



Care after Death and Bereavement Policy: Operational Policy for Staff to follow in the event of a Patient Death

This procedural document supersedes: PAT/T 60 v.1 (amended) – Death of a Patient



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Date written/revised:	June 2018
Approved by:	Policy Approval and Compliance Group
Date of approval:	5 July 2018
Date issued:	9 July 2018
Next review date:	June 2021
Target audience:	All staff involved following the death of a patient - 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 2	9 July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy has been re-formatted into new APD template. • Changes made to viewing arrangements • Notification of GP • Completion of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death) (MCCD) 	Mandy Dalton
Version 1 (amended)	30 Oct 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to changes in the Standard Operating Procedure for the reporting of deaths occurring at Bassetlaw District General hospital to Her Majesty's Coroner for Nottinghamshire. Information/process is added as Appendix 3 (A) of this policy. 	Mark Boocock
Version 1 (Supersedes and Incorporates PAT/PA 32 – Operational Policy following the Death of a Patient and Incorporates PAT/T 30 – Last Offices Policy – Version 2)	31 July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This policy has been significantly changed and now incorporates PAT/T 30 – Last Offices Policy – please read in full. • Transferred from 'Patient Administration' to 'Treatments/Investigations' section. • Title change. • Format and style updated in line with CORP/COMM 1. 	Victoria Bagshaw

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1. INTRODUCTION

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is committed to ensuring empathic and efficient support for the families and carers of the deceased to access appropriate information and care following bereavement and to ensure that provision is made for those people with special communication needs and cultural variance. This includes those people who do not speak English or who may have sensory impairment or loss where communication is affected. Interpretation services, where required, are available via Big Word on 0800 757 3053 or 0800 694 5093 (Interpretation and Translation Services Policy (PAT/PA 34)).

2. PURPOSE

This guidance has been developed to ensure that services provided by the Trust are equally accessible to all parties of the communities it serves and to advise Trust staff on how to access the services available. This policy covers care of patients or members of the public who die in hospital or who are brought in dead. This policy does not cover end of life care and death in the community.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is every member of staff's responsibility that this policy is upheld. The Trust has the right to expect that the standards in this policy are adhered to and line managers will regularly monitor adherence. All staff who are involved in the death of a patient and the subsequent support of the bereaved have a duty to abide by the relevant policy and guidance documents for their areas, which include roles and responsibilities, these include:

3.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all policies and procedures within Trust.

3.2 Associate Directors of Nursing, Head of Nursing/Midwifery, Clinical Site Managers, Matrons and Senior Clinicians.

Associate Directors of Nursing, Heads of Nursing/Midwifery & Quality, Clinical Site Managers, Matrons and Senior Clinicians have a responsibility to set the standard and ensure that the policy is followed at all times, ensuring that the deceased is treated with dignity and the bereaved are treated with compassion and respect.

Clinical Site managers and duty matrons will provide advice and support for out of hours viewings of the deceased.

3.3 Registered Nurse/Midwife

Follow all aspects of this policy, ensuring that the deceased is treated with dignity and relatives, friends and family are treated with compassion and respect. All documentation is completed promptly and accurately. Health care professionals are responsible for ensuring that patient's valuables and belongings are packed carefully and documented in accordance with Trust policy (Patients Property and Valuables (PAT/PA 12)).

3.4 Doctor

Follow all aspects of this policy, ensuring that the deceased is treated with dignity and relatives, friends and family are treated with compassion and respect. All documentation is completed promptly and accurately and appropriate referrals to HM Coroner are completed accurately and promptly.

3.5 End of Life Coordinator

The end of life care team contacts the patient's next of kin normally 2-3 days post bereavement to offer support, if appropriate the relatives are referred to a counselling service. Relatives are also offered a voluntary patient experience survey (National Audit of Care at End of Life (NACEL) 2018). All surveys generate a quarterly and yearly report which is fed back to ward managers, discussed at patient experience committee and fed into the end of life strategy. These are only patients that have been commenced on the individualised plan of care for the last hours/days of life.

3.6 Chaplain

Provide appropriate religious, spiritual and/or pastoral support and refer on to other agencies where appropriate.

3.7 Bereavement Officer

Follow all aspects of this policy, ensuring that relatives, friends and family are treated with compassion and respect. All documentation is completed promptly and accurately. Relatives, friends and family are appropriately signposted for on-going bereavement support as required.

3.8 Mortuary Staff

Follow all aspects of this policy, ensuring that the deceased is treated with dignity and relatives, friends and family are treated with compassion and respect. All documentation is completed promptly and accurately.

3.9 Professionals Performing Last Offices

Health care professionals have a legal duty to prepare the deceased in accordance with HM Coroner requirements if a post-mortem examination is required.

Health care professionals are responsible for ensuring that the deceased is prepared for transfer to the mortuary in accordance with the principles of infection prevention and control and health and safety, ensuring that dignity is maintained at all times.

To act in accordance with professional codes of conduct and practice and to ensure appropriate supervision of any non-registered staff undertaking this duty and make certain that anyone whom the professional delegates duties to is able to carry out instructions to meet the required standards.

3.10 Healthcare Support Workers

To undertake delegated duties in accordance with Trust policy ensuring the deceased and their family are treated with respect, dignity and compassion at all times. Health care professionals are responsible for ensuring that patient's valuables and belongings are packed carefully and accurately documented in accordance with Trust policy (Patients Property and Valuables (PAT/PA 12)).

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Identification

4.1.1 Inpatients

In the event of death, the identity band must not be removed from the deceased patient's body. A second I.D. band bearing additional details must be attached prior to transporting the deceased to the hospital mortuary. (For full information see section on Mortuary Transfers within Patient Identification Policy (PAT/PS 7)). The additional details can be hand written on the standard printed band.

It is the responsibility of a registered nurse/midwife to ensure that the information contained on the deceased's identity bands is correct. In the event of a discrepancy in information, it is the responsibility of the registered nurse/midwife to rectify the problem immediately.

In the event that the deceased does not have an inpatient identity band in situ (in A&E for example) it is the responsibility of a registered nurse/midwife to prepare and attach two patient ID bands (see PAT/PS 7). The identity bands must be checked by a second registered nurse/midwife before being placed on the deceased.

If a deceased patient arrives at the mortuary without an identity band during routine hours, the mortuary staff will notify the relevant ward/department/unit manager. It is the responsibility of the manager to arrange for a registered nurse/midwife who knows the

deceased patient to attend the mortuary as soon as possible to identify the deceased and attach an appropriate identity band.

4.1.2 Outpatients

The death of any member of the public who may be attending for an out-patient appointment or someone visiting an in-patient must be transferred to A&E and identified as per 4.1.3

4.1.3 Brought in Dead (BID)

When people are certified dead on arrival to the hospital the Ambulance Service may transport the deceased to the mortuary (Doncaster Royal Infirmary (DRI) and Bassetlaw Hospital (BH) sites). In this case individuals from the ambulance or police service are responsible for confirming the identity of the patient. These individuals, along with the mortuary staff are responsible for ensuring the deceased's identity is accurately recorded on wrist and toe/ankle bands and applied to the body of the deceased.

If the deceased is unidentified, temporary labels bearing the terms unidentified male/female/adult/child must be used. The admission time and date must be written on the temporary labels. This must be completed by whoever transfers the deceased i.e. ambulance/funeral director etc. Verbal patient details can be accepted from the funeral director or police handling the body.

4.2 Care after Death

This procedure must be followed for all deceased patients. Following this procedure, viewing of the deceased on the ward is still available and remains available until the deceased is transferred to the mortuary.

