



Democratic Support

Plymouth City Council
Civic Centre
Plymouth PL1 2AA

Please ask for Katey Johns, Democratic
Support Officer

T (01752) 307815

E katey.johns@plymouth.gov.uk

www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy

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#plymreview

SCRUTINY - COOPERATIVE REVIEWS PUBLIC FUNERALS

Wednesday 26 February 2014

10 am

Council House (Next to the Civic Centre) Plymouth

Members:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Chair.

Councillors Mrs Bowyer, Casey, Martin Leaves and Tuffin.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

SCRUTINY - COOPERATIVE SCRUTINY REVIEWS

PART I - PUBLIC MEETING

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by members.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of this agenda.

3. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

4. COOPERATIVE REVIEW: PUBLIC FUNERALS

The panel will consider the various documentation and information submitted, as well as hear from a number of witnesses -

4a Cooperative Review Request Form **(Pages 1 - 2)**

4b Project Plan **(Pages 3 - 6)**

4c Briefing Paper **(Pages 7 - 10)**

The panel will receive a briefing paper which will set the scene for the cooperative review.

4d Background Information **(Pages 11 - 16)**

The following documentation is available on various websites and may be of assistance to members during the review –

- Public Funerals – Background Information
<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/communityandliving/deathandbereavement/ourlegalduties.htm>
- Benefits and Credits: Funeral Payments
<https://www.gov.uk/funeral-payments>

The panel have identified a number of witnesses to attend and present information which will aide their consideration of this matter.

5. SUMMARY AND REVIEW

Members will take the opportunity to review its findings and form recommendations for submission to the Cabinet Member and/or Cabinet.

6. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

PART II - PRIVATE MEETING

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE

that under the law, the panel is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

7. COOPERATIVE REVIEW: PUBLIC FUNERALS

(Pages 23 - 32)

Additional documentation / background information provided in confidence.

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REQUEST FOR A COOPERATIVE REVIEW



Please submit this document to Democratic Support once complete.

The request will be submitted to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board for consideration against the approval criteria and you will be notified of its success. If the Board approve the request for a Co-operative Review on the subject matter below then a project plan will be completed and you may be asked for further information.

What is the name of the review	Public Funerals
Please provide a brief outline of the subject and scope of the review?	<p>Plymouth City Council has a legal duty under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 to</p> <p><i>'cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who dies or has been found dead, within its area, in any case where it appears to the local authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the local authority.'</i></p> <p>As agreed at the Your Plymouth panel meeting on 4 November 2013, the scope of the review will be limited to consideration of the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funeral arrangements are made at a time to suit the Bereavement Service, rather than give a choice to family members. Should we accommodate the wishes of the family? • Even when family members have not accepted responsibility, we still notify them of the time and date of the funeral. Should we continue to do this? • The Council offer a simple, non-denominational burial, and no choice is given to family members for burial or cremation. The law requires that cremation should not be carried out if it was contrary to the wishes of the deceased, and if a next of kin was unable to be traced, the Council would always be legally required to provide a burial only. Should we offer a choice of burial or cremation to family members, even if cremation is more expensive? • Should we employ a minister where the denomination of the deceased is known, which currently has a fee of £179? • The service is basic and minimal and does not provide for flowers or anything but a graveside service, and no marking of a grave. Are the Council happy that this is acceptable? Some information is available from other Councils but further benchmarking data could be obtained about what is offered elsewhere.

Please outline the reasons as to why you believe a review needs to take place?	The cost to the Council for each Public Funeral, is in the region of £2000 to £2200 but can be more, depending on the time spent investigating the case. Traditionally, the older generation have made provision in their wills for their funeral arrangements but this is no longer the case and, with the number of public funerals set to rise combined with the existing budget pressures of the current economic climate, it is essential that the Council looks at ways of making better use of its resources.
What will the review attempt to achieve?	The review will help inform the Council's policy on dealing with public funerals which, in turn, will sustain and improve service delivery and public confidence.
Who will benefit from the review?	Members of the public, Councillors and Officers.
How long do you think the review might take?	It is anticipated that the review will be in the form of one half-day meeting.
When do you think the review should commence and why?	It is proposed that the review takes place in December 2013. Given the panel's existing work programme commitments this is the most suitable time for a review to be undertaken.
When do you think the review should be completed by and why?	The review will be completed by the end of December 2013 in order to avoid any conflict with budget scrutiny taking place in January 2014.
Review requested by?	Your Plymouth Scrutiny Panel

