



Support Following the Death of a Member of Staff

This procedural document supersedes: CORP/EMP 24 v.3 – Support Following the Death of a Member of Staff.



Did you print this document yourself?

The Trust discourages the retention of hard copies of policies and can only guarantee that the policy on the Trust website is the most up-to-date version. **If, for exceptional reasons, you need to print a policy off, it is only valid for 24 hours.**

Executive Sponsor(s):	Karen Barnard
Author/reviewer: (this version)	John Scott HR Manager
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Approved by:	Workforce & Education Committee
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Next review date:	November 2020
Target audience:	Trust-wide

Amendment Form

Please record brief details of the changes made alongside the next version number. If the procedural document has been reviewed **without change**, this information will still need to be recorded although the version number will remain the same.

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Changes	Author
Version 4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed and contact details updated • Chaplaincy added 	John Scott
Version 3	13 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed and put into new format • New employee assistance service promoted – HELP Employee Assistance • Contact numbers updated 	Ruth Cooper
Version 2	May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed and put into new format. • Amendment form and contents page added • Occupational Health contact numbers updated 	Jayne Lang

Contents

	Page No.
1 Introduction	4
2 Purpose	4
POLICY OVERVIEW	4
3 Duties and Responsibilities	5
4 Procedure	5
4.1 Communications and Immediate Actions.....	5
4.2 Further action on practical issues	6
5 Training/Support and Useful Contacts.....	7
6 Monitoring Compliance with the Procedural Document.....	7
7 Definitions.....	7
8 Equality Impact Assessment.....	8
9 Associated Trust Procedural Documents.....	8
10 References.....	8
APPENDIX 1 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING.....	9

1 INTRODUCTION

We understand that the death of a member of staff, whether at work or not, can have devastating consequences both for the individual's immediate family and for you and your work colleagues. At such a difficult time, you don't always think clearly about the practical things you need to do quickly and where you can go for further support.

You need to ensure that issues for both the individual's immediate family and their work colleagues are identified and dealt with quickly, sensitively and sympathetically. This policy sets out what we expect of you and gives you a guide on some of the practical details you may need to consider.

2 PURPOSE

The policy sets out the key actions and issues required:

POLICY OVERVIEW

Communication & Immediate action

Member of Staff

- Inform your manager immediately, even if it is your day off.

Line Manager

- Inform our Chief Executive and the Director of People & OD and the relevant executive director during normal working hours.
- Notify the Hospital Bleep Holder and Executive Director on-call if out of normal working hours.

Further action on practical issues

Member of Staff

- If you find it difficult covering duties, or using office space of the deceased staff member, talk to your manager,
- You can also call HELP, the external employee assistance service on **0800 0288761** (www.dbh.helpeap.com) for support.
- If you want to attend the funeral for the deceased, or set up a collection, talk to your manager about it.

Line Manager

- Regularly check in with your staff to see if they need further support. Try to accommodate requests for unpaid time off to attend the funeral, where appropriate.
- Agree with immediate family, the information they want you to share with work colleagues.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how you should break the news to staff, both on and off shift, and take immediate action to inform them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify Employee Services of the death immediately and complete a termination form as soon as practically possible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to your own manager for support and/or call HELP, the external employee assistance service on 0800 0288761 (www.dbh.helpeap.com) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the funeral, discuss with Employee Services how best to discuss financial and pension matters with relatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the Chief Executive's office to arrange for him to write to the family on behalf of the Trust, acknowledging the bereavement and offering condolences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree with relatives how to return personal belongings, or receive property back.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how and when you will handle the vacancy and the interim arrangements to cover the work. Seek advice from the HR Business Partner when necessary.

3 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Line Managers

- Act as the contact point for immediate family, making sure their wishes are met.
- Offer your support to members of staff who may be affected by the death and remind them of how to access further emotional or practical support from HELP Employee Assistance on 0800 0288761 – a 24 hour, 7 day a week advice/counselling service for all employees.
- Take immediate action on the practical things that need to be done – see policy section.

Employees

- If you have been affected by the death of your colleague talk to your manager immediately.
- Consider contacting HELP Employee Assistance on 0800 0288761 – a 24 hour, 7 day a week advice/counselling service for all employees.
- The chaplaincy service is also available at DRI (01302 642237) and Bassetlaw (01909 502846)

4 PROCEDURE

4.1 Communications and Immediate Actions

- Anyone receiving notification of the death of a member of staff should immediately report the matter to their immediate line manager, who should in turn notify the Chief Executive, the Director of People & OD and the senior management team in their Care Group or Directorate. Where notification occurs out of hours, they should notify the Hospital Bleep Holder and the Executive Director on call at the time.

- You then need to consider how to inform work colleagues. Breaking bad news to staff that are likely to be distressed, is never easy and often helpful to inform them that you have bad news, before proceeding to impart the news of the death. It might be helpful to talk this through with your senior manager, a colleague who has dealt with a matter of this kind previously, or your HR Business Partner.
- As a manager you can also seek guidance and support from HELP Employee Assistance, the external employee assistance service on 0800 0288761 (www.dbh.helppeap.com) who also offer an advice and guidance service for managers. Trained counsellors can help you think through the issues that arise as a result of bereavement and how best to support everyone through a difficult period. Where teams have been particularly affected by death or other forms of crisis, HELP Employee Assistance will also offer on-site de-briefing/counselling.
- It is also useful to keep a record of when staff have been informed of the death in order to prevent uncertainty at a later stage and to ensure that you have not overlooked anybody, particularly staff who are absent from work, or not on shift at the time
- The Chief Executive will write to the family on behalf of the Trust acknowledging the bereavement and offering condolences. To follow up your immediate notification of the death, you will then need to provide the office with details of the deceased employee's role, period of service, etc.
- You need to contact Employee Services to notify the death quickly. This not only helps avoid salary overpayments, but also avoids mail being sent which may distress the family and helps Employee Services prepare any financial advice quickly, which may important for the family. You then need to follow-up this notification with a termination form as soon as practically possible.

