

Dear Doctors

Re: Coronavirus Act (2020)

As you are aware, the Coronavirus Act (2020) recently came into force to reduce the burden of paperwork that doctors are required to undertake.

The Act has now removed the requirements for a Cremation 5 form (generally known as a "Part 2") to be completed. Unfortunately the Act has also meant that a lot of the safeguards implemented as a result of the Shipman Report have been removed.

The Ministry of Justice are aware of this concern, and have stipulated that Crematorium Medical Referees (CMRs) are required to assess forms received with greater diligence.

CMRs across the country are struggling to make sense of the legislation so the Ministry of Justice have provided clarification on certain issues.

A doctor must have seen the deceased either within 28 days of death OR after death to be able to complete the Cremation 4 form ("Part 1") and the viewing of the body must be IN PERSON and not via video imaging. The doctor must also provide as much detail as possible to enable the CMR to understand what led to the death.

If a doctor has not seen the deceased before or after death, they can complete Cremation 4 as long as they inform the coroner and write the name and GMC number (and ideally contact details) of the doctor who last dealt with the deceased. This option is only acceptable in exceptional circumstances, for example if the doctor who dealt with the patient is ill.

Finally, the form MUST be signed with either a "wet" signature or an electronic version of a wet signature.

In exceptional circumstances, the Ministry of Justice has clarified that we can accept an emailed form from the doctor's personal email, as long as the following statement is included: "Please find the attached Cremation Form signed by me". This must be emailed either to the Crematorium with a copy sent to the funeral director or emailed directly to the relevant CMR (the funeral director should be able to provide that information). All CMRs are being expected to use encrypted email accounts, such as nhs.net.

If you have any specific questions, please contact us via the following:

Regards,

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