The bereaved are given Bereavement Services information available on all wards or the bereavement offices, which reiterates that a member of hospital staff (bereavement services at DRI or General Office at BH and MMH) will contact them the next working day, Monday – Friday excluding Bank Holidays so that arrangements can be made to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. They are offered further help and advice that they may require and given the Patient Experience Team (PET) contact number of 01302 642764, in case they wish to discuss concerns regarding the care the deceased received or information regarding the condition the deceased suffered from.

At this point, chaplaincy is always available to offer spiritual and/or pastoral support if not already supporting the patient and carers. They can be contacted by switchboard both in and out of hours.

Staff must not advise the bereaved when the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be ready. This information can only be provided by the Bereavement Office at DRI and the General Office at BH and MMH and may take more than a day to achieve. For example – delays may occur in situations due to doctors not being available or when the death is being dealt with by the Coroner. See also **Appendix 1** for when to refer a death to HM Coroner.

Last Offices is the care given to a deceased patient, which demonstrates our respect for the dead and is focused on maintaining privacy and dignity, fulfilling religious and cultural beliefs, and upholding health and safety requirements. Performing last offices is the final demonstration of respectful, sensitive care that nurses/midwives offer patients and their families. It enables families to be aware that care and respect is ongoing after death and also allows both family members and healthcare professionals the opportunity for closure in the relationship, which can be helpful in the bereavement process. Families may wish to spend time with their loved one on the ward after death prior to Last Offices being performed. In this situation, the deceased should be repositioned and the environment tidied, in order to allow this time to be dignified and peaceful. Offer support and information to family members and friends regarding the procedure after death.

4.2.1 Deaths which occur in departments (in a non ward environment)

Given the diversity of departments across the Trust, clinical departments are expected to have a local policy to deal with situations where an unexpected event occurs which results in death.

Local policy must include:

- Patient ID
- Suitable environment for temporary storage of cadaver
- Personnel to certify death or arrange referral to Coroner
- Transfer to A&E/ward/mortuary

The medical imaging department is the largest non-ward department caring for both in patient and outpatients, therefore the following general principles apply:

- In the event of a death of an in-patient whilst attending the medical imaging department the ward retains the responsibility for delivering the care and support.
- In the event of a death of an A&E attender or member of the public attending the medical imaging department the staff in A&E will hold the responsibility for delivering the care and support detailed in the guidance.
- There will be circumstances that need dealing with on an individual basis but in general within working hours it may be appropriate for either ward staff/A&E staff to come to the imaging department and out of hours it may be appropriate for the patient to be transferred to the ward/A&E in a trust enclosed transfer trolley.

4.2.2 Death in custody

Following a 'death in custody', the deceased is dealt with directly by the police/coroner. In such situations, nothing relating to the deceased, the environment or the deceased themselves must be touched, allowing the police to take immediate control of the deceased and surroundings. All lines and devices must be left in situ and unless there is a safety risk, all devices left operating. All clinical notes must be made immediately available to the investigating officers. Staff should refer to the Policy Concordat for the care of prisoners admitted to Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (DBTH) (PAT/PA 10).

4.2.3 Legal Requirements

Either medical staff or a senior nurse/midwife must verify death. Senior nursing and midwifery staff can only verify the expected death of an adult patient following training.

Verification of death must be documented in the patient's notes. Following on from the 2012 NPSA signal, staff must follow the guidance contained within the Code of Practice for the Diagnosis and Confirmation of Death, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (2008) when diagnosing and confirming death after cardiopulmonary arrest. Staff verifying death must ensure time of death is recorded only once and all identified criteria are fulfilled. Medical staff must verify an unexpected death. If a patient has died unexpectedly, or if HM Coroner is to be informed for any reason, a post-mortem examination will probably be required. Examples of such situations include sudden death, death after invasive procedure (e.g. surgery or endoscopies) or patients with industrial disease (e.g. Mesothelioma). If it is not clear whether a post-mortem will be required, the medical team must be consulted who will confirm whether they are able to issue a death certificate or whether the case needs referral to HM Coroner. If a post-mortem is required all tubes/drains/lines must be left in place and catheters and/or cannulae spigotted. If the deceased was being artificially ventilated in DCC/ITU at the time of death, the endotracheal tube may be removed, unless the deceased was in custody.

4.2.4 Cultural/Individual Requirements

Practices relating to last offices may vary according to religious and cultural needs. Brief information regarding these variations is included within this policy, however further information is available from the chaplaincy department. See **Appendix 2** for cultural variations.

It is good practice to sensitively discuss and document the patient's wishes prior to death if the opportunity presents.

4.2.5 Infection Control Precautions

No particular risk of infection exists with the majority of cadavers. However, bacteria normally colonising the gut, respiratory tract, genital tract can leak into previously sterile sites such as blood, muscle and lung after death. Additionally, as body functions cease after death, there may be leakage from orifices to cause local contamination of the skin and environment. The whole body should therefore be regarded as potentially contaminated and Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions Policy PAT/IC 19

In certain situations there may be an additional risk due to a particular infection, which may be spread by:

- Airborne droplets or particles especially from lungs
- Discharges from the gut
- Inoculation risks
- Skin lesions

The risks and additional precautions necessary (e.g. body bags) relating to specific infectious diseases, confirmed or suspected, are listed in **Appendix 3**.

4.2.6 Procedure for preparation of the body (Last Offices)

The procedure should be carried out within 2 - 4 hours of the death of the patient (See **Appendix 4** for Last Offices Procedures). Any religious requirements/preferences must be taken into account as far as possible.

4.3 Handling Medicines following the Death of a Patient

This section should be read in conjunction with the Safe and Secure handling of Medicines Policy (PAT/MM 1 A). Following the death of a patient, medicines shall normally be sent to the Pharmacy for destruction in the ward/department transit box. However, where harm is suspected as a result of medicines administered, any medicines in use shall be retained on the ward until the death certificate and/or investigation has been completed.

4.4 Transfer of Deceased within the Trust

Following completion of Last Offices (see **Appendix 4**), including the specified identification checks and completion of relevant documentation to accompany the deceased, the Service Department is contacted to transfer the deceased to the Mortuary in an enclosed transfer trolley.

It is expected any transportation of deceased around the Trust is performed with respect, dignity and discretion; the body must be transferred from the bed to the transfer trolley using appropriate moving and handling techniques i.e. the use of a slide sheet to assist in transfer of the patient. The body should be transferred through those areas not regularly accessed by the general public i.e. utilise service lifts and basement corridors. It is important that the service department ensure that their staff are trained appropriately for this task and appropriate training and competency records are maintained.

4.5 Viewing of the Deceased by Relatives and Friends

Whilst it is unusual to refuse a request to view the deceased, there may be occasions when this is not appropriate, particularly when the body may be altered, discoloured or odorous to a degree where the bereaved would be distressed.

Caution should be applied as there may be occasions when the person making the request is neither known nor welcome to the next of kin. When in doubt, the next of kin must be contacted to ensure their agreement. Each case must be considered individually. Staff should be aware that all children of the deceased carry equal status so that in situations where there is a split in the family one child cannot instruct staff that another child cannot view.

Viewing of the deceased can take place either on the ward, mortuary viewing room or with the funeral director. Relatives should be encouraged to view the body on the ward prior to removal to the mortuary. Viewing of patients out of hours in the mortuary should be an exception. In situations where the deceased has been placed into a body bag, viewing can still usually take place. Any deceased who are deemed unsuitable for viewing will be clearly identified. Where the deceased has been classified as high risk for infection (see **Appendix 3**), viewing may be advised via the window of the viewing room. It is imperative that patient confidentiality is maintained, irrespective of infection status. Therefore, if relatives are not aware of the presence of disease, explanation of the additional labelling and infection control precautions being carried out must be communicated with great care and sensitivity.

