



Job Description

Job Title:	Lead Medical Examiner (Lead ME)
Remuneration:	1.00-PA
Responsible to:	Lead ME for the North East and Yorkshire region
Reports to:	Chief Medical Officer/Medical Director in the employing organisation
Tenure:	23 months subject to satisfactory annual appraisal and extendable by mutual agreement

Context

The role of Medical Examiner has been created by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in response to observations made in the Third Report of the Shipman Inquiry. The medical examiner system aims to promote robust, transparent and independent scrutiny of death certification processes feeding into the Clinical Governance of all healthcare providers in Bradford.

The Lead Medical Examiner is a local role to oversee development and leadership of an effective Medical Examiner service consistent with regional and national best practice, reporting and accountable to the Trust Board as necessary, liaising and working with local partner organisations.

Dimensions of role

Medical Examiners (MEs) are appropriately trained (typically senior) doctors who will verify clinical information on Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCDs) and ensure that the right referrals are made to the coroner for further investigation. MEs will take a consistent approach to the formulation of MCCD content, which must be clinically accurate and reflect any discussions with the next of kin/informant.

The present Medical Examiner Office is responsible for providing an ME service for the whole of Bradford, this includes all deaths not referred to the coroner in both the acute and non-acute (community) settings. The Bradford office is working in close collaboration with the Airedale Medical Examiner's Office in a collaborative arrangement between Airedale NHS Foundation Trust and Bradford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Both Trusts have a Lead ME (1 PA each) and a number of MEs working in these offices.

Main duties

Lead Medical Examiner

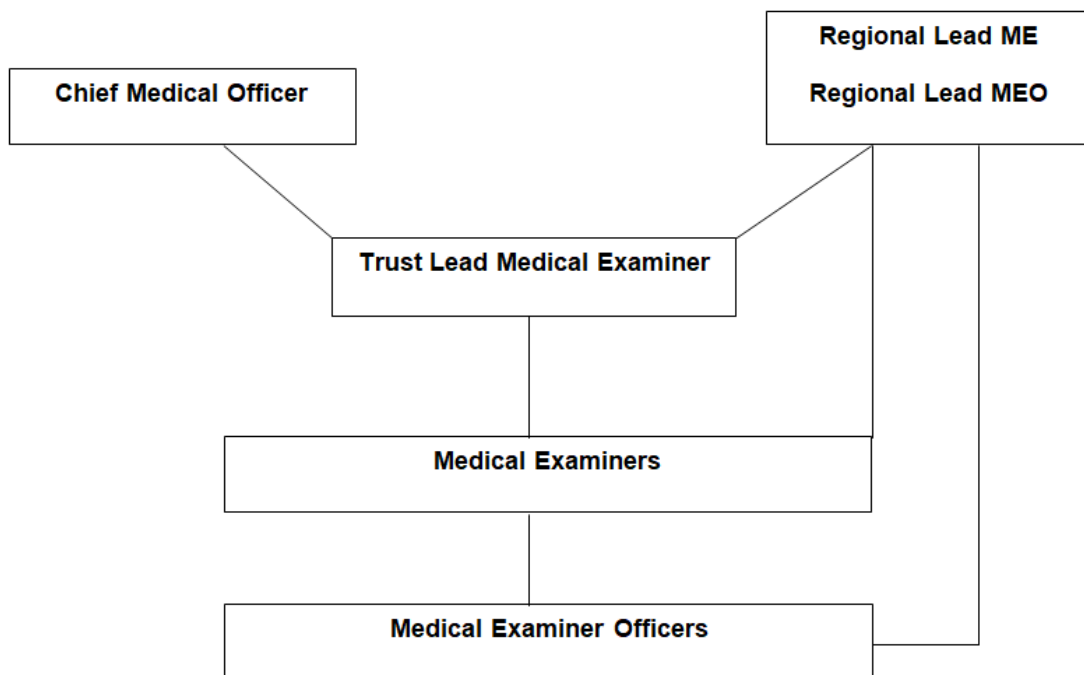
- To ensure compliance with the legal and procedural requirements associated with the current and proposed reformed processes of certification, investigation by coroners and registration of deaths.
- To engage with lead Medical Examiner (ME) and Medical Examiner Officer (MEO) for the region.
- To take the lead for overseeing the effective delivery of the ME service within Bradford, ensuring that, with the support of the acute trust and national funding package, there are sufficient resources available including the recruitment and management of the MEs and MEOs.
- To take a joint lead in the ME service collaboration between Airedale NHS Foundation Trust and Bradford Hospitals Foundation Trust.
- To have oversight of the work of MEs and MEOs employed by the Trust.
- To ensure that the ME service is aligned and fully integrated with existing and evolving mortality review processes.
- To ensure that there is a robust framework for the quality assurance and continuous development of the ME service including raising awareness, stakeholder feedback, peer review, training and education as required.
- To engage with all relevant stakeholders in Bradford, understanding their needs and maintaining good communication.
- To respond to concerns and complaints relating to the ME service.

