



Ein cyf/Our ref WQ96292

Paul Davies MS
Senedd Member for Preseli Pembrokeshire
Paul.Davies@senedd.wales

29 May 2025

Dear Paul,

Subject: WQ96292 (e) Tabled on 16/04/2025 Further to WQ95789, what impact have the recent actions taken had on reducing the waiting times for bereaved families to register deaths?

Following your written question WG96292, I am writing to provide you with a full response.

My officials, together with their counterparts in the UK Government, continue to closely monitor the impact of the reforms on the death certification process. [ONS publish weekly statistics](#) on the median time from death to registration in Wales based on the number of deaths registered within a week. This data has a time lag of 12 days between the reporting week and publication. The latest data is for the week ending 18 April which shows that the median time between death and registration for all deaths in Wales was 11 days, this is down from a high of 15 days in week ending 24 January 2025 and for those deaths certified by a Doctor and reviewed by the Medical Examiner the Median time is between 7 and 11 days. Recent changes to data published by ONS also allow for comparisons between deaths that happened at home, in hospital, in a care home or in a hospice. It should be noted that the introduction of additional scrutiny brought about from these reforms was very necessary and included improvements in the quality and accuracy of medical death certification as well as improved patient protections.

The monitoring of the whole process is being presented at the fortnightly meeting to all stakeholders and to executive medical directors. This knowledge has prompted health boards and the Medical Examiner Service (MES) to undertake a review to improve the process. This includes more accurate completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and improved communication between Health boards and the MES. Future meetings will provide focused time for health boards and MES to take the necessary additional steps identified through this review work and overseen by my officials.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

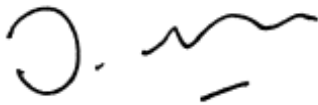
Additional funding provided by DHSC to the MES, for administrative staff to manage calls to the service has supported the clearance of a backlog that developed during January. The MES has also recruited more Medical Examiners and Medical Examiner officers. This was following the bank holidays when many stakeholder services were closed and when Wales experienced for a number of weeks a larger number of deaths than expected.

Recent mortuary data has demonstrated a return to normal levels of mortuary occupancy. A review of national processes has resulted in establishing a consistent process (for the first time in Wales) for the release of bodies which will support bereaved families and the funeral industry to allow for timely viewing, embalming and funeral arrangements.

My officials and other key stakeholders in Wales will be participating in a rapid implementation evaluation commissioned by DHSC and led by BRACE Rapid Evaluation Centre (University of Birmingham). Following work on the design, the evaluation will commence in Autumn 2025 and last for 12 months.

I appreciate that any delay, regardless of the reason, can add undue stress and distress to a family at this sad time and I am clear that doctors and the MES must undertake their roles as efficiently and speedily as possible whilst continuing to provide adequate oversight and supporting the bereaved through this process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal line at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care