It is expected that the person accompanying the relative to a viewing is a registered professional, preferably who knows the patient and the family. It is the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the correct body is viewed by checking at least three patient identifiers.

4.5.1 Doncaster mortuary

See flowchart at **Appendix 8**

Doncaster Royal Infirmary provides a specialist Bereavement Service in liaison with the Service Department that arranges for, and organises the viewing procedure of bodies. Mortuary staff are available during working hours if the body requires significant preparation. Mortuary staff are also available out of hours for advice with viewings or identification of the deceased, especially if the deceased is received in a poor state.

All viewings are coordinated by the bereavement office regardless of the route of admission to the mortuary. Families report to the appropriate area and are then accompanied to the mortuary by a registered professional/Healthcare Assistant or member of the bereavement office staff. Designated appointment times will be offered to families but viewings are encouraged to take place during office hours (9.00 – 16.00, with no viewings arranged after 15.00hrs.)

Preparation for viewing

At DRI, the service assistants/mortuary assistant are responsible for the movement of the deceased into the viewing room. Whenever possible this must be completed by two members of staff.

Viewings before 3pm Monday to Friday are prepared by the Mortuary assistant, who will also confirm the identity of the patient. Outside of these hours, it is the responsibility of the health care professional to prepare the body for viewing and to confirm the identity.

Any wounds or injuries must be covered and the deceased presented as if laid within a bed, covered by sheets and blankets. The health care professional accompanying the relatives should advise of anything they may find distressing.

Following the viewing, the body must be recovered and returned to the correct body storage chamber by the mortuary assistant/service staff.

4.5.2 Bassetlaw mortuary

Appointments for viewings can be arranged by telephoning the mortuary on 01909 500990 ext. 572814 between 8.30am and 4.00pm, Monday to Thursday. Viewings are not arranged after 3.00pm.

Relatives should report to the ward or A&E department and will be accompanied to the mortuary by a nurse or healthcare assistant. The mortuary assistant will prepare for and supervise any viewings.

In the event of relatives arriving at the mortuary unaccompanied, they should be asked to wait in the waiting room until assistance from other staff has arrived. The MA on duty is responsible for ensuring that other staff are present and the viewing should not go ahead until they are with the family.

Preparation for viewing

At BH, the identification and preparation is completed by the mortuary assistant during working hours.

Please note: Viewings may occur out of hours with the understanding that the ward/A+E staff or the clinical site manager must coordinate and prepare the body for viewing and movement of the deceased be facilitated by the service staff/Porters. DRI mortuary staff are available for advice.

4.5.3 Mexborough Hospital

Appointments for viewings can be arranged by telephoning the General Office on 01709 649002 between the hours of 9am and 12.30pm and 1.30pm and 4pm Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays). Outside these hours the staff on the ward where the patient died can arrange viewings. The Central Service assistant will be contacted by either the General office or nursing staff to prepare the deceased for the viewing.

Relatives should report to General Office or the ward and will be accompanied to the mortuary by a nurse from the ward where the patient died. ID of the deceased is confirmed by the Nurse prior to the viewing.

The mortuary facilities at Montagu Hospital are only accessible via the Central Services team.

4.5.4 Maternal Death (see Maternity Service Guideline MSG 121 version 5)

It is a Trust and statutory requirement to report all maternal deaths up to 1 year following birth, irrespective of the reason for the death.

A maternal death is defined as a woman dying during pregnancy, or within 1 year of birth, termination of pregnancy or miscarriage. (MBRRACE –UK Dec 2017)

The Head of Midwifery should be informed within working hours, at other times the labour ward co-ordinator must be informed. This should occur as soon as possible.

4.5.5 Child Death

In April 2008, Child Death Overview Panels (CDOP) were established as part of all Local Safeguarding Children Boards in line with government guidance outlined within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government 2006 & 2010). The guidance stipulates that all child deaths (excluding stillbirths and planned medical terminations) up to the age of 18 years must be reviewed. The purpose is to understand, more fully, the circumstances surrounding individual child deaths and to identify themes and trends regarding all child deaths in order to develop strategies to prevent the deaths of other children in the future.

Should any child under 18 years of age die within Doncaster or Bassetlaw the staff involved must inform the Rapid Response to Unexpected Child Death Team.

The Rapid Response Team work on a Rota basis and this is distributed to key areas in the hospital including the switchboards at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals. The on-call member can be contacted via switchboard 09:00 -17:00 seven days a week. Out of hours please contact the next morning.

4.5.6 Bariatric Patients

See Manual Handling Policy CORP/HSFS 4

4.5.7 Further Support and Guidance for Carers

Staff may deem it appropriate to offer family additional helpful information this includes:

Information that can be found on www.dyingmatters.org

4.6 Organ Donation/Transplantation

Refer to Adult Organ Donation Policy, Departments of Critical Care – PAT/PA 8.

Organ and tissue donation is supported by Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Tissue donation should therefore be considered with all patients who die within the Trust.

Tissue services are a team of specialist nurses who will approach families regarding tissue donation. Tissue can be donated by most patients who die within the Trust, and age is not a barrier. Tissues can be donated up to twenty four hours following death.

Tissue services are based at Bridle Path Leeds and can be contacted on a twenty four hour pager system on 0800 4320559.

The resident Specialist Nurse in Organ Donation is based on Critical Care and can be contacted regarding any donation issues on 07525299087 during office hours Monday-Friday.

4.6.1 Consent requirements

The Human Tissue Act 2004 sets out a legal framework for the storage and use of tissue from the living and for the removal, storage and use of tissue and organs from the dead. The Act also established the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) as a regulatory body for all matters concerning the removal, storage, use and disposal of human tissue for scheduled purposes. The Human Tissue Authority has issued codes of practice which are available on the HTA website: <http://www.hta.gov.uk/hta-codes-practice-and-standards-0>

Please refer to the Consent to Examination or Treatment Policy (PAT/PA 2) for full details around consent.

Consent is only related to hospital post-mortems, which should be obtained through the Bereavement Office procedures. Ward staff are advised to inform the Bereavement Officer and the appropriate doctor if family voice the view they want a post-mortem.

4.7 Hospital Post–Mortem Examination

Anyone seeking consent for a hospital post-mortem examination must be spoken to by someone who is sufficiently experienced and well informed, with a thorough knowledge of the procedure, for example the most senior member of the medical team. They should have been trained in dealing with bereavement, in explaining the purpose and procedures and they should have witnessed a post-mortem examination. (See HTA Code A: Guiding principles and the fundamental principle of consent).

Post-Mortem examinations must be carried out on premises licensed by the H.T.A. (see HTA Code. B: Post-Mortem Examination.) – currently the mortuary facilities at Doncaster Royal Infirmary are licensed for this purpose.

Families requesting hospital post-mortem must be made aware that post-mortem scanning may be used as an alternative or addition to the post-mortem examination. However this is not provided by the Trust but can be obtained through a private provider such as iGene; this procedure will incur a cost to the family.

4.8 Contract Funerals

The Trust has arrangements with local funeral directors when there are no next of kin/family members or no financial support from other sources. All requests and queries should be escalated to Bereavement Services.

4.9 Release of Bodies

In ordinary situations, relatives can arrange their own funerals without a funeral director. In this situation, if cremation is the disposal method, the family will be informed that there is an appropriate fee to be paid on collection of the paperwork and deceased from the mortuary.

On occasion a patient dies without a legal next of kin or the financial means to pay for their funeral. In these circumstances the responsibility for arranging the funeral of the deceased lies with the Local Authority within which the deceased has died subject to section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. Please refer to **Appendix 7**.

