Information for the Bereaved

Royal Victoria Infirmary
Freeman Hospital
Campus for Ageing and Vitality

Your appointment with the Bereavement Officer is on:
Day: ______________________________________
Date: ______________________________________
Time: ______________________________________

Please attend:
The Main Reception, Ward Block, Freeman Hospital if the
death occurred at the Freeman.
The Leazes Wing Reception, RVI if the death occurred at the
RVI or Centre for Ageing and Vitality.
The death of someone close to you can be one of the most distressing events that can happen. At the moment you may feel daunted by the prospect of finding yourself responsible for making the arrangements. This booklet attempts to cover some of the practical issues you and your family may have to deal with at this time.

The hospital staff offer their sympathy and condolences at this time and wish to help you in any way we can.

Yours sincerely

Sir Leonard Fenwick, CBE
Chief Executive
Immediately after the death

Staff will try to ensure that you and your family have as much time as you need. The Hospital Chaplain or other Religious Leader can be available for support at any time of the day or night. The Hospital will inform the deceased patient’s GP, and if appropriate Community Nurses.

When you leave the hospital they will be taken to the hospital mortuary.

Visit to the Chapel of Rest

If you wish to visit the Chapel of Rest at the Freeman or RVI it is important that you ring the Leazes Wing Reception at the RVI to make the arrangements on 0191 282 5800 (at any time). 30 minute appointments are available between 9.00 am and 9.00 pm. Please tell the Receptionist when and where your relative died. An appointment will be offered to you at a mutually convenient time and arrangements made for you to be met and accompanied to the Chapel.

What happens next?

Before you leave the hospital the staff will explain to you what will need to happen next, the following notes are a reminder of some of the things you may be told:

An appointment will be made for you to see the Bereavement Officer. The appointment time is written on the front of this booklet. Please contact Leazes Wing Reception on 0191 282 5800 if the appointment date or time is inconvenient.

If the death has occurred at the Royal Victoria Infirmary or the Centre for Ageing and Vitality you will need to report to Leazes Wing Reception at the Royal Victoria Infirmary.

If the death has occurred at the Freeman Hospital you will need to report to the main reception desk in the wark block of the Freeman Hospital.
At this appointment, the Bereavement Officer will give you the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, the Hospital Release Form and return any property or valuables if required. Any queries about the funeral arrangements can also be answered.

**Registering the Death**

As the death occurred in Newcastle it should be registered with the Newcastle Registrar. This must to be done within five working days. An appointment should be made by telephoning 0191 211 5089 or 211 5091.

The address of the Registrar is:
Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Registrars Office
Civic Centre
Barras Bridge
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8PS

The registrar's office is open:
Monday to Friday from 9.00 am - 4.00 pm (except Bank Holidays).

**Who can register the death?**

- A relative of the deceased.
- Someone who was present at the death
- The person instructing the funeral director.

**Information needed for the Registrar**

To register a death, you will need:

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, issued by the hospital, or Coroner.

The registrar will ask you to provide:

- Full name and address (maiden name, if appropriate)
- Date and place of birth.
- Occupation and occupation of spouse, if married.
- State pensions and benefits received – don’t worry if you are not sure.
- The name and date of birth or any surviving widow or widower.
Certificates

The Registrar will give you a green certificate that you should give to your Funeral Director as soon as possible. This enables them to proceed with the arrangements. You will also be given a white certificate which you may need to send to the Department of Work and Pensions. The actual Death Certificate remains with the Registrar. If you need copies for insurance, bank account or other purposes, you may obtain them at a fee from the Registrar.

The Coroner

Medical Staff are required by law to inform the Coroner when people die in certain circumstances. These are:

- Within 24 hours of admission.
- Within 48 hours of surgery.
- At any time after an operation, medical procedure or treatment if it is considered that this may have hastened death.
- Where the cause of death is uncertain.
- Industrial accident or related diseases.

In these cases the medical staff will have spoken to the Coroner who may order a post-mortem examination. If this is the situation you will be given an appointment at the Coroner’s Office to explain this to you.

The Coroner’s Officer will be responsible for issuing a certificate for burial or cremation and give further advice. In most cases referral to the Coroner will not unduly delay your funeral arrangements unless and inquest is opened.

You can still contact a funeral director who will make provisional arrangements.

Hospital Post-Mortems

On occasions the consultant in charge may ask permission to carry out a post-mortem or a partial post-mortem examination. This can only be carried out with permission from the next of kin.
Helping with Transplantation

It may be that the person who has died carried a donor card, was on the Organ Donor Register or discussed donation with you. It is the policy of The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to allow the opportunity to consider donating corneas and other tissues for transplantation. A specialist nurse may contact the designated family representative at home or at the bereavement appointment to offer information and choice about donation.

If you have any questions or want to discuss donation further you can contact the National Centre for Tissue Donation on Tel: 0800 432 559.

Funeral Arrangements

It is important that any Will and Testament that has been made by the person who has died is read as soon as possible, as it may include their wishes regarding the funeral – e.g. burial or cremation.

You can contact the Funeral Director of your choice as soon as possible, even before you obtain the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. You may choose burial or cremation, but your funeral director will need to obtain further medical certificates from the hospital before cremation can take place.

If you have agreed to a post-mortem this should not delay the issue of a certificate or the funeral arrangements.

Funeral directors give a full estimate of charges at the time of taking instructions. If you are in receipt of state benefits you may be eligible for assistance with funeral costs. To find out more information contact Job Centreplus Tel: 0845 604 3719 or download form SF200 Funeral Payment from the social fund @ www.DWP.gov.uk.
Help with Your Grief

Everyone reacts differently to a death. It is normal to feel a whole range of emotions – numbness, disbelief, anger, guilt, pain, yearning for your loved one, panic or fear. Accompanying this may be loss of sleep and inability to concentrate. All of this is normal and may go on for days or months.

It is often helpful to talk. Friends and family may be a great help - but don’t forget they are grieving too.

The telephone numbers in this booklet may be of help if you wish to talk about your grief.
Useful Telephone Numbers

Hospital bereavement officer
0191 223 1146 (Freeman)
0191 282 4348 (RVI)
Available Weekday’s – 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Hospital Chaplain
0191 233 6161
(Ask for the on-call Chaplain to be bleeped)
On-call Chaplain available 24 hours a day every day

Cruse
0191 276 5533
(Support and counselling for bereaved adults)
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Samaritans
0191 232 7272
(24-hour service for all ages)

Macmillan Support Service
(Support for bereaved adults)
0191 219 4618

Patient Advice and Liaison Service
The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone 0800 032 0202 or e-mail northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Information produced by Trust Bereavement Group November 2012.
To be reviewed November 2015. Contact Group Chair: Nigel Goodfellow ext. 21510