4.2 Further action on practical issues

- Make contact with the family and agree how and when you will keep in contact with them. In the initial conversation with them agree how and what news they would like you to communicate to work colleagues. They may have strong preferences on what they want you to say and we should make every effort to comply with their wishes.
- After imparting the initial news to staff, you will need to consider the practical actions you need to take. People deal with the shock of bereavement in different ways, so try to be as flexible as possible in the support you offer – for example, some staff may want to take some immediate time off, while others may just want a short period of quiet time on their own to digest the news. In the following weeks, speak to your staff about how they are feeling and check on any further support they need.
- In the period immediately following the death you will need to be sensitive where staff feel uncomfortable about using the work space/equipment of the deceased, or covering duties previously allocated to them. You have a responsibility to continue delivery of Trust

services, but seek advice from your own manager on handling the reallocation of work – for example, there may be areas where some worked can be paused for a very short period of time.

- Local circumstances will determine how quickly you need to make arrangements to fill the lost role, but it is often helpful not to rush this process, giving staff some time to adapt to the loss. Your HR Business Partner can advise on handling.
- When talking to the family you will need to ensure their wishes are met with regard to attendance at a funeral and/or sending flowers and condolences. Where they are content for former colleagues to attend funeral services, you need to be as flexible as possible in allowing unpaid time off for staff to attend.

5 TRAINING/SUPPORT AND USEFUL CONTACTS

The training requirements of staff will be identified through a training needs analysis. Role specific education will be delivered by the service lead.

Below is a list of contacts which you will find useful when dealing with the death of a member of your staff.

CONTACT	
Chief Executive	01302 644150
NHS Shared Business Services (for Pay Services)	0330 123 5794
Help Employee Assistance	0800 0288761 www.dbh.helpeap.com

6 MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT

What is being Monitored	Who will carry out the Monitoring	How often	How Reviewed/ Where Reported to
Overall effectiveness of the policy	Director of People and OD, or nominated person	Annually	Workforce & Education Committee, as part of regular policy update
Fitness for purpose	Director of People and OD, or nominated person	Three years	Formal review every three years

7 DEFINITIONS

None identified.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, population and workforce, ensuring that none are disadvantaged over others. Our objectives and responsibilities relating to equality and diversity are outlined within our equality schemes. When considering the needs and assessing the impact of a procedural document any discriminatory factors must be identified.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted on this procedural document in line with the principles of the Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27) and the Fair Treatment For All Policy (CORP/EMP 4).

The purpose of the EIA is to minimise and if possible remove any disproportionate impact on employees on the grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. No detriment was identified. (See Appendix 1)

9 ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

Flexible Working Policy (CORP/EMP 48)
Special Leave Policy (CORP/EMP 47)
Fair Treatment For All Policy (CORP/EMP 4)
Equality Analysis Policy (CORP/EMP 27)

10 REFERENCES

Help Employee Assistance www.dbh.helpcap.com

APPENDIX 1 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT PART 1 INITIAL SCREENING

Service/Function/Policy/Project/ Strategy	Care Group/Executive Directorate and Department	Assessor (s)	New or Existing Service or Policy?	Date of Assessment																														
Guidance for support following the death of a member of staff	People and Organisation Development Human Resources	John Scott	Existing	10 November 2017																														
1) Who is responsible for this policy? People & OD																																		
2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project / strategy? Intended to benefit the Trust as a whole, managers and employees. To provide managers with a reference point in order to offer support and guidance for staff members who may be affected by the death of a member of staff. To help managers give consideration to the practical implications of the death of a member staff																																		
3) Are there any associated objectives? Legislation, targets national expectation, standards:																																		
4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes? – None																																		
5) Does the policy have an impact in terms of age, race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, maternity/pregnancy and religion/belief? No																																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, please describe current or planned activities to address the impact n/a 																																		
6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? n/a																																		
7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy?																																		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">Protected Characteristics</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Affected?</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>a) Age</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>b) Disability</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>c) Gender</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>d) Gender Reassignment</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>e) Marriage/Civil Partnership</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>f) Maternity/Pregnancy</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>g) Race</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>h) Religion/Belief</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>i) Sexual Orientation</td><td>No</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>					Protected Characteristics	Affected?	Impact	a) Age	No		b) Disability	No		c) Gender	No		d) Gender Reassignment	No		e) Marriage/Civil Partnership	No		f) Maternity/Pregnancy	No		g) Race	No		h) Religion/Belief	No		i) Sexual Orientation	No	
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8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function / policy / project / strategy – tick (✓) outcome box																																		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcome 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcome 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Outcome 4																															
<i>*If you have rated the policy as having an outcome of 2, 3 or 4, it is necessary to carry out a detailed assessment and complete a Detailed Equality Analysis form – see CORP/EMP 27.</i>																																		
Date for next review:		November 2020																																
Checked by:		Anthony Jones																																
		Date:		10 November 2020																														