



Medical Examiner Service
for Primary Care

Medical Examiner services provide an opportunity for the bereaved to speak with a medical professional after the death of a loved one. A community setting is a care home, community hospital, a hospice or at a private residence.

A hospital means one of the three hospitals that makes up United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust;

- Lincoln County Hospital,
- Grantham and District Hospital
- and Pilgrim Hospital, Boston.

They will talk to you about the cause of death and can address any questions or concerns you may have. The Medical Examiner service is hosted by United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, who have been offering this service for patients who have died in a hospital setting since 2019 and are now overseeing this service as it is extended to include all deaths that occur in community settings.

Why is there a Medical Examiner Service?

The Department of Health and Social Care has overhauled the death certification process and have implemented a statutory Medical Examiner's Service to help provide a consistent review of deaths and to improve the quality and accuracy of cause of death certificates. As of the 9 September 2024 all medical certificates of causes of death must be countersigned by a Medical Examiner. The

role also allows shared learning and knowledge on a national level. Most importantly, the service allows you to speak to a medical professional after the death of a loved one. Further information on the Death Certification Reforms can be found here: [An overview of the death certification reforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/death-certification-reforms)



Who are Medical Examiners and Medical Examiner Officers?

Medical Examiners are senior doctors who have specialist training to be able to also perform their role as Medical Examiners. Medical Examiner Officers have also had specialist training and work closely alongside Medical Examiners to deliver the Medical Examiner service. This role provides independent advice about causes of death (except for deaths, which have to be reviewed by a Coroner). You can be confident that Medical Examiners and their staff will provide an independent view as they only review cases where they or their staff have not provided care for the patient. They will not have had any involvement in the deceased's care. The team is overseen nationally by National Health Services England (NHSE).

Coroners

If a death has been referred to the Coroner then the Coroner (not the Medical Examiner) investigates the death independently. Some deaths must be notified to the Coroner; you can find out more about this here: [Deaths – Lincolnshire County Council](#)



After a death, the Medical Examiner team will contact you

Medical Examiners and Medical Examiner Officers offer the opportunity to have an open and honest conversation with someone who was not involved in providing care to the person who has died. They can help you understand the cause of death and the medical language used. They can also help you understand the treatment provided. They are here to answer any questions that you may have. If you have had any concerns in relation to the care of your loved one and their death then please raise this with the Medical Examiner.

Can I ask the Medical Examiner to talk to someone else if it is too difficult for me to speak with them?

We appreciate that this is a difficult time and our services are here to help and support you. Following a death, the Medical Examiner or the Medical Examiner Officers will contact you and at that point, you can give them another first point of contact.

When will the Medical Examiner or Medical Examiner Officers get in touch?

The Medical Examiner or Medical Examiner Officers will usually contact you by phone. They will then arrange a convenient way and time to speak with you or your nominated contact, if that is your preference. The Medical Examiner will make first contact with the nominated next of kin.

What questions will I be asked?

The Medical Examiner or the Medical Examiner Officers are able to explain what is written on the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and why. They will also discuss the Medical Examiner's review and ask if you have any questions or concerns about the care the person received before their death.

What if I don't want to speak to the Medical Examiner or their team?

We understand that this can be a difficult time and speaking to someone is entirely your choice. Feedback has told us that many people have found using this service really helpful and that it helps people to have an open and honest chat about their loved one's care. If you are unsure, please contact the bereavement office and speak to one of the team. They are trained professionals who are there to help and support you during this difficult time.

How do I contact the Medical Examiner office?

The Medical Examiner Office will get in touch with you. Once you have had contact with the service they will provide further details of how to access them in the future.

Address of the Medical Examiner Service:

Swanpool Suite,
Lincoln County Hospital,
Greetwell Road,
LN2 5QY

and

Pilgrim Hospital Boston,
Sibsey Road,
PE21 9QS

Further information about the Lincolnshire Medical Examiner Service can be found here: [Medical Examiner - United Lincolnshire Hospitals \(ulh.nhs.uk\)](#). If you would like to know more about the new national Medical Examiner service you can do that here: [NHS England - The national medical examiner system](#)



If I have not been contacted what do I do?

Any death must be referred by the GP to the Medical Examiner's service, we therefore advise you to contact the GP surgery where the deceased was registered. They will be able to update you.

Will the new system cause delays in receiving the Medical Certificate of cause of death?

The Medical Examiner's Service typically completes their work within 24-48 of receipt of referral from the GP practice. The MCCD will be sent to the Registrar of deaths by the Medical Examiner's Service, the death must then be registered within 5 days.

What do I do if I have questions or concerns about the Medical Examiner process?

If you have any unaddressed concerns with the Medical Examiner service, please discuss this with the Medical Examiner's office. The team will try and address your concerns. If you still have concerns, you can also contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). The PALS service are there to listen to your concerns and to work to resolve these with you:

LCHS Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Tel: 0300 123 9553 lines open 10.00-16.00 (Mon-Fri excluding bank holidays)

Email: lhnt.LincsPALS@nhs.net

What should I do if I have concerns about another service?

Should you have concerns about other services, please raise these with the appropriate team who has delivered this service. The Medical Examiner Service will be able to advise you of the appropriate contact.