

MEDICAL EXAMINER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Medical Examiner
Grade	Senior Doctor (Consultant, GP or SAS Grade)
Organisation	Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
Work base	Musgrove Park Hospital
Time Allocation	1-2 PAs – subject to job plan review
Tenure	3 Years
Accountable to	Regional Medical Examiner
Reports to	Lead Medical Examiner for the Trust and Medical Director (Acute Services)

Job Purpose

This post of Medical Examiner has been created by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in response to observations made in the Third Report of the Shipman Inquiry. The introduction of the medical examiner system will promote robust, transparent and independent scrutiny of death certification processes.

Medical Examiners (MEs) are appropriately trained doctors who will verify clinical information on Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCDs) and ensure that the right referrals are made to the coroner for further investigation. A practising medical practitioner who has been on the general medical council register for a minimum of five years post registration can apply to be a medical examiner. It is recommended that medical examiners are consultant grade doctors from a range of disciplines (including GP principals). MEs will take a consistent approach to the formulation of MCCD content, which must be clinically accurate and reflect any discussions with the next of kin/informant. MEs must not have been involved in the care of the deceased patients for deaths they scrutinise.

Key Responsibilities include:

- To ensure compliance with the legal and procedural requirements associated with the current and proposed reformed processes of certification, investigation by coroners and registration of deaths.
- To explain to bereaved relatives the cause of death in a transparent, tactful and sympathetic manner, which respects different faith, cultural, ethnic and diversity considerations or delegate where appropriate for the Medical Examiner Officer to do so.
- To support the training of junior doctors in completion of MCCDs and provide feedback on accuracy of certification locally.
- To scrutinise the certified causes of death offered by attending doctors in a way that is proportionate, consistent and compliant with the proposed national protocol.
- To identify deaths that could potentially be reported as serious incidents requiring investigation via the Trust governance systems
- To participate in relevant clinical governance activities relating to death certification including audits, mortality review processes and investigations regarding formal complaints about patient care.
- Liaise with the Lead Medical Examiner and Medical Director if additional themes for learning from deaths are identified that are not captured in the above processes
- Work with the other ME's in the Trust to arrange reciprocal cover for holidays and other periods of absence and also to ensure that there is no potential conflict of interest between the ME and the death being scrutinised
- To maintain comprehensive records of all deaths scrutinised and undertake analysis to provide information to the National Medical Examiner's office.
- To work with medical examiner officers (MEOs), delegating duties as appropriate.
- To undertake delegated engagement with lead ME and lead MEO for the region.
- To adopt a collaborative working relationship with other MEs by sharing experiences and expertise to support peer learning and set uniform standards of service delivery.

Key working relationships

Internal

- Medical Director Acute Service
- Chief Medical Officer
- Deputy Chief Medical Officer

- Lead Medical Examiner
- All grades of clinicians
- Clinical governance leads
- MEOs and bereavement service staff
- Mortuary staff.

External:

- Coroners and their officers
- Registrar of births and deaths
- Local Authorities, including care homes and safeguarding teams
- Spiritual and faith community leaders
- Other health care providers to including GPs
- Regional Lead MEs and lead MEOs
- National Medical Examiner.

Accountability

MEs will have professional independence in scrutinising deaths but will be accountable to the employing organisation's Board for achieving agreed standards or levels of performance.

MEs will have an independent professional line of accountability to a regional structure of NHS Improvement/NHS England outside the employing organisation and immediate line management structure.

MEs will comply with guidance issued by the National Medical Examiner when carrying out ME duties.

Safety and Quality – Clinical Governance

MEs will be required to participate in any relevant governance activities relating to scrutiny and confirmation of the cause of death where concerns have been raised by the next of kin/informant of the deceased and/or clinical staff and ME scrutiny.

MEs will facilitate routine analysis of MCCD information to identify trends, patterns and unusual features of deaths and report, as required, firstly to the regional Lead ME and ultimately to the National Medical Examiner's office.

MEs will provide information to local Child Death Overview panels in respect of all child deaths which are not being investigated by the coroner.

Maintaining Trust

Equality and Diversity

MEs will act in accordance with Equalities and Human Rights legislation and the organisation's Equality and Diversity policies.

Independence

MEs must avoid any potential conflicts of interest. In cases where they have a personal or professional relationship with the deceased person, next of kin/informant, or with the attending doctor preparing the MCCD, they must transfer any scrutiny of the death to another ME.

Continuing professional development

MEs are expected to take responsibility for their own continuing professional development in accordance with any standards for maintaining a GMC licence to practice and membership of any relevant professional body. The ME role should be included in the whole practice appraisal.

MEs should maintain a Personal Development Plan in agreement with their appraiser.

There will be opportunities to attend local and national activities to maintain up to date knowledge.

Working Conditions:

MEs may need to use a computer for prolonged periods of time. The ME system operates within a reactive area of service delivery interacting with people in variable degrees of distress and demonstrating potentially irrational/unpredictable behaviour.

Person Specification

Attributes	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge & Experience	<p>A commitment to life-long learning and undertaking personal development opportunities.</p> <p>Candidates must have successfully completed the mandatory e-learning modules by the time they start the role. Candidates must attend a face-to-face training session within the first three months in post.</p> <p>MEs should have up-to-date knowledge of causes of death and an understanding of the legal frameworks associated with death certification processes.</p> <p>Knowledge of the special requirements of various faith groups and respect for equality and diversity</p> <p>Knowledge of local and national clinical governance systems and an understanding of how the ME can work collaboratively to improve patient safety by identifying sub-optimal clinical and organisational performance.</p>	
Qualifications	Medical practitioner registered and licensed to practise in the UK by the GMC.	
Aptitude & Abilities	<p>Ability to manage and comply with sensitive information-based processes under tight timescales with a proportionate approach.</p> <p>IT skills including use of email and commonly used software.</p> <p>Ability to identify available data sources to support the detection and analysis of concerns and to recognise gaps in available knowledge.</p> <p>Ability to identify and disseminate examples of good practice amongst relevant colleagues.</p> <p>Ability to work effectively and efficiently within own team and also closely with people in other disciplines</p> <p>Ability to work as part of a team and organise a fluctuating workload around competing priorities and numerous interruptions.</p>	

Disposition / Attitude / Motivation	<p>Strong interpersonal skills demonstrating the ability to communicate in difficult and emotional situations with empathy and professionalism.</p> <p>Proactive and self-motivated with a flexible working approach</p> <p>Have the resilience to manage own reaction to frequently distressing situations and support others within the team.</p> <p>To sustain professional integrity and independence at all times, particularly where there is the potential for a conflict of interest.</p>	
Other factors		