Received in Democratic Support Section:	Reviewed by the Co-operative Scrutiny Board:
Date: <input type="text"/>	Date: <input type="text"/>
Scrutiny Review Approved/Rejected	
If approved initial Project Plan meeting date:	

CO-OPERATIVE REVIEW PROJECT PLAN



REVIEW OF PUBLIC FUNERALS

Background	
Chair:	Councillor Mrs Aspinall
Lead Officer:	Darin Halifax, Community Cohesion Coordinator
Democratic Support Officer:	Katey Johns
Membership:	Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Chair Councillor Mrs Bowyer, Casey, Martin Leaves and Tuffin
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Vincent, Cabinet Member for Environment
Date review approved by the Co-operative Scrutiny Board:	27 November 2013
Summary of subject to be reviewed:	To review the Council's current process for dealing with public funerals
Reason(s) and rationale for the review:	The cost to the Council for each Public Funeral, is in the region of £2000 to £2200 but can be more, depending on the time spent investigating the case. Traditionally, the older generation have made provision in their wills for their funeral arrangements but this is no longer the case and, with the number of public funerals set to rise combined with the existing budget pressures of the current economic climate, it is essential that the Council looks at ways of making better use of its resources.
Objectives of the review:	To consider whether the Council's Public Funeral Policy is fit for purpose
What will the review look at?	As agreed at the Your Plymouth panel meeting on 4 November 2013, the scope of the review will be limited to consideration of the following – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funeral arrangements are made at a time to suit the Bereavement Service, rather than give a choice to family members. Should we accommodate the wishes of the family? • Even when family members have not accepted responsibility, we still notify them of the time and date of the funeral. Should we continue to do this? • The Council offer a simple, non-denominational burial, and no choice is given to family members for burial or cremation. The law requires that cremation should not be carried out if it was contrary to the wishes of the deceased, and if a next of kin was unable to be traced, the Council would always be legally required to provide a burial only. Should we offer a choice of burial or cremation to family members, even if cremation is more expensive?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should we employ a minister where the denomination of the deceased is known, which currently has a fee of £179? <p>The service is basic and minimal and does not provide for flowers or anything but a graveside service, and no marking of a grave. Are the Council happy that this is acceptable? Some information is available from other Councils but further benchmarking data could be obtained about what is offered elsewhere.</p>
Who will benefit from the review:	Members of the public (Council Tax payers), Councillors and Officers.

Methodology	
The method and approach of the review:	<p>One meeting to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review current procedures look at processes in place at other authorities talk to witnesses identify areas for improvement
Witnesses and experts:	<p>To agree witnesses and experts that might be called to provide evidence -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Officers; Cabinet Member; Funeral Operatives; Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust; Civil Funeral Celebrant
Documents and/or reports for analysis e.g. internal/external reports or legislation):	<p>Which documents would assist with the review. Documents can take a variety of forms including (for example):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government guidance or legislation; Local policies and strategies;
Site visits:	Site visit to Efford Crematorium
Consultations/Research:	Identify the research that will be required for this review and the method by which this research should be carried out.
Resource Requirements:	<p>When considering resource requirements you should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of venue hire Costs of site visits Travel costs Publicity costs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximate officer hours
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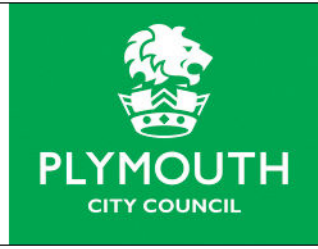
Timetable		
Activity	Timescale / Date(s)	Intended Outcome(s)
Meeting 1: (Non public)	31 Jan 2014	Agree scoping document
Meeting 2: (Public)	26 Feb 2014	To consider evidence, hear from witnesses and identify areas for improvement
Draft report:	End March 2014	
Meeting 3 (approve report): Alternatively, agree report content via e-mail	Early April 2014	
Submit report to the Co-operative Scrutiny Board Meeting:	23 April 2014	Approve report
Submit to Cabinet Meeting:		
Submit to other bodies/organisations:		
Scrutiny Panel to evaluate and track the outcomes of the Co-operative Review:		

