

Organising Hospital Contract Funerals for Deceased Adult Patients

Policy and Procedures

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REVIEW DATES AND DETAILS OF CHANGES MADE DURING THE REVIEW

- References to the “Head of Chaplaincy and Bereavement Services” have been updated to “Head of Learning from Deaths”
- References to the “Chief Nurse” have been updated to “Medical Director”
- 7 – Policy Monitoring Table updated
- Appendix One – 4(1) and 4(2) 4(5) updated to current process
- Appendix Two 2(1) 2(3) 2(4) 2(5) updated to current process
- Appendix Three 2(1) 2(2) 2(3) 2(4) updated to current process
- Appendix Four 2(1) burial added

Key Words:

Next of Kin, Funeral, Intestate, Pauper’s Funeral, No Will, No Family

1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1.1 This document sets out the University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust Policy for Bereavement Services for organising funerals for deceased adult patients.
- 1.2 In line with the NHS Management Executive (1992, 1997), Treasury Solicitor Guidelines (2009) and Section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act (1984), hospitals have a statutory obligation to arrange a funeral for patients who die in hospital if no-one else is prepared to make the arrangements because:
 - a) Relatives cannot be traced, or
 - b) Relatives cannot afford to pay for the funeral and/or do not qualify for Social Fund Funeral Payments, or
 - c) Relatives are unwilling to take responsibility for the funeral arrangements.
- 1.3 This policy sets out the policy and procedures for:
 - a) Deciding in what circumstances a Hospital Funeral is appropriate.
 - b) Outlining the procedures for organising a Hospital Funeral.

2 POLICY SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to adult patients with no known next of kin who die on any ward or department (including the Emergency Department) in UHL or where relatives cannot afford to pay for the funeral and/or do not qualify for Social Fund Funeral Payments, or where relatives are unwilling to take responsibility for the funeral arrangements. The policy for arranging a hospital funeral is the same whether the estate of the deceased is solvent or insolvent.
- 2.2 This policy and procedures apply to all staff employed by UHL (including bank, agency and those on honorary contracts).

3 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

3.1 Hospital Funeral

A Hospital Funeral is one which the hospital is organising and paying for (in the first instance as funds may later be reclaimed - see 9.4).

3.2 Next of Kin

For the purposes of this policy this refers to a blood relative or a person nominated by the patient to act as Next of Kin.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The Executive lead for this policy is the Medical Director, delegated to the Head of Learning from Deaths who will oversee the implementation and compliance of this policy and for monitoring overall compliance with the Policy and liaising with Internal Audit or Counter Fraud Services.

4.2 Head of Learning from Deaths is responsible for:

- Monitoring and auditing compliance with this policy and procedures on an annual basis as detailed in section 7.
- Ensuring that the Senior Bereavement Services Officer / Bereavement Services Officers have the appropriate skills and training to organise hospital funerals in accordance with the Policy.
- Reviewing the Policy at regular intervals, no more than three years apart (or earlier in response to changes in Treasury Solicitors guidelines). The policy will also be reviewed

in conjunction with Internal Audit or Counter Fraud Services and the Head of Legal Services where appropriate.

4.3 Senior Bereavement Services Officer is responsible for:

- Overseeing the arrangement of hospital funerals in accordance with the policy.

4.4 Bereavement Services staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to the procedures within this policy.

4.5 Trust Chaplains

- Being available to conduct Hospital Funerals as requested by Bereavement Services.
- To contact any relatives, friends or others who knew the deceased as recommended by Bereavement Services
- To lead a funeral that is personal to the deceased.

5 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

5.1 Staff must follow the following procedures for arranging Hospital Funerals as set out in the text and appendices of this Policy to ensure the following:

- a) Confirmation that the deceased patient has no known next of kin or where next of kin refuse to make funeral arrangements (appendix one)
- b) Completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and Cremation Forms by the appropriate doctors (appendix two)
- c) Completion of Statutory Paperwork for the local authority for Cremation / Burial (appendix three)
- d) A quality service in accordance with the contractual requirements is provided by the Trust's contracted Funeral Director (appendix four)

6 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1 The policy will be incorporated into staff induction programme for Bereavement Services.