Medical Examiner

- To scrutinise the certified causes of death offered by attending doctors in a way that is proportionate, consistent and compliant with the proposed national protocol.
- To discuss and explain the cause of death with next of kin/informants in a transparent, tactful and sympathetic manner. It is anticipated that such discussions will be predominately conducted through telephone conversations where barriers to understanding information may exist.
- To ensure that all users of the ME service are treated with respect and are not discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability.
- To maintain comprehensive records of all deaths scrutinised and undertake analysis to provide information to the National Medical Examiner's office.
- To participate in relevant clinical governance activities relating to death certification including audits, mortality review processes and investigations regarding formal complaints about patient care.
- To support the training of all relevant healthcare providers in Bradford in their understanding of death certification and promote good practice in accurate completion of MCCDs.

- To work with medical examiner officers (MEOs), delegating duties as appropriate.
- To adopt a collaborative working relationship with other MEs by sharing experiences and expertise to support peer learning and set uniform standards of service delivery.

Organisational chart



Knowledge and skills required for post

Qualifications

Registered medical practitioner with a licence to practice in the UK¹.

As a pre-condition of practicing, the Lead ME will have successfully completed the mandatory components of the national online medical examiner curriculum and completed the face-to-face training.

¹ Currently - a registered medical practitioner of at least five years' standing. 'Five years' standing' means a medical practitioner who has been a fully registered person within the meaning of the Medical Act 1983 for at least five years and, if paragraph 10 of Schedule 1 to the Medical Act 1983 (Amendment) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/3135) has come into force, has held a licence to practice for at least five years or since the coming into force of that paragraph

Behavioural attributes

The Lead ME should be aware of how their personal communication style impacts on others and be able to adapt their approach to suit a variety of situations and audiences. This will require:

- Highly evolved self-awareness and empathetic skills to liaise effectively and sympathetically with bereaved families.
- The ability to demonstrate and combine appropriate levels of compassion with professionalism and discretion.
- Being open to constructive criticism, ideas and solutions.
- Acting as a positive role model and interacting appropriately with all stakeholders including MEOs, other MEs, the bereaved and the Coroner.
- Having the integrity to gain trust and comply with the independent nature of the ME role in the context of other clinical specialty duties.

The Lead ME will also be required to:

- Demonstrate an ability to collaborate effectively with partner organisations.
- Collate and analyse relevant data to extract learning as part of the wider mortality review process.
- Critically appraise systems and working practices, developing and implementing changes when required.
- Appraise and provide feedback to other MEs and MEOs in relation to their role and contribution to the service.

Performance criteria

Communications and key working relationships

The Lead ME will be a source of expert knowledge and advice for health professionals and wider stakeholder groups; these include:

Within Bradford acute trust:

- Chief Medical Officer
- All grades of clinicians.
- All grades of Healthcare professionals.
- Clinical governance leads.
- MEOs and bereavement service staff.
- Mortuary staff.

Within Bradford but external to the acute trust:

- Integrated Care Boards.
- Coroners and their officers.
- Registrar of births and deaths.
- Local Authorities, including care homes and safeguarding teams.

- Spiritual and faith community leaders.
- Other health care providers including GPs.
- Lead MEs and Lead MEOs.
- Regional and National Medical Examiner

Knowledge

The Lead ME must have up to date knowledge of medical conditions and treatments which may or may not have contributed to death, and be able to exercise judgement in where to seek specialist advice in order to determine the appropriate level of scrutiny required.

The Lead ME must have detailed knowledge of the relevant legislation and processes which apply to:

- The determination of whether a death is natural or unnatural.
- Deaths that must be reported to the Coroner.
- Deaths abroad where bodies are returned to England and Wales for disposal.
- Deaths where relatives wish to transport the body abroad for disposal.
- Certifying and registering deaths and the regulations to authorise cremation or burials of stillbirths abroad.

The Lead ME ideally should also have some knowledge of quality improvement tools and techniques to support emergent widespread learning across both organisations.

Accountability

The Lead ME will have professional independence in scrutinising deaths but will be accountable to the employing organisation's Board via the CMO for achieving agreed standards or levels of performance and will comply with guidance issued by the National Medical Examiner when carrying out ME duties.