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PUBLIC FUNERALS

'Your Plymouth' Cooperative Scrutiny Review

26 February 2014



What is a Public Funeral?

Plymouth City Council has a legal duty under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 to

‘cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who dies or has been found dead, within its area, in any case where it appears to the local authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the local authority.’

This duty applies to anyone who has died within the Plymouth City boundary including none residents. Current arrangements excludes any person who dies within Plymouth after being admitted to a ward at the local Hospitals. Hospitals have similar arrangements in place. The Council would not transfer bodies across counties as the duty only relates to those that have died within the boundary of Plymouth. Only local arrangements would be made for a funeral.

The following table indicates the numbers of enquiries and cases where the Council duty to make arrangements has been invoked.

Public funerals	Male	Female	Total where council made arrangements	Additional Enquiries where advice given
2008/ 2009	27	1	28	
2009/ 2010	5	3	8	8
2010/ 2011	15	2	17	10
2011/ 2012	14	6	20	12
2012/ 2013	21	5	26	13
2013/2014 to date (22/10/13)	4	3	7 to date	25

Procedural steps

The Public Protection Service (PPS) undertake the Public Funerals duties on behalf of the Council. When PPS are informed of a death enquiries are made as to whether there is a next of kin.

To identify next of kin, officers undertake research into the deceased including identifying and where appropriate gathering together personal papers and assets. Officers attempt to locate a will. If this is found, contact is made with the executor. In most cases a will is not found.

If there is no next of kin or executor or any other person prepared to make the necessary arrangements the following steps are followed: -

- The Council arrange a dignified but no frills non-denominational burial, using forfeit graves. Burial is currently the cheapest option and it enables any next of kin who may be identified in the future to make alternative arrangements.
- PPS specifies a graveside service, where the Funeral Director conducts a short non-denominational service.
- The Council has a right to recover any expenses including officer time from the estate. The deceased’s property is searched, and if any assets or valuables are found in the property,

they are sold to recover the expenses. If the deceased owns the property, it would be referred to the Treasury Solicitor, if there is no next of kin.

- In many cases, there are no assets.
- The officer searches are conducted under controlled procedures, by a minimum of two officers, who video record their actions. The procedure and the search are subject to external audit.
- The sale of assets is controlled by procedures and is subject to external audit.
- The sales process is via a local auctioneer.
- Where assets are liquidised a claim is made by PPS for the cost of the funeral and officer time from the estate.
- If more than £500 funds remain after the full payment for the Council's costs is made, the estate is referred to the Treasury Solicitor. Where a next of kin or executor is known, they are advised to approach a solicitor to recover the funds remaining.
- The Banks or Building Societies often do not release the details of the amounts held in the bank accounts of the deceased to PPS officers. However where accounts are identified officers will seek to recover our costs from those accounts.
- It is difficult for PPS officers to see if the financial institutions refer the residual estate of the deceased to the Treasury Solicitor.
- Many properties are rented and the cost of clearing the property, after any available valuables are sold, is the responsibility of the landlord.

DWP Funeral Payment

Where the next of kin or friend are on benefits, the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) provide a Funeral payment, on application, entitling successful claimants to help with the cost of a basic funeral. Only the person making arrangements for the funeral may apply, and the applicant must be in receipt of benefits. The Council is not entitled to claim this benefit.

The Funeral Payment can help pay for:

- burial fees and exclusive rights to burial in a particular plot
- cremation fees, including the cost of the doctor's certificate
- up to £700 for funeral expenses, eg funeral director's fees, flowers, coffin
- travel to arrange or go to the funeral
- the costs for moving the body within the UK - but only for the part of the journey that's over 50 miles

PPS officers will provide advice on how to obtain quotes from Funeral Directors known to the service to ensure the most competitive quote is obtained.