Bodies cannot be released if there is to be a Coroner’s Post-Mortem, or if there is a significant infection risk.

4.9.1 Rapid release of bodies

This may take place in the following situations:

- Where release for burial or cremation is required as soon as possible (within 24 hours preferably). This request in our geographical area is most likely to come from members of the Muslim community, or members of the Jewish faith, but it could come from anyone for cultural or personal reasons.
- A family may wish to have the body of a deceased patient taken to another country for burial or cremation. **The Coroner must be informed before release, if a body is to be taken out of the country.** Additionally, a “Free from infection letter/certificate” must be completed by the Doctor, available via the bereavement office at DBTH and the General Office at BH. The death must be registered before the body leaves the country.
- It is not a requirement of either the Muslim or Jewish faith for a body to be buried in another country. It may however be requested for cultural or personal reasons.
- A body can only be released if there is a signed Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and there is not a requirement for a Coroner’s Post-Mortem.
- Following a ‘death in custody’, the deceased are dealt with directly by the police/coroner and do not go to our hospital mortuary. Staff should refer to ‘Concordat for the care of prisoners admitted to DBTH’ PAT/PA 10.

If unsure, then the case should be discussed with the Coroner’s Officer or a Consultant Pathologist. If a Coroner’s Post-Mortem is required then this **MUST** be completed before the body can be released and the body must go to the mortuary for the examination. It may be possible to ask for the post-mortem to be scheduled to allow a quick release for bona fide reasons, but this will require discussion with the Coroner’s Officer, Mortuary Staff and Pathologist.

If a Coroner’s Post-Mortem is not required and there is no other reason preventing the release of the body then it may be released, provided there is a signed Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

The body is taken to the Mortuary as usual and details are entered into the Mortuary Register. If collection of the body is imminent then the body may not need to be placed in refrigeration but may remain decently covered in an appropriate area. If a body is released from the ward, entry into the mortuary register must still occur.

If Cremation is required (highly unlikely in the case of deceased Muslim & Jewish patients) then the Cremation form must be completed before the body is released from the Hospital. (It is a requirement for all doctors completing both parts of the form to view the body and discuss the case in order to complete the necessary forms).

The Mortuary Register is duly completed.

The Consultant in charge and the appropriate Department Manager/Clinical Site Manager should be informed.

Details are recorded in clinical records.

If there is a lack of agreement between relatives as to whether the body is to be released or not then the body **must not be released until there is agreement**. If in doubt discuss with the Consultant pathologist or Coroner and the body should proceed to the mortuary as usual.

Contact Details for Coroner's Office:

Doncaster: 01302 737135

Out of hours, contact is with the Police. Ring 101 and ask for the Force Incident Manager.

Bassetlaw: 0115 8415553

Out of hours numbers are on answer phone message.

Contact Details for Registrar:

Please note a funeral cannot take place without the death having been registered, neither can the body be removed from the country.

Doncaster: 01302 735222 (Monday – Friday 8:45am – 4pm; out of hours - Office Answering Machine). Doncaster Register Office, Civic Office, Waterdale Doncaster DN13BU

Bassetlaw: Nottinghamshire Registration Services 0300 500 8080. Worksop Register Office, Memorial Avenue, Worksop S80 1BP. Retford Register Office, County Council Offices, Chancery lane, Retford DN22 6DG

Contact Details for Muslim Community

(Please note there is no Mosque in the Bassetlaw Area.)

Doncaster Mosque: 01302 368336

Muslim Council of Britain: 0845 2626786

www.mcb.org.uk

Contact Details for Jewish Community

There are very few Jewish residents in Doncaster & Bassetlaw, but we may have to deal with a patient who is travelling and is then admitted. The Jewish Community in Sheffield have staff that are happy to assist as needed.

Orthodox Synagogue: 01142 588855

Reform Jewish Congregation: 07719209259

There is always a member of the chaplaincy team on-call. They may be able to offer support or assistance. To contact the on-call Chaplain, ring either the switchboard at DRI or BH and ask for the on-call chaplain to be paged.

4.10 Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) - (see Appendix 5)

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death must be completed correctly and signed by an appropriate doctor. It may well take time to find an appropriate doctor to undertake this task.

When the Bereavement Offices at DRI and the General Office at BH and MMH are closed, a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Book is available as follows on the Trust sites:

- DRI: In AMU, the Department of Critical Care and ward 26/27.
- BH: Contact the Clinical Site Manager who has access to the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Book held in the General Office
- MMH: The death certificate book is kept in a yellow folder on top of the large grey cabinet near the safe.

4.11 Referral to Her Majesty the Coroner

Doctors are required to electronically refer a death to Her Majesty the Coroner in certain situations. Every computer at Doncaster Royal Infirmary has an ICON for electronic forms, press “legal” and then “report an adult patient death”

At Bassetlaw hospital the link to the form is via the intranet:

- News
- Applications
- Clinical systems
- Reporting a death to the Coroner.

As DBTH crosses over two jurisdictions, we have to comply with the requests of both the Doncaster and Nottingham Coroner, the scenarios for referral differ for both Coroners.

The lists for referral to Doncaster Coroner and Nottingham Coroner can be found at **Appendix 1**.

See **Appendix 6** for reporting death in Accident and Emergency to the Coroner’s office.

4.12 Notifying the deceased’s GP

The bereavement officer at DBTH and the general office staff at BH will inform the GP of a patient’s death as soon as possible and within 3 days of death via either e-mail or fax.

5. TRAINING/SUPPORT

Training sessions are available and are accessed through the Education and Training Department on Consent, Integrated Pathway of Care for the Dying and Breaking Significant News. The latter two may also be accessed directly with the Palliative Care Team.

The Junior Doctors Handbook covers all the medical issues of this policy.

Last Offices training sessions are available for all staff to attend. To book training sessions please contact the Clinical Skills Team on extension 642232. If you are unsure regarding any aspect of performing Last Offices, please contact the palliative care team on extension 644093

at Doncaster Royal Infirmary or 572981 at Bassetlaw Hospital, or the mortuary technicians on extension 642861.

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

6. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT

Failure to follow this policy will be reported via the DATIX adverse incident reporting mechanism. Any member of staff failing to follow this policy will be managed according to Trust policy and this may result in disciplinary action.

The following chart illustrates how compliance with this policy will be monitored.

What is being Monitored	Who will carry out the Monitoring	How often	How Reviewed/ Where Reported to
Patient ID on arrival to Mortuary	Mortuary staff	ongoing	Reported via Datix
Preparation of Body prior to leaving ward/department	Registered nurse	ongoing	Reported via Datix
Correct completion of Notification of death form	Mortuary staff	ongoing	Reported via Datix
Staff trained for transportation of deceased	Service Dept.	annually	Training and competency records

7. DEFINITIONS

Family - applies to all family, relatives, next of Kin and close friends who are part of the identified extended family.

Brought in Dead (BID) - refers to those individuals who are already deceased on arrival at the hospital. This usually relates to individuals brought in by emergency ambulance

Last Offices - is the procedure undertaken by staff (predominately nursing) to prepare the body for transfer from the ward/department to the mortuary.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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 9**).

