



Medical Examiners Committee

A meeting of the Medical Examiners Committee was held on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 10:00am via Zoom conferencing

Dr Lance Sandle
Registrar

Minutes

- Present:** Dr Suzy Lishman CBE, Chair
Dr Frances Cranfield, Royal College of General Practitioners representative
Dr Alan Fletcher, National Medical Examiner
Mrs Daisy Shale, Lead Medical Examiner Officer for Wales
Ms Jane Crossley, Department of Health and Social Care
Ms Natalie Harris, Welsh Government representative
Dr Anna Green, Cellular Pathology SAC representative
Ms Mary Ann Cameron, Lay Advisor
Dr Berenice Lopez, RCPATH Clinical Director of Quality and Safety
Dr Jason Shannon, Lead Medical Examiner for Wales
- In attendance:** Ms Louise Mair, Governance and Committee Services Officer
- Apologies:** Professor Carol Seymour, Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine representative
Dr Golda Shelley-Fraser, Gloucestershire NHS Foundation Trust
Dr Matthew Clarke, Trainee representative
Mr Geoffrey Sullivan, Coroners' Society representative
Miss Shelaine Kissoon, Governance and Committees Services Officer (*minutes*)

ME.71/22 Welcome, declarations of conflicts of interest and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. There were no declarations of conflict of interests. Apologies for absence had been noted and listed above.

ME.72/22 Review and approve minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022 were approved as a correct record.

ME.73/22 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

ME.74/22 Review of action log

The action log had been reviewed and the following updates had been noted:

- ME.47/22: Medical Examiners and Retirement
The Chair advised that she is currently working on several items to update the FAQs which includes the removal of the retirement clause. **Action remains in progress.**
- ME.69/22: MEs in Gibraltar
Gibraltar would like their MEs to join the College in the same way as the MEs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, the issue is that some MEs in Gibraltar are non-medics. Gibraltar had submitted a proposal document which had been circulated to the Committee together with a proposal from the Chair, suggesting to the Committee that the recommendation to Council be that only doctors are allowed to join as ME members and use the RCPATHME post-nominals and membership category. If the non-medical MEs wish to undertake the MEO training they can do so, and join as RCPATHMEO members. Chair to provide an update at the next meeting. **Action remains in progress.**



ME.75/22 Update from the National Medical Examiner

Dr Fletcher provided the following update:

- Steady progress of implementation of ME system in the non-statutory phase in England and Wales.
- Quarterly reporting reflected the total number of scrutinised deaths in England and Wales to over 350k.
- Recruitment is over 80% of MEs and MEOs.
- Diversity of specialties is continuing to be recruited to and represented, including many general practitioners.
- Local progress with non-acute sector roll out in England is continuing. Many solutions are being identified to enable access to general practitioner records and other systems where needed. Others continue to strive to find wider solutions that can be communicated and distributed.
- Dr Fletcher spoke at the Local Registration Services Association annual conference and some clear messaging was given to Registration Services and supported by coroners regarding the transition to the statutory system in relation to boundaries, rules and responsibilities.
- Thanks was extended once again to the RCPATH for their publication of the good practice series and most recently the antimicrobial resistance good practice series. A paper on homelessness is in the pipeline. A positive discussion on dementia relevant to MEs recently took place.
- Dr Fletcher had a positive visit to Doncaster to see the engagement of multiple different systems and he attended a successful CPD event in Wales.

ME.76/22 Update from Wales

Dr Shannon provided the following update from Wales:

- In relation to the DHSC update relating to central funding for England and Wales, Dr Shannon mentioned that is enormously welcomed and extended his thanks to all those involved in resolving the issue with funding.
- November has been one of the busiest months, 10% up on numbers compared with the previous three-month average for both acute and non-acute deaths.
- MEs and MEOs have booked and participated in the training.
- For new staff, both MEs and MEOs, this time round for recruitment Wales was able to run a more structured induction programme due to the lessons learnt over the last two years.
- A fair number of MEOs have been recruited who are now fully working in the service.
- A real success is that Wales is now able to look at roles that extend from band 3 with support working right up to lead MEO role.
- 14 MEs had been recruited, 6 of whom had commenced induction, and there are plans to recruit more MEs.
- There had been a Datix update; still awaiting the business intelligence tool.
- The antimicrobial resistance good practice series is still being debated within the service.
- An educational event took place on 19 November, where several good practice series (mental health, organ donation and child deaths) were covered with representation from each of those communities.
- Dr Shannon gave feedback on the internal quality assurance scheme where a set of notes was sent to all MEs who were asked to do a return. The next steps are to plan a quiz, which will be a pilot MCQ as an informal test of knowledge.

Ms Harris echoed Dr Shannon's words in relation to central funding and stated that it is very welcome. She mentioned that it was great to attend the CPD event and it was good to see

so many people attend who work in the service. The Welsh government continues to work with DHSC in preparing the regulations for statutory implementation.

ME.80/22 Update from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

Ms Crossley provided the following update:

- The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is Stephen Barclay, and the Minister for Death Certification Reform and Medical Examiners is Maria Caulfield.
- The DHSC continues to work with officials across government on the relevant secondary legislation and with NHS England on the operational roll out.
- Central funding for England and Wales has now been confirmed.

ME.78/22 Update from RCGP on Medical Examiners community roll out

Dr Cranfield provided an update from the RCGP and stated that they are still supportive of the principles of MEs. However, they are disappointed that, having been asked to provide carefully thought-out solutions to the issues that the RCGP has raised over a prolonged period, that none of the solutions provided by the RCGP or BMA had been accepted. Dr Cranfield referred to the RCGP letter dated 20 September 2022 and stated that sadly it is reported that the roll out to the community in England remains very slow as a result of the issues discussed. The RCGP does not believe the statutory system is achievable by March 2023; they feel a real concern and are looking for guidance and an update as they do not see the system being able to deliver by then.

Dr Fletcher asked if a copy of the letter from the RCGP to him could be shared with the Committee. **Action: Dr Cranfield.**

ME.79/22 Medical Examiner training

The Chair provided the following update on ME training:

- There had been a training day in October.
- Total number of MEs trained to date is 1721.
- For the training day on 7 December, 83 have booked to attend.
- There are four dates scheduled for 2023 and bookings have commenced.
- The next ME conference is scheduled for 17 May 2023; members are welcome to share ideas for topics.
- There is now an official College version of the 2022 [ME conference report](#).

ME.81/22 Medical examiner officer training

Mrs Shale provided the following update:

- MEO training day took place on 30 November 2022 and there were 10 facilitators.
- The total number of MEOs training to date is 500.
- 2 further training events are planned for 2023, which are on 16 February and 20 April and bookings have commenced.
- Training will continue to be virtual.
- There are 10 new facilitators at the training.
- MEO Facebook page continues to be popular with over 150 members.
- In relation to the request for short video webinars on process, there are talks on developing some short video series to be uploaded to the RCPATH portal.
- In 2023, the MEO training will be reviewed and updated with any changes.
- There is ongoing work to standardise the on MEO appraisals process.

- Considering joint working with the MEO Office and Coroners Office in developing guidance and information about what things could be considered when there are cases involving both offices.

ME.82/22 Update from the Coroners' Society

Mr Sullivan had given his apologies and therefore there had been no update.

ME.84/22 Any other business

There had been no other business discussed.

ME.85/22 Date of next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 1st February 2023 at 10:30am.