Where there are no next of kin or family members are not on benefits, and cannot afford the cost or do not accept responsibility for the arrangements, and in effect 'walk away', PPS managers assess if the Council should accept responsibility for the burial. If it is clear that no other arrangements will be made, the Council accepts responsibility.

How much does a funeral cost?

The cost to the Council for each Public Funeral, is in the region of £2000 to £2200 but could be more, dependant on the time spent investigating the case.

This cost is made up of the cost of officer time expended in investigating the deceased and collecting assets together, the officer time in organising the burial of the deceased, the cost of the burial and the cost of funeral directors services. PPS is exploring ways of reducing the cost of

Public Funerals. In efforts to reduce costs, burial is chosen as opposed to cremation, as cremation requires the additional expense of doctors' fees, which are in the region of £150. Currently we use local Funeral Directors. The Council offers a tender for the provision of public funerals on an annual basis although the current tender agreement has been extended, whilst the Council review what service is provided. Information obtained from this scrutiny of services would be used to inform the tender process

PPS officers have identified two new funeral directors offering a different service whereby the body is collected and taken to a crematorium. These are at a significantly reduced price to the Local Funeral Directors, in the region of £1500.

PPS make next of kin or others who are taking responsibility for the arrangements of the deceased aware of all local Funeral Directors and the two newer types of service so they can make informed choices.

What do other Councils do?

All local authorities have the same duties, but the duties do not always sit within the same departments. Most local authorities appear to have tender arrangements in place that are reviewed periodically, or that requirements to use the powers are infrequent and arrangements are made on an ad hoc basis with a local Funeral Director at the time. Costs vary between Councils based upon the funeral directors charges and the cost of disbursements, which vary amongst areas.

Issues suggested for consideration

- The funeral arrangements are made at a time to suit the Bereavement Service, rather than give a choice to family members. Should we accommodate the wishes of the family?
- Even when family members have not accepted responsibility, we still notify them of the time and date of the funeral. Should we continue to do this?
- The Council offer a simple, non-denominational burial, and no choice is given to family members for burial or cremation. The law requires that cremation should not be carried out if it was contrary to the wishes of the deceased, and if a next of kin was unable to be traced, the Council would always be legally required to provide a burial only. Should we offer a choice of burial or cremation to family members, even if cremation is more expensive?
- Should we employ a minister where the denomination of the deceased is known, which currently has a fee of £179?
- The service is basic and minimal and does not provide for flowers or anything but a graveside service, and no marking of a grave. Are the Council happy that this is acceptable? Some information is available from other Councils but further benchmarking data could be obtained about what is offered elsewhere.

A table of information of other local authorities procedures relating to the above points is included in Part 2.

Public Funerals – Background Information

Our legal duties

The Local Authorities legal duty

Where no suitable funeral arrangements have been made or are being made for a deceased person who has died in the Plymouth area, the Council may have a duty to help out (under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984). Where possible expenses will be recovered from the estate of the deceased.

If the death occurred in hospital

In this instance the Plymouth Hospitals Trust will arrange for the funeral of any person who died in hospital.

Who pays for the funeral?

If possible the cost of the funeral is met out of the estate of the deceased, or from a family member. If details of family and friends are found they will be informed of the death and invited to make the funeral arrangements. If it is not possible to contact a family member the cost will be met by the Council.

Paying for the funeral

Funerals can be expensive. So remember to check where the money for the funeral will come from before making any arrangements. Otherwise, you may have to pay the bill yourself. Check whether the deceased person has contributed to schemes to pay for the funeral. You can contact the hospital's bereavement officer on 01752 761682, who will have to be satisfied that there is no financial assets available to meet the funeral cost.

You may be able to get a payment from the Social Fund to help pay for the funeral if you are getting any of these social security benefits:

- income support
- jobseeker's allowance (income-based)
- pension credit
- working tax credit (where a disabled worker is included in the assessment)
- child tax credit (at a rate higher than the family element)
- housing benefit
- council tax benefit

Check the [Directgov - Funeral Payments factsheet](#) for further details.

