



18th March 2020

Dear All Medical Practitioners,

COVID-19

We are facing unprecedented times with the current Covid-19 pandemic, therefore I want to take this opportunity to provide some clarification.

COVID-19 is a natural cause of death

- Covid-19 is an acceptable direct or underlying cause of death for the purposes of completing the Medical Certificate Cause of Death
- Covid-19 is not a reason on its own to refer a death to the Coroner under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009
- Covid-19 is a notifiable disease under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010. This does not mean the death is reportable to a Coroner

Furthermore, the Royal College of Pathologists Briefing on Covid-19 February 2020 states:

"In general, if a death is believed to be due to confirmed COVID-19 infection, there is unlikely to be any need for a post-mortem examination to be conducted and the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death should be issued."

It is important that only statutorily referable matters are reported to the Coroner. Unnecessary referrals that place pressure on medical practitioners to complete and Coronial staff to investigate must be avoided. Bereaved families must be able to register the death in a timely manner.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-notes-for-completing-a-medical-certificate-of-cause-of-death>

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Nigel Parsley