7 PROCESS FOR MONITORING COMPLIANCE

Policy Monitoring Table

Element to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting arrangements
Feedback from families or those attending Hospital Contract Funerals	Senior Bereavement Services Officer	Feedback from mourners following funerals and reports to the BS office or Funeral Directors	Per funeral	Feedback will be collated by the Senior Bereavement Services Officer and reported to Head of Learning from Deaths
Monitoring of Number of Hospital Contract Funerals	Senior Bereavement Services Officer	Statistics generated by BS Database	Monthly	Senior Bereavement Services Officer to report to Head of Learning from Deaths

Element to be monitored	Lead	Tool	Frequency	Reporting arrangements
To audit all hospital funeral arrangements to ensure compliance of Bereavement Services staff with the policy and to confirm that any funeral costs incurred by the Trust or next of kin are kept to a minimum.	Senior Bereavement Services Officer or (Head of Learning from Deaths in their absence)	Bereavement Services Database Hospital Funeral Closure Statements	Monthly or as funeral cases are closed on the Bereavement Services Database.	Senior Bereavement Services Officer to report to Head of Learning from Deaths
Monitor compliance with the policy and the Bereavement Services Database	Internal Audit	Audit tool	Annual basis or at regular intervals determined by Internal Audit	Audit report will be sent to the Audit Committee / Chief Financial Officer

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Trust recognises the diversity of the local community it serves. Our aim therefore is to provide a safe environment free from discrimination and treat all individuals fairly with dignity and appropriately according to their needs.

As part of its development, this policy and its impact on equality have been reviewed and no detriment was identified.

9 SUPPORTING REFERENCES, EVIDENCE BASE AND RELATED POLICIES

- 9.1 NHS Management Executive HSG (1992) - Patients who die in hospital - Guidance on patients who die in hospital.
- 9.2 NHS Management Executive HSG (1997) - Patients who die in hospital – Guidance on minimum standards for funerals of patients who die in hospital where the NHS Trust takes responsibility.
- 9.3 Treasury Solicitors (2008) - Referring cases to the Treasury Solicitor (BV): A guide for local authorities and hospitals.
- 9.4 UHL Policy for Recouping the Costs of Hospital Funerals from the Estates of Deceased Patients (B12/2010).

10 PROCESS FOR VERSION CONTROL, DOCUMENT ARCHIVING AND REVIEW

- 10.1 Once this Policy has been approved by the UHL P&G Committee, Trust Administration will allocate the appropriate Trust Reference number for version control purposes.
- 10.2 The updated version of the Policy will then be uploaded and available through INsite Documents and the Trust's externally-accessible Freedom of Information publication scheme. It will be archived through the Trusts SharePoint system
- 10.3 This Policy will be reviewed every three years and it is the responsibility of the Policy and Guideline Committee to commission the review

Confirmation that the Deceased Patient has no known next of kin or where next of kin refuse to make funeral arrangements

1. Introduction / Scope	
1	This procedure is to be followed by all Bereavement Services Staff involved in organising Hospital Contract Funerals for deceased adult patients
2. Confirming whether the deceased patient has any next of kin	
1	Before arrangements for a hospital funeral can commence, confirmation of whether or not the deceased has any next of kin is required.
2	The UHL Notification of Death Form (NDF) that is completed by ward staff following a patient's death must confirm details of next of kin and be sent to Bereavement Services with the patient's notes and property.
3	<p>If the NDF indicates that there is no next of kin and no family or friends of the deceased has contacted the Bereavement Services after 5 working days, investigations will begin in order to trace the deceased next of kin (or other family or friends) by the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Bereavement Services will read and check through the medical notes for any relevant information regarding contact. Staff may need to request "old" case notes just in-case different information has been previously recorded. b) Bereavement Services will check with the Ward staff if the deceased had any visitors or talked about their next of kin. c) Bereavement Services will contact anyone (usually friends / neighbours) listed in the notes to seek more information. For example, next of kin details, place of birth, occupation, or did the deceased discuss making a Will? d) Bereavement Services will contact any other agency who may hold information. For example, Residential/nursing home, GP surgery, Housing Officer, Council Finance Officers, Social Workers. e) If next of kin have not contacted Bereavement Services after 14 working days, a property search may be undertaken in line with the UHL Policy and Procedures for Staff from Bereavement Services to Undertake Property Searches following the Death of an Adult Patient in Hospital (B10/2010).
4	Any information discovered in relation to the next of kin must be recorded in the Bereavement Services Database.
3. Performing a Property Search	
1	If enquiries do not lead to identifying any next of kin, Bereavement Services may arrange a property search of the deceased's home if appropriate according to the UHL Policy and Procedures for Staff from Bereavement Services to Undertake Property Searches Following the Death of an Adult Patient in Hospital (B10/2010). This is in order to find any personal papers (eg a will) or details of any family or friends.