9. ASSOCIATED TRUST PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS

Interpretation and Translation Services Policy - PAT/PA 34
 Patient Identification Policy – PAT/PS 7
 Concordat for the care of prisoners admitted to DBTH - PAT/PA 10
 Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions Policy - PAT/IC 19
 Pathology Specimens – Collection and Handling of Pathology Specimens - PAT/IC 11
 Safe and Secure handling of Medicines Policy (Part A) - PAT/MM 1 A
 Serious Incidents (SI) Policy – CORP/RISK 15
 Inquest Policy - CORP/RISK 22
 Learning from Deaths Policy - CORP/RISK 32
 Manual Handling Policy - CORP/HSFS 4
 Adult Organ Donation Policy, Departments of Critical Care – PAT/PA 8
 Equality Analysis Policy - CORP/EMP 27
 Fair Treatment For All Policy - CORP/EMP 4
 Patient Property and Valuables - PAT/PA 12
 Guidelines for the Management of Patients who are End of Life - PAT/T 65
 Rapid Response to Unexpected Child Deaths and Child Deaths Function - Standard Operating Procedure – PAT/T 62
 Consent to Examination or Treatment Policy – PAT/T 2
 MSG121 Guidelines for Management of Maternal Death

10. REFERENCES

MBRRACE-UK Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care - Lessons learned to inform maternity care from the UK and Ireland Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths and Morbidity 2013–15 December 2017
 A Code of Practice for the Diagnosis and Confirmation of Death, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (2008)
 Human Tissue Act 2004
 Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
 National Audit of Care at End of Life (NACEL) 2018
 Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government 2006 & 2010).
 National Assistance Act 1948

APPENDIX 1 – WHEN TO REFER TO HM CORONER***When to Refer to HM Coroner *see policy CORP/RISK 22****Patients who die at Doncaster Royal Infirmary & Mexborough Montagu**

A death must be referred to Doncaster Coroner in the following circumstances:

1. The cause of death is unknown;
2. It cannot readily be certified as being due to natural causes;
3. The deceased was not attended by the doctor during his last illness or was not seen within 14 days or viewed after death;
4. There are any suspicious circumstances or history of violence;
5. The death may be linked to an accident (whenever it occurred);
6. There is any question of self-neglect or neglect by others;
7. The death has occurred or the illness arisen during or shortly after detention in police or prison custody (including voluntary attendance at a police station);
8. The deceased was detained under the Mental Health Act
9. The death is linked with an abortion;
10. The death might have been contributed to by the actions of the deceased (such as a history of drug or solvent abuse, self-injury or overdose);
11. The death could be due to industrial disease or related in any way to the deceased employment;
12. The death occurred during an operation or before full recovery from the effects of an anaesthetic or was in any way related to the anaesthetic (in any event a death within 24 hours should normally be referred);

13. The death may be related to a medical procedure or treatment whether invasive or not;
14. The death may be due to lack of medical care;
15. There are any other unusual or disturbing features to the case;
16. The death occurs within 24 hours of admission to hospital (unless the admission was purely for terminal care);
17. It may be wise to report any death where there is an allegation of medical mismanagement.

This note is for guidance only, it is not exhaustive and in part may represent desired local practice rather than the statutory requirements. If in any doubt, contact the Coroner's Office for further advice.

Patients who die at Bassetlaw Hospital

BASSETLAW HOSPITAL ONLY

A death must be referred to the **Nottinghamshire Coroner** in the following circumstances (updated September 2014):

- The cause of death is not known
- Deceased had not been seen by a medical practitioner within 14 days prior to death
- Deceased had not been seen alive by certifying doctor
- Cause of death may be due to trauma or unnatural cause e.g. Road Traffic accident, apparent taking of own life, poisoning, self-harm, fracture, evidence of violence.
- Cause of death may be related to an industrial disease e.g. pneumoconiosis if the deceased was a miner, mesothelioma if the deceased had been exposed to asbestos, farmer's lung or the deceased had died due to an injury sustained in employment (Please refer to the reverse of the death certificate to see a comprehensive list.)
- Patient had been in hospital for less than 24 hours.
- Cause of death is due to a fall or there has been a fall in the three days prior to death.
- At time of death, a grade 3 or grade 4 pressure sore is present or more than one grade 2 pressure sores are present.
- Surgery or invasive procedure involving general or local anaesthetic performed within the preceding 12 months (including endoscopies).
- Significant medical procedure or treatment (inc chemotherapy or radiotherapy) during index admission.
- Person deprived of their liberty or liberty was restricted by law at the time of death, in seven days preceding death, including a serving prisoner or a person detained pursuant to Mental Health legislation.
- Alcohol or any prescribed or non-prescribed drug is mentioned as contributing to the cause of death in part 1 of the death certificate
- Death during pregnancy or within a year of giving birth.
- All deaths that would be referred to the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) i.e. all paediatric deaths.

- Allegations of negligence during or prior to admission regardless of whether these are considered to be substantiated.
- Death associated with (or after) a clinical incident.
- If the patient is under the age of 80 and Old Age is given as the sole cause of death then you must report the death to the Coroner (please see note below)
- Any other unusual circumstances.
- If there is no apparent indication to refer to the Coroner but a significant and unresolved complaint has been received relating to patient care the Consultant in charge must consider if Coroner referral is required.

If there is any doubt about whether a Coroner's referral is required, the first point of contact should be the Consultant in charge of the care. The Consultant has the ultimate responsibility for decisions on referral.

Deaths certified as Old Age

Please note that to give old age as a cause of death without referring to the Coroner you must:

- a. Have personally cared for the deceased over a long period of time
- b. Have observed a gradual decline in the patients general health and functioning
- c. Not be aware of any identifiable disease or injury that contributed to the death.
- d. Be certain that there is no reason that the death should be referred to the Coroner

APPENDIX 2 – CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS VARIATIONS

Cultural/Religious Variations:

This section provides some general guidance only in relation to specific requirements that may need to be undertaken following death. However, it is not inclusive and it is therefore important to seek family views as individuals may have different preferences regardless of religion/culture.

For further advice, please contact a member of the chaplaincy team via switchboard. Please follow the Human Tissues Act 2004 guidance for organ/tissue donation.

Baha'i faith: Cremation not permitted, burial should take place as near as possible to place of death. Baha'i relatives will wish to say prayers for dead. Routine last offices are acceptable.

Buddhism: Consider dying is a very important part of life and that it should be approached positively and in as clear and conscious state of mind as possible. Routine last offices are acceptable; however, the body should not be moved for at least one hour if prayers are to be said. Cremation preferred.

Chinese: Customs vary very widely in the Chinese tradition; therefore, it is difficult to speak for all Chinese. Mostly for adults, the body is bathed, and sometimes the body is dressed in white or old-fashioned clothing.

Christianity: Offer support of appropriate chaplain.

Roman Catholic patients should be offered visit by priest to give Sacrament of Sick when dying, and may wish to have a rosary or crucifix in their hand. Church of England and members of other churches may also wish to have prayers said both in the last stages of the patient's illness and after death.

Christian Scientists: Worship is kept free from ritual. Routine last offices are appropriate. Female staff should handle a female body. Cremation preferred, prefer to not have post-mortem unless required by law.

Hinduism: Post-mortems disliked unless required by law. Consult the family by asking whether they wish to perform last offices, as distress could be caused if non-Hindus touch the body. If family are not available, wear disposable gloves, close the eyes and straighten the limbs of the deceased. Do not remove jewellery, religious objects or sacred threads. Do not wash the body, as this is part of funeral rites and will usually be carried out by relatives using Ganges water. Wrap the body in a clean sheet. Body is cremated.

Jainism: Prefer no post-mortem unless required by law. Prayers are offered for soul of dying patient. Presence of a Jain Spiritual Caregiver is preferred. Family may wish to assist with Last Offices. Body is cremated.

Jehovah's Witnesses: No objection to post-mortem. No special practices for the dying, but will appreciate a pastoral visit from one of their elders. Routine Last Offices are appropriate. May be buried or cremated.