If no one is able or willing to arrange and pay for the funeral, the local council, or in some cases, the health authority may do so, but only where the funeral has not already been arranged.

Payment by the deceased

The bank account of the deceased will be frozen, unless it is a joint account. It may be possible to have part of the deceased's savings released to pay for the funeral, for example from a building society or national savings. You will be asked for appropriate documents, usually including the death certificate.

Check the deceased's papers for a cremation society certificate, life insurance policy papers or prepaid funeral plan. Also look for letters from previous employers with details about any occupational pension scheme or personal pension.

If the person who died was living in hospital or a residential home, the possessions will be handed over to the nearest relative or to a person with written authority from whoever is dealing with the will.

Property and personal effects

If the deceased left furniture or other personal effects arrangements will be made for the disposal of these items and any money recovered offset against the cost of the funeral.

When all costs are known and the value of the estate exceeds this, the Treasury Solicitor is informed.

Registering a death

When someone dies there is a legal obligation to register the death but only certain people are qualified or able to register. They are:

- A relative of the deceased
- A person present at the death
- A person arranging the funeral (not the funeral director)
- In certain circumstances there are other people qualified to register a death but you would need to discuss this with the Registrar

A death must be registered in any register office within 5 days (although this is not always possible there must be a good reason for this). It should be within the district where the person died or can be done by declaration in another district.

What information is required to register a death?

You will need to bring the medical certificate of the cause of death issued by a doctor or, if the death has been referred to the Coroner, the necessary certificate from the coroner's officer.

Cost

The only cost attached to registering a death would be for certified copies of the original entry. Certificates cost £4 each and there is no restriction on the number of copies which can be purchased. More than one is always recommended as photocopies are not valid.

GOV.UK

Benefits & credits: Funeral Payments

Notes

1. Overview

You could get a Funeral Payment if you're on a low income and need help to pay for a funeral you're arranging.

How much you get depends on your circumstances and if you [qualify](#).

Repayments

You'll usually have to pay back any money you get from the deceased person's estate (if they have one).

The estate includes any money or property they had but not a house or personal things left to a widow, widower or surviving civil partner.

2. What you'll get

How much you get depends on your circumstances.

The Funeral Payment can help pay for:

- burial fees and exclusive rights to burial in a particular plot
- cremation fees, including the cost of the doctor's certificate
- up to £700 for funeral expenses, eg funeral director's fees, flowers, coffin
- travel to arrange or go to the funeral
- the costs for moving the body within the UK - but only for the part of the journey that's over 50 miles

If the person who died had a pre-paid funeral plan, you'll only get help for items not covered by the plan.

You can find the full list of what can be included in the Funeral Payment in [claim form SF200](#).

How the money is paid

Usually, if the funeral director hasn't been paid, the money is paid to them.

If the funeral director has been paid, the money is [paid into your account](#) - eg a bank account.

3. Eligibility

To get a Funeral Payment you must be responsible for the funeral and:

- claim in time
- get certain benefits or tax credits
- meet the rules on your relationship with the deceased

The rules are different if the person [died outside the UK](#).

When to claim

You must apply within 3 months of the funeral. You can make a claim even if you're waiting for a decision on a qualifying benefit.

Rules on your relationship with the deceased

You must be one of the following:

- the partner of the deceased when they died
- a close relative or close friend of the deceased
- the parent of a baby stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- the parent of the deceased child, if they were under 16 (or under 20 and not in full-time education)

If the parent is 'absent', you must be responsible for the child and the absent parent must get a qualifying benefit.

Benefits and tax credits

You (or your partner) must get 1 of:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- the disability or severe disability element of [Working Tax Credit](#)
- one of the extra elements of [Child Tax Credit](#)
- Universal Credit

How much you get also depends on any other money available, eg from an insurance policy or the deceased's estate.

If there's a close relative of the deceased who isn't getting one of the qualifying benefits you may not be able to claim Funeral Payment.