4. Evidence of a Last Will and Testament or Next of Kin found

1	If during the property search a 'Last Will and Testament' is found the Bereavement Services must contact the solicitor or the Executors to advise them of the death. Bereavement Services will obtain the executors details and add to the BS database, their details will be emailed to the 'Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages' to enable registration. An appointment can be made for the Executor (by Bereavement Services) to collect any patient's property from the site where the death occurred. The funeral will then be organised by the Executors.
2	If next of kin details are found, Bereavement Services will attempt to contact them to inform them of the death. If contact is made and the NOK is willing to organise the funeral, Bereavement Services will confirm the NOK details and add to the BS database, their details will be emailed to the 'Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages' to enable registration. An appointment can be made for the NOK (by Bereavement Services) to collect any patient's property from the site where the death occurred.
3	If the next of kin refuse to take responsibility for the funeral arrangements the Trust will arrange and pay for the funeral. However, the next of kin must be advised that all costs incurred by the Trust, plus an administration fee will be claimed from the deceased's estate in accordance with the UHL Policy for Recouping the Costs of Hospital Funerals from the Estates of Deceased Patients (B12/2010).
4	If it has been confirmed that there are monies in the estate, a Bereavement Services Trust disclaimer must be signed by the next of kin, confirming that they will repay the Trust the funeral costs and an administration fee (see appendix five). This will be done before the funeral is arranged.
5	If the disclaimer form is not signed by the next of kin, a letter from the Senior Bereavement Services Office (Head of Learning from Deaths in their absence) may be sent to the next of kin advising them of the liability of the deceased's estate, so that the funeral can be arranged.

5. No Evidence of a Will or Next of Kin

1	If there is no next of kin and no will (or the next of kin have not contacted the Trust) the Trust will arrange the funeral. A cremation will be arranged unless there is clear evidence that the deceased expressed the wish to be buried. However, even when a will states the wishes of the deceased for a burial or cremation, the person(s) arranging the funeral may vary the means of disposal taking into account other factors.
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Registering the Death

1. Introduction / Scope	
1	This procedure is to be followed by all Bereavement Services Staff involved in organising Hospital Contract Funerals for deceased adult patients
2. Registering the death ¹	
1	Once it has been confirmed that the Trust will be arranging the funeral, BS staff will advise the Register Office (Nominated Officer) via email, that registration will be completed by a member of the BS office. The Nominated Officer will contact the BS office by phone and book an appointment to attend the Register Office to register the death.
2	The member of staff from Bereavement Services, who is registering the death, must not give the registrar their home address for inclusion on the death certificate. The address that must be given is the Bereavement Services Office at GH, LGH or LRI.
3	One 'Certified Copy of the Cause of Death' can be purchased from the Registrar if it is known that the deceased had funds and can be claimed towards the cost of the funeral. A receipt must be obtained so that this fee can be reclaimed from the Trust.
4	A 'green form' (Certificate for Burial or Cremation) and a 'Tell us Once' information sheet, containing a reference number, will be given to the BS staff member by the Registrar.
5	The member of staff from Bereavement Services will need the reference number to complete the Tell Us Once' service, this can be either by telephone (0800 085 7308) or the online service (www.gov.uk/tell-us-once) The 'Tell Us Once' service allows you to inform central and local government services of the death all at one time . The services works on behalf of the DWP

¹ The MCCD or the Certified Copy of the Cause of Death must not be given to the next of kin unless:-
a) They are arranging the funeral, or
b) All costs incurred by the Trust have been recovered from the deceased's estate.