Judaism: Prefer no post-mortem unless required by law. Cremation is forbidden. Dying person should not be left alone, may wish to hear special psalms and prayers, can be said by a relative or Rabbi. Patients must not be washed and should remain in the clothes in which they died. The body will be washed in a ritual purification. It is important that the body is released to family as soon as possible.

Mormon: Do not object to post-mortem. No rituals for dying, however spiritual contact is important. Routine last offices appropriate, if wearing a sacred undergarment must be replaced on body following last offices. Burial is preferred.

Muslim: Prefer no post-mortem unless required by law. Patients may wish to face Mecca (South East). Family/friends may sit with patient reading the Holy Quran and making supplication. At death do not wash the body. Where no relatives are available, staff should wear gloves to avoid direct contact with the body. The body should face Mecca and the head should be turned towards the right shoulder before rigor mortis begins. The body can be made respectable by combing hair and straightening limbs, however the family will ritually wash the body before burial. The body of a female should be prepared by a female member of staff and vice versa for a male body. It is important to bury a body as quickly as possible.

Plymouth Brethren: As death approaches family may wish to keep a 24 hour vigil. After death the family may wish to attend to Last Offices themselves. Prefer no post-mortem unless required by law.

Quakers: Do not object to post-mortem. No special rules or practices for the dying, will appreciate a visit from an Elder or other Quakers who may sit in silent worship.

Rastafarianism: Post-mortem is extremely distasteful to most Rastafarians, unless required by law. Routine last offices appropriate. Burial preferred.

Romany origin: Many people of Romany origin are Christians. If a traveller is dying, family/friends from around the country will wish to visit before death, meaning that there will

often be many visitors. After death, the family will request that the person be laid out in clothing of their choice.

Sikhism: No objection to post-mortem, however prefer not to if possible. Sikh men wear the five K's: kesh (long hair kept under a turban), kangha (a small comb worn in the hair), kara (steel bracelet or ring worn on right wrist), kachha (special type of underwear) and kirpaan (sword worn symbolically by baptised Sikhs). After death routine last offices may be performed, but the 5 K's should not be removed. Body is cremated.

Zoroastrian/Parsis: No religious objection to post-mortem. Routine last offices are appropriate. Believe it necessary to commence prayers as soon as possible after death. No preference for burial or cremation.

APPENDIX 3 – BIOHAZARD GUIDANCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF KNOWN OR SUSPECTED INFECTIONS WHICH NEED PRECAUTIONS AFTER DEATH

Biohazard guidance on the management of known or suspected infections which need precautions after death

Infection / condition	Body bag	Viewing	Hygienic preparation	Embalming
Intestinal infections: transmitted by hand-to-mouth contact with faecal material				
Dysentery	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Typhoid / paratyphoid fever	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cholera	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Profuse diarrhoea / food poisoning	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hepatitis A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Blood borne infections: transmitted by contact with blood via skin-penetrating injury or broken skin or splashes to eyes, nose and mouth				
Hepatitis B and C	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
HIV	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Intravenous drug user	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Respiratory infections: transmitted by breathing in infectious respiratory discharges				
Tuberculosis	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meningococcal meningitis/ septicaemia	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meningitis (non-meningococcal)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diphtheria	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contact: transmitted by direct skin contact				
Invasive group A streptococcal infection	Yes	Yes	No	No
MRSA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Other infections:				
Viral haemorrhagic fevers e.g. Lassa fever, Ebola	Yes	No	No	No
Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies e.g. CJD/vCJD	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Anthrax	Yes	No	No	No
Plague	Yes	No	No	No
Rabies	Yes	No	No	No
Relapsing fever	Adv	Yes	Yes	Yes

Adv = Advisable and may be required by local health regulations

* Requires particular care during embalming

See also:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1200660061555

HSE. Controlling the risks of infection at work from human remains

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1200660055420 SS Bakhshi. Code of practice for funeral workers: managing infection risk and body bagging. *Commun Dis Public Health* 2001; 4: 283-7

Definitions:

Body Bag: placing the body in a plastic body bag.

Viewing: allowing the bereaved to see, touch and spend time with the body before disposal.

Embalming: injecting chemical preservatives into the body to slow the process of decay.

Cosmetic work may be included.

Hygienic preparation: cleaning and tidying the body so that it presents a suitable appearance for viewing (an alternative to embalming).

Other situations in which a body bag should be used:

- Known intravenous drug user
- Severe secondary infection
- Gangrenous limbs/infected amputation sites
- Large pressure sores (e.g. grade 4)
- If body fluid leakage present e.g. coagulation disorder

Always consider the people who will be handling the body after it leaves the ward. Document any infectious disease on the notification of death form to allow mortuary staff to communicate this to funeral directors.

APPENDIX 4 – LAST OFFICES PROCEDURES

Last Offices Procedures

Ensure adequate time, privacy and dignity whilst performing last offices.

- Identity must be confirmed by two persons one of whom must be a registered nurse/midwife/allied health professional.
- If not previously documented, wherever possible determine from the family or carers, the patient's previous wishes for care after death.
- Wash hands and put on disposable gloves and plastic apron.
- Lay the patient on their back, straightening the limbs. Remove all but one pillow. Support the jaw by placing a pillow or rolled up towel on the chest or underneath the jaw. Do not bind the patient's jaw with bandages, as this can leave pressure marks on the face which can be difficult to remove. However, if the body cannot be straightened, force must not be used as this can be corrected by the funeral director.
- Close the patient's eyes by applying light pressure to the eyelids for 30 seconds. If this is unsuccessful then tape such as "Micropore" can be used, which leaves no mark. Alternatively, moistened cotton wool may be used to hold the eyelids in place.
- Remove all mechanical aids, syringe drivers, heel pads, etc from the patient's body.
- Remove all tubes, drains, cannulae etc, unless the coroner is likely to be informed of the death – see section 4.2.1. Central Lines and other intravenous lines that need to be left in situ must be covered with a waterproof dressing. A record must be kept in the patient's notes of any devices left remaining.
- Stoma bags must always be left in situ. However, a clean stoma bag must be used.
- Drain the bladder by applying firm pressure over the lower abdomen. Have a disposable receptacle at the ready to collect urine.
- The mouth, nose and pharynx should be packed with cotton wool. This should not protrude from the mouth and nose. Leakages from the vagina and bowel can be contained by the use of suctioning, drainage and incontinence pads respectively.
- Exuding wounds or unhealed surgical scars should be covered with a clean absorbent dressing and secured with an occlusive dressing. Stitches and clips should be left in situ.

- Wash the patient unless requested not to do so for religious/cultural reasons or carers preference. Male patients should be shaved unless they chose to wear a beard in life. Apply a water based emollient cream to the face after shaving. It may be important to the family/carer to assist with washing.
- Clean the patient's mouth using a foam stick to remove debris and secretions. Clean dentures and replace them in the mouth if possible. If this is not possible, send the dentures to the Mortuary with the body and document this on the death notification form.
- In line with the Policy on the Safe Keeping of Patients Property and Valuables (PAT/PA 12), all jewellery must be removed other than the following items:
 - Wedding Ring
 - Jewellery worn for cultural/religious reasons (See **Appendix 2** for cultural variations). This must be performed in the presence of a registered nurse/midwife/allied health professional
- Jewellery left on the patient must be clearly documented on the "notification of death" form in line with the Policy on the Safe Keeping of Patients Property and Valuables (PAT/PA 12). Rings left on the body must be secured with tape if loose.
- Dress the patient in personal clothing or shroud, depending on relatives/carer's wishes. If a post-mortem is to be undertaken the patient should be dressed in a shroud.
- The above procedures should be carried out, if possible before the relatives are invited to view/spend time with the patient on the ward.
- Patient identification labels must be attached to **both** the wrist and ankle – see section 4.1 and Patient Identification Policy (PAT/PS7).
- Loosely wrap the patient in a clean sheet to allow access to the patient's limb bearing the ID band.

