

E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Lewis MacDonald MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee

By Email

18 January 2021

Dear Lewis,

I am writing to you and the Health and Sport Committee to inform you of a change to the way in which reviews are currently being undertaken by the Death Certification Review Service (DCRS).

This update follows the letter from Mr FitzParick sent to the Committee on 14 December 2020, highlighting key changes to DCRS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In that letter, the Committee were advised that, from 24 November 2020, changes had been implemented to reduce the burden on front-line doctors by limiting reviews to hybrid Level 1 reviews. Central to this form of review is the ability of the medical reviewer to scrutinise the electronic Key Information Summary (eKIS) in order to determine whether the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is in order. Detailed Level 2 reviews, which are more resource intensive for hospital administrative staff, are limited to those which need escalation from Level 1 reviews and for interested person reviews.

This position has been reviewed every two weeks and at the last review, the Scottish Government agreed, in consultation with DCRS, that further steps were required to reduce the pressure on clinical services. The number of reviews to be undertaken by DCRS has now been reduced from 12% to 8% of all eligible MCCD.

These changes came into effect at 09:00 on Monday 18 January 2021 and will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

MAIRI GOUGEON