4. How to claim

You can claim the Funeral Payment:

- by post - print off and fill in the [Funeral Payment \(SF200\) claim form](#) and send it to your [local Jobcentre plus](#)
- by telephone by contacting the Bereavement Service

Bereavement Service helpline

Telephone: 0845 606 0265

Welsh language: 0845 606 0275

Textphone: 0845 606 0285

Welsh language: 0845 606 0295

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

[Find out about call charges](#)

There's a different way to claim if you live in [Northern Ireland](#).

What you need to know

You must apply within 3 months of the funeral, even if you're waiting for a decision on a [qualifying benefit](#).

You can make a claim before the funeral if you've got an invoice from the funeral director. It must be an invoice - an estimate won't be accepted.

If you can apply by phone, the adviser will help you claim any other bereavement benefits you're entitled to.

Appeals

You can appeal against the decision about your Funeral Payment if you're unhappy with it.

Check the date on your decision letter. There are different ways to appeal if your decision was made:

- [before 28 October 2013](#)
- [on or after 28 October 2013](#)

[Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

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Cooperative Scrutiny Review : Public Funerals

Wednesday 26 February 2014

Witness Timetable

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 10 am | Nicola Horne, Environmental Protection and Monitoring Manager
Councillor Vincent, Cabinet Member for Environment |
| 10.40 am | Jayne Glynn, Patient Experience Manager, Plymouth Hospitals NHS
Trust |
| 11.10 am | Adrian Smart, Westlake's Funeral Directors |
| 11.40 am | Michael Hull, ISCA Funeral Services (Exeter) |
| 12.10 pm | Wendy Coulton, Civil Funeral Celebrant |

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Bereavement Administration Process

Process

- Collect death notices(white and pink copies) from Mortuary
- Take pink copies to Cashier's Office (for any valuables held by cashier who will notify us later in the morning of any they have. If there are, write Cashiers in Red on Patient Information Sheet.
- Write each death alphabetically in the Register with ED patients in Red (We don't normally deal with these)
- Write out a pack for each patient (excluding ED) - note less than 24 hr stays. Packs should be completed by 10.00 a.m. when families start to ring in.
- File ED notices
- Ring each ward clerk to confirm they are aware of deaths on their ward and ask if they know when the medical certificate will be done.
Note the time you have contacted the ward on the Deceased Patient Information Sheet in the pack - update with each chase up call you make.
- After 10.00 a.m. families will begin to call (it is highly unlikely that you will have the medical certificate by this time)
- Please ask /confirm (write on Deceased Patient Information Sheet in pack)
 - Telephone number, including mobile
 - Relationship to the deceased
 - Funeral Director
 - Burial or Cremation
 - If cremation ask if pacemaker fitted
 - If yes, say there will be some additional paperwork (insert a pacemaker consent form into the pack)
 - Circle Yes or No on information sheet

Say we are awaiting medical certificate as Dr is doing ward rounds. As soon as certificate is issued we will be in touch to make an appointment for them to collect it.

If people are persistent do not make them promises of an early completion just to appease them.

When talking to relatives be aware that this must at all times be professional. Do not use endearments e.g. calling people love, darling, sweetheart etc.

Issue of medical Certificate

When medical certificate is issued the Ward Clerk will bring it, the notes and possibly patient's property to the Bereavement Office.

Check the following:

- Doctor has printed as well as signed name and this is legible

- Has put medical qualifications e.g. MBBs AND gmc Number
- If qualified overseas should give University, Country and year of qualification
- Ringed one each of 1,2,3 or 4 and A,B or C
- If Part A - 3 and 4 must be ringed (* see below)
- Cause of death looks o.k. - check with notes (see list of unacceptable things e.g. falls)
- No abbreviations have been used regarding cause of death

If you are not happy with cause of death bleep the doctor and advise him/her to discuss with coroner's officers.

- * A Part A means our doctor has referred the case to the coroner's officers and they have agreed that a medical certificate can be issued by the hospital. The coroner's office will issue the A as confirmation that the death has been referred, and the cause agreed. Coroner sends Part A to Registrar, who must receive A before relatives can register.

