

## **PROTOCOL FOR ELECTRONIC DEATH REPORTING BY DOCTORS**

### **TO THE CORONER IN SOMERSET**

1. As from **02 May 2022** there will be a revised procedure for death reporting in the County of Somerset due to.
  - (i) A new Acting Senior Coroner being in post; and
  - (ii) Expiry of provisions within the Coronavirus Act 2020 (which changed the position from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022)

2. Doctors must report deaths electronically by completing an Electronic Death Reporting Form (EDRF) as attached.

All previous EDRF copies and versions derived therefrom **MUST** be destroyed with immediate effect. Only those with new Acting Senior Coroner logo will be acceptable.

3. Doctors must ensure that they are familiar with;
  - (i) The Notification of Death Regulations 2019;
  - (ii) Procedures for death certification from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022 onwards;
  - (iii) S.22 of the Birth and Death Registration Act 1953

Copies of all of the above have been circulated with this Protocol

4. The EDRF must be typed and all sections fully and accurately completed. The EDRF must include sufficient clinical information to enable the Coroner to assess the circumstances and must include a generic return email address for the surgery/department rather than a personal email together with a generic telephone contact number rather than a personal contact number.
5. EDRFs can be submitted to the Coroner's Officers at any time. Coroner's Officers are on duty from 07.00-16.00hrs Monday – Thursday and 07.00-15.30 Friday. The Coroner's office will use its best endeavours to triage the referral within one working day, however this time may need to be extended during particularly busy periods. Any EDRF's reported after 14.00hrs on a weekday will be processed on the next working day.
6. The completed EDRF must be emailed to: [CoronersOfficersSomerset@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:CoronersOfficersSomerset@avonandsomerset.police.uk)
7. A Coroner's Officer will initially review the EDRF and if any sections are not fully completed or further information is required then the form will be returned, or the reporting doctor telephoned, to obtain the outstanding information.

8. Upon receipt of the EDRF it may be necessary for the Coroner's Officer to contact the Next of Kin of the deceased to discuss or obtain further information.
9. Once the Coroner's Officer is satisfied that they have all the necessary information they will forward the EDRF to the Coroner on duty for authorisation as to whether the Coroner will either proceed by way of allowing a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) to be released to the next of kin, or by ordering a Post Mortem or proceed by way of Inquest without Post Mortem. It is the Coroner's sole responsibility to come to a final decision in this regard; such a decision being a Judicial decision and cannot be delegated.
10. The reporting doctor must not release a signed MCCD to the next of kin until they have received a signed authority to do so by way of email from the Coroner's Officer. Failure to wait for that signed authority before issuing the MCCD to the Next of Kin may result in the Next of Kin being turned away by the Registration Service when they attend to register the death.
11. The Cause of Death, as set out in the EDRF completed by the doctor, must be copied exactly on to the MCCD. Abbreviations must not be used when completing the MCCD. Any change to the Cause of Death will result in the family being turned away by the Registration Service.
12. If doctors have any queries in respect of the completion of the EDRF, then they may telephone the Coroner's Officers on 01278 649700 to discuss. The Officer's will deal with purely administrative queries only and cannot offer advice on:
  - (i) What medical cause(s) should be offered;
  - (ii) Whether a particular cause(s) will be accepted by the Coroner.

**SAMANTHA MARSH  
ACTING SENIOR CORONER  
SOMERSET**