The deceased must not be released from the ward for transfer to the Mortuary until the specified identification checks have been undertaken and correct identity confirmed.

- Once identification has been confirmed, the sheet can then be secured ensuring that the face and feet are covered and that all limbs are held securely in position.
- Secure the sheet with tape.
- Place the patient in the body bag if appropriate. A body bag should only be used in situations where an infection hazard has been identified (see **Appendix 3** - Biohazard guidance on the management of known or suspected infections which need

precautions after death) ensuring that the zip fastenings close at the head end of the body

- Tape the “Notification of Death of a patient” form on the outside of the sheet or body bag.
- If the patient is a danger of infection risk, then use the ‘Danger of Infection’ sticker (Collection & Handling of Pathology Specimens (PAT/IC 11.)) and apply to the outside of the body bag.
- The service assistants and mortuary staff must be informed that the body is a known infection risk. Details of actual diagnosis must not be given for reasons of confidentiality.
- Remove gloves and apron and dispose of equipment in accordance with Trust policy (Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions Policy (PAT/IC 19)). Wash hands thoroughly.
- The ‘Notification of the death of a patient’ form must be completed for all deceased patients by the registered nurse/midwife or doctor verifying the death in consultation with the ward nursing staff. The mortuary staff will inform the funeral directors of any infection control hazards associated with the body.
- At the time of transfer to the Mortuary, it is the responsibility of a registered nurse/midwife to confirm with the service assistant transferring the deceased that the deceased’s identity is correct. The registered nurse/midwife will check with the service assistant that the information contained on the ID band matches the deceased’s records and notification of death form. The registered nurse/midwife and the service assistant will both sign the notification of death form confirming that this check has been undertaken and that the details are correct.
- The notification of death form WPR 17044 must be put at the front of the notes prior to transfer of the notes to the bereavement office:
- It is the ward staff responsibility to identify the next of kin and their contact details.

APPENDIX 5 –COMPLETION OF MEDICAL CAUSE OF DEATH CERTIFICATE (MCCD) GUIDANCE

Completion of Medical Cause of Death Certificate (MCCD) Guidance

- You are required to complete a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, stating the cause of death to the best of your knowledge and belief, if you attended the deceased during his/her last illness. You must not complete the certificate if you did not attend the deceased during his/her last illness (e.g. patient brought in after attempted resuscitation was commenced in the community).
- There are 3 types of death certificate:
 1. Medical Certificate of Stillbirth (after 24 weeks of pregnancy).
 2. Medical Certificate of Cause of Death of a live-born child dying within the first 28 days of life.
 3. Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (any other death).

*See **Appendix 1** for when a death should be referred to the Coroner

It is advisable to discuss the cause of death with the senior staff of your clinical team especially if you are in any doubt as to whether a death should be reported.

You must discuss the cause of death with your consultant before completing the MCCD.

Document all discussions clearly/legibly in the medical notes and date them.

In certain circumstances, a hospital post-mortem may be deemed appropriate, especially where a cause of death is known but more detailed information may be helpful e.g. in deaths from Metastatic Cancer from unknown primary.

Cause of Death Statement

- **Part 1**

On the first line, state the disease or condition leading directly to the death (Part 1a). On subsequent lines, complete the sequence of disease(s) or condition(s) leading to death as given in 1a – these must be directly related i.e., 1c should lead to 1b which should lead to 1a.

The disease or condition directly leading to death and the Underlying Cause of Death may be the same. In this case you need complete only the first line of Part 1 – 1a.

- **Part 2**

If there is some significant condition or disease that contributed to the death but which is not part of any sequence leading directly to death, e.g. diabetes mellitus that is difficult to control in a patient with disseminated malignancy, you should record it in Part 2.

Do not state a mode of dying, e.g. 'coma', 'organ failure', 'cardiac or respiratory arrest', 'cachexia', 'debility', 'uraemia', 'shock', unless you also specify the disease or condition which preceded it, otherwise the Registrar will report the death to the Coroner as 'cause of death unknown'. It is advisable to discuss the wording of the cause of death with senior medical staff of your team. The bereavement officers who are used to seeing death certificates may also be able to help.

Do not use abbreviations (e.g., CCF, COPD) or medical symbols.

Do avoid the use of 'old age' or 'senility' as causes of death UNLESS there is no other significant illness that can be related to the death, death is not reportable to the HMC, and the deceased is > 80 years of age

- **CREMATION FORMS**

The junior doctor (usually the doctor who completed the death certificate) will be contacted by the mortuary or the bereavement officer (at DRI) and the General Office at Bassetlaw Hospital, to complete the first part of the cremation form (called Form 4). The second part (Form 5) is completed by another doctor who will need to speak to you and at least one additional member of the team caring for the patient in their last illness – so relevant names of involved team members must be provided.

When you complete a cremation form, you must view the body after death.

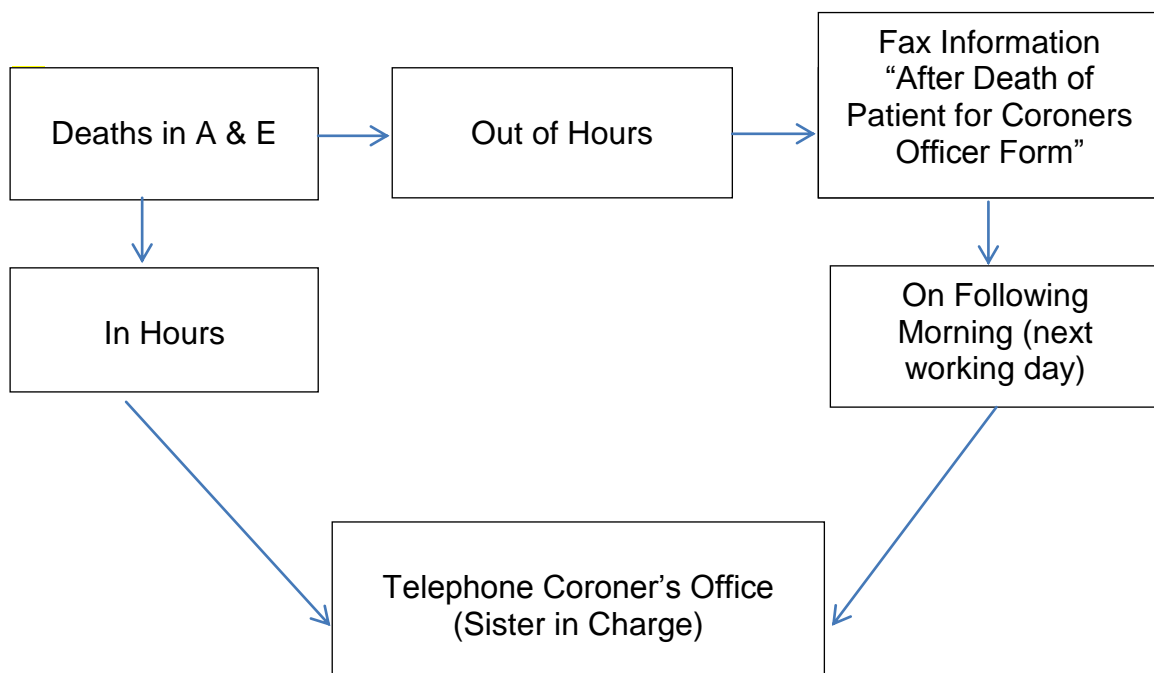
You must confirm with a senior member of the team that there is no indication for a post-mortem before you complete the first part of the Cremation form. It is a legal requirement for the doctor completing Form 5 of the form, to speak to the doctor completing Form 4 before the form is completed – so provide your contact details, details of leave and night duties.

