Scottish Government, other NHS boards, primary care services provided under an NHS contract
- deaths reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal
- complaints being investigated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO), and
- complaints relating to the Death Certification Review Service where the complainant has stated that they intend to take legal proceedings regarding the same matter.

When such complaints are received, we will:

- contact you within three working days
- explain why we cannot deal with your complaint, and
- provide contact details for the appropriate organisation.

What can I expect from the Death Certification Review Service?

- We will be polite and do our best to help you, and try to sort out your complaint in a way that you are happy with.
- If we need to investigate your complaint, we will tell you what we have found by writing to you within 20 working days.
- If we can’t provide you with a full response within 20 working days, we will tell you why, and give you a timescale of when we will contact you.

If your complaint involves multiple organisations, we will:

- inform you who will take the lead in dealing with the complaint, and
- issue a joint response, where possible.

Who can help me with my complaint?

We will be happy to give you advice. We can also give you details of organisations that give advice and support to people who want to complain. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau may also be able to give you help and support. You can find your nearest bureau on the website www.cas.org.uk, or in the phone book. You may also wish to contact Patient Advice Service Scotland (PASS) directly through the website (www.patientadviceScotland.org.uk).
Sometimes we may offer to arrange mediation for you. This means that an independent third party, such as the Scottish Mediation Network (www.scottishmediation.org.uk/) helps you and the service to discuss the problem and agree on how to sort it.

**What can I do if I remain dissatisfied with the response I receive from the Death Certification Review Service?**

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can speak to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). SPSO provides an independent and free service to help people who are still having problems after they have made a complaint about a public service. SPSO can’t help you make a complaint, however they can help if you are:

- finding it difficult to get an answer to your complaint, or
- unhappy with the results of a complaint you have made.

We will explain how to contact SPSO in our response to you, but their main contact details are:

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

**How to find out more**

For more information please contact:

Rachel Wyse
Operations Team Manager
Death Certification Review Service
Norseman House
2 Ferrymuir
South Queensferry
EH30 9QZ

Telephone: **0300 123 1898**
Email: [dcrs@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:dcrs@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk)
or visit:

[www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/death_certification.aspx](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/death_certification.aspx)