

MEDICAL EXAMINER SERVICE (Leeds)

Information for the bereaved



What is the Medical Examiner Service?

The Medical Examiner Service scrutinises all deaths in the local area that do not require a coroner's investigation. Medical Examiners are senior doctors who independently review the care provided to the deceased. They help identify situations in which there is potential learning for care organisations and professionals.

They provide the bereaved with an opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification or raise concerns regarding the care their loved one received. They also ensure that the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is completed as accurately as possible. The Medical Examiner Service will provide an independent medical review of care and values your thoughts, comments, or concerns. We want to make sure that you have the opportunity to have an open and honest discussion about anything that has worried you with someone who understands but is independent of the care your loved one received. We are here to listen to your questions, to provide answers and assurance if possible, and if necessary, to pass any concerns on for further investigation.

Will this delay my funeral plans?

There should be no delay to any funeral plans you have made. The aim of the service is to prevent delays and work with you to ensure any funeral plans can proceed. There may be a slight delay of a day or two before the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is issued, but you can still book appointments and speak with funeral directors.

Can I ask the Medical Examiner Service to talk to someone else if it is too much for me to talk to them?

Yes of course. The Medical Examiner Office may contact you to ask who you would like us to talk to instead, or you can let the medical team know if you would rather, we use someone else as a first point of contact. We will usually contact you via phone before the certificate is sent to the Registrar, but we can arrange alternative ways of communication if required.

What will the Medical Examiner Service ask me?

They will let you know what is written on the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and check if you have any questions about it. They will also discuss the Medical Examiner's review and ask if you have any feedback, comments or questions about the care received, or events leading up to your loved one's death. This is an opportunity for you to ask any questions you wish about the death and raise anything that has worried you in any way.

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What if I don't want to tell the Medical Examiner Service about my concerns?

We strongly advise that if you have any concerns regarding your loved one's death or care, that you discuss them with the Medical Examiner Service. We are here to listen and to ensure that any issues with care are passed on to the right department to address them and get you the answers you deserve. The Medical Examiner service is independent from the provider of the care your loved one received, so please be as honest and open as you can.

What should I do if I have concerns with the Medical Examiners decision or process?

If you disagree with the Medical Examiner's conclusion, you are encouraged to inform the officer who contacts you. They will listen to your concerns and can arrange a second independent review by a different Medical Examiner. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome the service may refer the case to the coroner or a further independent consideration. If you have a complaint or compliment about the service, you can contact the programme team on leedsth-tr.meoffice@nhs.net and they will respond to you within 30 days.

Contacting the Service

You can email the Medical Examiner office for your area or ask the bereavement services team to contact them for you directly. It may be that the Medical Examiners team will need to pass you on to another department if they feel that your concerns would be better handled via another channel. Leeds Medical Examiner Service – Email: leedsth-tr.meoffice@nhs.net

Leeds Registry Office

Merrion House

Merrion Way

Leeds LS2 8BB

Tel: 0113 222 440

Website: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-marriages>