If you anticipate being unavailable, consider requesting another team member to complete the form.

Payment for completion of the forms is a private transaction between the Funeral Director and the doctor (non NHS). The mortuary technician will accept payment on behalf of the doctor and will forward on the payment to the doctor.

APPENDIX 6 – REPORTING DEATHS IN ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY TO THE CORONERS OFFICE

Reporting Deaths in Accident and Emergency
to the Coroners Office



APPENDIX 7 – DEATH OF A PATIENT WITHOUT LEGAL NEXT-OF-KIN OR FINANCIAL MEANS TO PAY FOR THEIR FUNERAL

DEATH OF A PATIENT WITHOUT LEGAL NEXT-OF-KIN OR FINANCIAL MEANS TO PAY FOR THEIR FUNERAL

When a patient dies within Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust without:

- (1) a legal Next-of-Kin who agrees to bear the financial cost of arranging a funeral for their deceased relative
- (2) the personal financial means to pay for their funeral

responsibility for arranging the funeral of the deceased lies with the Local Authority within which the deceased has died subject to Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 ⁽¹⁾.

In the event of a patient dying within the hospitals of the Trust, it is the responsibility of the Bereavement Services Office at Doncaster Royal Infirmary, and the General Office at Hospital and Montagu Hospital to contact the designated Local Authority Funeral Officer to inform them of the patient's death and arrange for them to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and Cremation Form 4 (Medical Certificate).

These statutory forms are required to be signed by a registered medical practitioner attending the last episode of care for the patient within 48 hours of the patient's death.

⁽¹⁾ Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984

Disposal of Dead Bodies

46 Burial and Cremation.

⁽¹⁾ It shall be the duty of a local authority to cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the authority that not suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority.

⁽²⁾ Any council which is the local authority for the purposes of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 may cause to be buried or cremated the body of any deceased person who

immediately before his death was being provided with accommodation under Part III of the National Assistance Act 1948 by, or by arrangement with, the council or was living in a hostel provided by the council under section 29 of that Act.

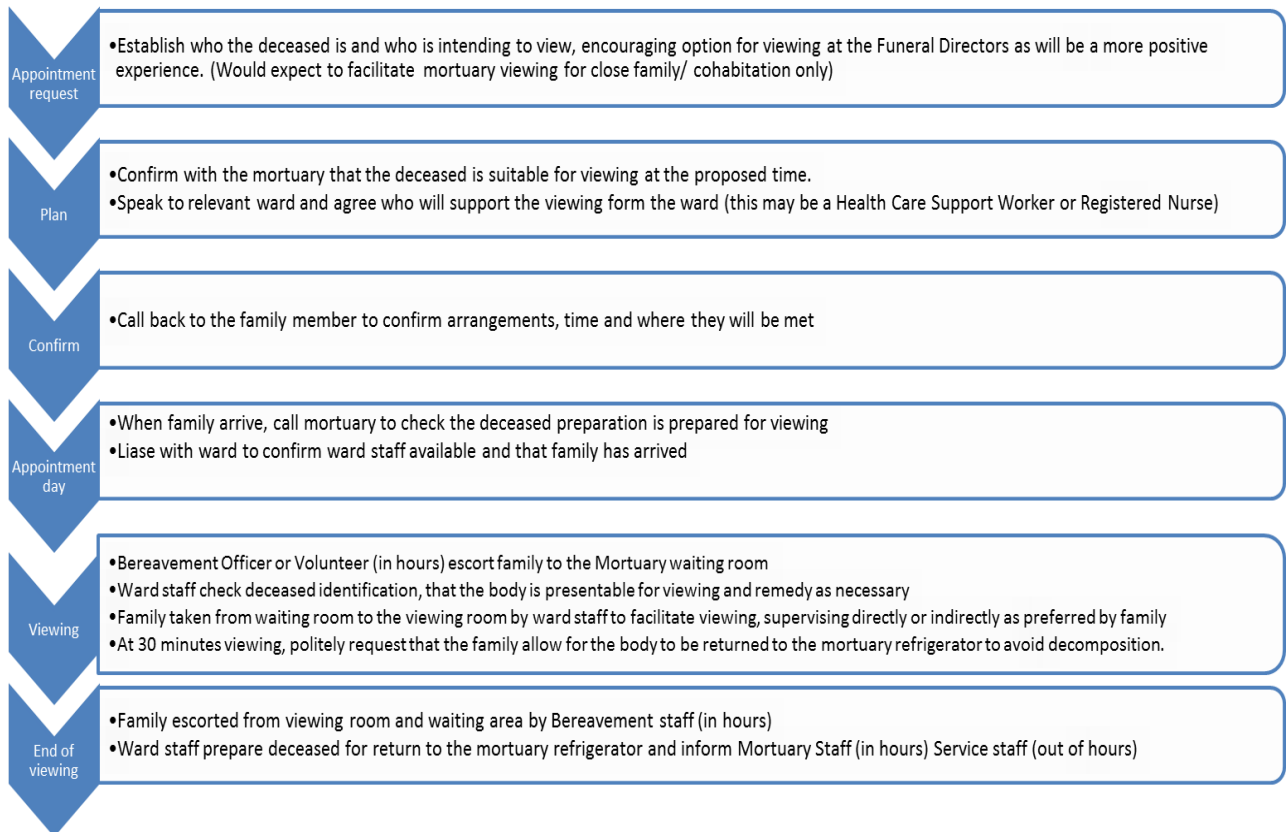
⁽³⁾ An authority shall not cause a body to be cremated under subsection ⁽¹⁾ or ⁽²⁾ above where they have reason to believe that cremation would be contrary to the wishes of the deceased.

⁽⁴⁾ Subsections ⁽¹⁾ and ⁽²⁾ above do not affect any enactment regulating or authorising the burial, cremation or anatomical examination of the body of a deceased person.

⁽⁵⁾ An authority may recover from the estate of the deceased person or from any person who for the purposes of the National Assistance Act 1948 was liable to maintain the deceased person immediately before his death expenses incurred under subsection ⁽¹⁾ or subsection ⁽²⁾ above.

⁽⁶⁾ Without prejudice to any other method of recovery, a sum due to an authority under subsection ⁽⁵⁾ above is recoverable summarily as a civil debt by proceedings brought within three years after the sum becomes due.

APPENDIX 8 – FLOWCHART FOR VIEWINGS AT DRI



APPENDIX 9 – 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
PAT/T 60 v.2	Corporate	Mandy Dalton	Existing	July 2018
1) Who is responsible for this policy? Name of Care Group/Directorate: Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Quality				
2) Describe the purpose of the service / function / policy / project/ strategy? Who is it intended to benefit? What are the intended outcomes? Trust-wide policy to be followed by all members of staff who contribute to the care of patients after death.				
3) Are there any associated objectives? Legislation, targets national expectation, standards – National Guidance				
4) What factors contribute or detract from achieving intended outcomes? Nil				
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 [e.g. Monitoring, consultation] 				
6) Is there any scope for new measures which would promote equality? [any actions to be taken – no				
7) Are any of the following groups adversely affected by the policy? - no				
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			
8) Provide the Equality Rating of the service / function /policy / project / strategy – tick (✓) outcome box				
Outcome 1 ✓	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	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 in Appendix 4</i>				
Date for next review: July 2021				
Checked by: Moira Hardy			Date: July 2018	