The Lead ME will have an independent professional line of accountability to a regional structure of NHS Improvement/NHS England outside the employing organisation and immediate line management structure.

Safety and Quality – Clinical Governance

The Lead ME will be required to participate in any relevant governance activities relating to scrutiny and confirmation of the cause of death where concerns have been raised by the next of kin/informant of the deceased and/or clinical staff and ME scrutiny.

The Lead ME will facilitate routine analysis of MCCD information to identify trends, patterns and unusual features of deaths and report, as required, firstly to the regional Lead ME and ultimately to the National Medical Examiner's office.

The Lead ME will provide information to local Child Death Overview panels in respect of all child deaths which are not being investigated by the coroner.

The Lead ME will share relevant information with responsible officers for doctors to remedy sub-standard clinical performance to protect patients.

The Lead ME will ensure that there are robust governance processes and procedures are in place to provide assurance that the ME service is being delivered consistently and to a high standard.

Maintaining Trust

Equality and Diversity

The Lead ME will act in accordance with Equalities and Human Rights legislation and the organisation's Equality and Diversity policies.

Independence

The Lead ME must avoid any potential conflicts of interest. There will be new legislation to define this but this is not yet ratified, but in general, in cases where they have a personal or professional relationship with the deceased person, next of kin/informant, or with the attending doctor preparing the MCCD, they must transfer any scrutiny of the death to another ME.

Continuing professional development

The Lead ME are expected to take responsibility for their own continuing professional development in accordance with any standards for maintaining a GMC licence to practice and membership of any relevant professional body. The Lead ME should be included in the whole practice appraisal.

The Lead ME should maintain a Personal Development Plan in agreement with their appraiser.

There will be opportunities to attend local and national activities to maintain up to date knowledge.

Working Conditions:

The Lead ME may need to use a computer for prolonged periods of time. The ME system operates within a reactive area of service delivery interacting with people in variable degrees of distress and demonstrating potentially irrational/unpredictable behaviour.

Person Specification for Lead Medical Examiner

Knowledge, Skills and Performance	Essential/ Desirable	Assessment Method
Medical practitioner registered and licensed to practise in the UK by the GMC of at least five years' standing.	Essential	Application form
Can demonstrate previous experience as a Medical Examiner.	Desirable	Application form/Interview
A commitment to life-long learning and undertaking personal development opportunities.	Essential	Application form/Interview
Candidates must have successfully completed the mandatory e-learning modules and attended a face-to-face training session. (Substantive appointment will only be confirmed once this has been achieved.)	Essential	Application form/Interview
Up-to-date knowledge of causes of death and an understanding of the legal frameworks associated with death certification processes.	Essential	Application form/Interview
Knowledge of quality improvement tools and techniques to support emergent widespread learning across organisations.	Essential	Application form/ Interview
Have good IT skills including use of databases, spreadsheets, electronic patient records, email, and commonly used software.	Essential	Application form
Ability to manage and comply with sensitive information-based processes under tight timescales with a proportionate approach.	Essential	Interview
Knowledge of the special requirements of various faith groups and respect for equality and diversity	Essential	Application form/Interview

Have the ability and experience to lead and manage a service across multiple healthcare settings.	Essential	Application form/Interview
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Safety and Quality – Clinical Governance	Essential/ Desirable	Assessment Method
Knowledge of local and national clinical governance systems and an understanding of how the ME can work collaboratively to improve patient safety by identifying sub-optimal clinical and organisational performance.	Essential	Application form/Interview
Ability to identify available data sources and interpret their meaning in order to support the detection and analysis of concerns and to recognise gaps in available knowledge.	Essential	Interview
Ability to identify and disseminate examples of good practice amongst relevant colleagues.	Essential	Interview

Communication and teamwork	Essential/ Desirable	Assessment Method
Strong interpersonal skills demonstrating the ability to communicate in difficult and emotional situations with empathy and professionalism.	Essential	Application form/Interview
Ability to work effectively and efficiently within own team and also closely with people in other disciplines	Essential	Application form/Interview
Ability to work as part of a team and organise a fluctuating workload around competing priorities and numerous interruptions.	Essential	Application form/Interview
Ability to manage and deliver effective education to relevant healthcare providers.	Essential	Application form/Interview

Personal qualities and behavioural attributes	Essential/ Desirable	Assessment Method
Proactive and self-motivated with a flexible working approach	Essential	Application form/Interview

Have the resilience to manage own reaction to frequently distressing situations and support others within the team.	Essential	Interview
To sustain professional integrity and independence at all times, particularly where there is the potential for a conflict of interest.	Essential	Interview