Completion of Statutory Paperwork for Cremation / Burial and other Requirements

1. Introduction / Scope	
1	This procedure is to be followed by all Bereavement Services Staff involved in organising Hospital Contract Funerals for deceased adult patients
2. Completion of Statutory Paperwork for Cremation / Burial and other Requirements	
	Throughout the process of organising a funeral; either burial or cremation, the Bereavement Services will need to ensure that the following statutory paperwork is completed either by themselves or the nominated funeral director for UHL.
1	<p>Forms for Cremation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UHL NHS Trust Adult Funeral Request for Chaplaincy and Funeral Director b) Application for Cremation of the Body of a person who has died (cremation form 1) c) Notice of Cremation d) Medical Certificate (cremation Form 4) e) Certificate for Burial or Cremation (green form) f) If a Coroner case, funeral paperwork replacing (d) and (e) will be emailed directly from the Coroner's Office to the Funeral Director
2	<p>Strewing of Ashes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is normal procedure for the deceased's ashes to be scattered at the crematorium. This is carried out without anyone from the Trust being present. b) Should a request be made by a friend / neighbour to attend the strewing of ashes, Gilroes Crematorium will require payment for this service (this service is not funded by UHL) The friend/neighbour will be advised by Bereavement Services staff to deal directly with Gilroes Crematorium. c) If the next of kin wishes to receive the ashes, the ashes will be returned to UHL Bereavement Services to be collected by the next of kin or a nominated person named by the NOK. Bereavement Services will require written or email confirmation of this request. If the ashes are not collected within 3 months of being delivered to UHL, the disposal in 2a) will be followed.
3	<p>Forms for Burial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) UHL NHS Trust Adult Funeral Request for Chaplaincy and Funeral Director b) Notice of Burial c) Certificate for Burial or Cremation (green form) d) If a Coroner case, funeral paperwork replacing (c) will be emailed directly from the Coroner's Office to the Funeral Director
4	<p>Other Burial Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) For a burial, a graveside service is provided by the Trust. b) The Trust does not purchase a 'Deed of Grant' (buy an individual grave) c) The Trust utilise a 'common grave' within the cemetery (a grave which holds up to 4 people of no relation) d) No marker or permanent memorial is allowed on the grave. e) If a 'Deed of Grant' is provided/located (existing owned grave), this will be considered on an individual basis. e) Cases where deceased patients have special requirements (eg a large person requiring specialist care, being buried in an existing grave) will be considered on an individual basis.

Services Provided by Trust's Contracted Funeral Director



University Hospitals
of Leicester
NHS Trust

Appendix Four
Organising Hospital Contract Funerals for
Deceased Adult Patients

1. Introduction / Scope	
1	This procedure is to be followed by all Bereavement Services Staff involved in organising Hospital Contract Funerals for deceased adult patients
2. Services Provided by Trust's Contracted Funeral Director	
1	<p>The costs associated with a hospital funeral include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Professional services by the contracted funeral director conducting the service. b) Supplying the basic coffin with nameplate. c) Supplying a hearse and all the necessary attendants for the cortege, transfer from the hospital to the funeral director's establishment and the services at the crematorium / cemetery. d) Cremation at the crematorium. e) Graveside Service in a common grave for burial e) There are no fees payable to doctors (if cremation) or the religious leader.
2	It is normal for a hospital chaplain of the appropriate faith / non-religious pastoral carer to conduct the service. Where the deceased has a close link with a local faith group the deceased's own religious leader may be asked to conduct the service if it is deemed appropriate by the Senior Bereavement Services Officer and the Head of Learning from Deaths. No fee is payable.
3	Other cars / limousines will not be provided. Anyone attending the service needs to make their own way to the funeral.
4	At the crematorium, the mourners meet outside the Chapel.
5	Burial, mourners meet at the graveside.
6	Flowers are not included in a hospital funeral.

**Disclaimer Form - Printed on UHL
Letterhead Paper**



Appendix Five
Organising Hospital Contract Funerals for
Deceased Adult Patients

Direct Lines

Glenfield: 0116 258 3417
LGH: 0116 258 4235
LRI: 0116 258 5194

To: Bereavement Services
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL)

I make application for the funeral costs of the late

..... ('the deceased')

to be borne by the UHL NHS Trust. I make the application on the grounds that the Estate of the deceased are insufficient to meet the cost of the funeral.

I undertake to dispose of the Estate of the deceased and to hand to the UHL Bereavement Services office all proceeds from the sale of the Estate up to the total cost of the funeral and the UHL administration charge. I also undertake to deliver or give to the Bereavement Services Office all information as to the whereabouts of all bankbooks, insurance policies and any other securities together with any monies belonging to the Estate of the deceased which are known to me.

I have been informed that failure to deliver any such security to money belonging to the Estate of the deceased or give information as to the whereabouts of such valuables to the UHL NHS Trust may result in UHL NHS Trust taking further action and informing the appropriate authorities.

Signed

Date

Relationship to Deceased