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Dear Colleague

Mortuary Access – Compliance with Guidance

Following the recent news of significant and serious criminal actions undertaken in an NHS mortuary in England, I am writing to ask that all NHS Boards with mortuary facilities in Scotland, review their current security and access arrangements. I would be grateful for confirmation that you have recently reviewed mortuary access and control and that you are satisfied that your facilities are compliant with Scottish Health Planning Note 16-01 – ‘Mortuary and Post Mortem Facilities: design and briefing guidance’.

[SHPN 16-01 v2.0 Nov 2017 \(nhs.scot\)](#)

Section 3 – General Functional Requirements notes the key requirements:

3.3. Appropriate risk assessments are required at both design and in use, to identify and mitigate the key risks to care, safety and security e.g. lone working, out-of-hours collection / deliveries; infestations; infection; refrigeration failure. See also Section 4.

3.4. Unauthorised access must be prevented for reasons of both health and security. Unfortunately the nature of the work undertaken by these services can attract unwanted attention. Entry into the mortuary, and to the secure areas within it, must be controlled by staff at all times, e.g. video / audio intercom or bell for Funeral Directors and other visitors entry; swipe card or mechanical lock for staff only / escorted entry. Surveillance of each entrance and body store area is to be provided locally, and to an appropriate 24hr/ 7days staffed area. Passive surveillance supports good behaviour.

Please could confirmation be provided by Friday 3 December that you are content with arrangements or alternatively, if improvements need to be made, what they are and when they will be implemented.

DL(2021) 42
23rd November, 2021

Addresses

For action
NHS Board Chief
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For information
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Enquiries to:

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If you have any questions please contact Alan.Morrison@gov.scot to discuss.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R McCallum', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Richard McCallum
Director of Health Finance and Governance