If it's a Part A

- Photocopy medical certificate
- Email to Coroner's office at the crescent (313297)
- Write Part A in Register
- Write Part A on white envelope and death notice in pack
- Proceed, as below but remember family can't register until Registrar has A from coroner's office.

When certificate has been checked and you are happy with everything

- Take a photocopy of the Med. Cert for the Medical Notes
- Complete the GP letter with cause of death and send by Courier
- Write across front of Medical Notes in black marker pen DECEASED and year
- File Green copy of death notice and the copy of medical certificate in the front of the Medical Notes
- Write on the photocopied Med Cert inside the Medical Notes
GP letter sent / date/and Part A when required.
- Trace Medical Notes to Mortuary
- Complete the Audit Form for Mortuary and attach to front of Medical Notes
- Update Register (e.g. disposal, notes traced etc.)
- Leave Notes on end of desk for collection by Mortuary staff
- If a Cremation form completed copy the GMC number in pencil onto either the bottom of Med Cert, or on the white envelope
- Enter cause of death, name of doctor and whether it's part A on iPMS under deceased icon

Property

When Ward Clerk returns patient's property to Bereavement Office it will be in a green bag, labelled with patient's name and a list of the property.

- Sign the Ward Clerk's property book and write "unchecked".
- Keep the Green copy of the property list and put it in the relevant pack
- Enter in our Property Book including the number of bags (make sure the entry is dated)

- Attach a wristband (with the entry number and patient's name) on patient's property bag.
- If the Cashier is holding valuable property for the patient they may have brought a green property form in - if so, put it in the relevant pack.
- Write 'Property' and/or 'Cashier' on the Patient Information Sheet in the pack

Contact family to make an appointment to collect the paperwork

- Mention no parking charges - display bereavement booklet
- Go to main reception who will direct them
- Record time, name and name of deceased on Appointments pad
- Put pack in the 'rack'
- Tell Reception (52929) who to expect and when

At an interview

- Check Patient Information Sheet for record of any valuables left with the Cashier - collect valuables immediately prior to interview with relatives
- Return all property (green bags and valuables) to relatives at interview (get a signature)
- Ensure the room is open and light on before collecting family
- Collect family from waiting area by chapel. Introduce yourself, seat and greet family appropriately
- Show them the medical certificate and check it's what they were expecting
- Complete first half of Release form and ask their name and address and ask them to sign the Release - allows us to release deceased to your funeral director
- Put medical certificate into the white Register Office envelope and seal it.
- Explain the process i.e. contact the Register office to make appointment to register the death
- If it's a Part A (ticked on white envelope) please remind family to check that Registry office have paperwork from Coroner's office before making appointment.
- Say Registrar will give them a green form to take to their funeral director.
- Keep both copies of the release form (white and blue) to enable release of deceased to funeral director
- Deceased will be released to funeral director as soon as crem forms completed - or for burial, as soon as can be arranged.
- If they ask how many Death Certificates will be required. Advise that where monies are involved they will require a certified copy but local banks and building societies take to them, they will copy and return to you.

After the interview

- Put White copy of Release form in plastic folder for collection by Mortuary staff
- Blue copy is stapled to the deceased patient information sheet and filed in lever arch file

Viewings

- Should the family request a viewing, ask if they are willing to wait until the certificate is ready for collection to save them two visits to the office, but if they are not prepared to wait, go ahead and arrange it.
- Explain limited time to view i.e. 15 mins. We can't prepare deceased in any way - they will be as they were on the ward.
- Arrange with Mortuary on 32400
- Tell Reception who you are expecting and that it is a viewing (i.e. they keep them in reception and you go down and collect them)
- When family arrive - check that mortuary are ready then collect family
- Greet family and explain the process, i.e. going to Level 4 viewing room etc.
- Ring outside bell on L4 and explain to family that you will be entering a waiting room
- Explain you will identify "Mr Bloggs" and then come and collect them

Coroner's Post Mortem

When a death is reported to the Coroner's office and they decide on a Post Mortem

- Check with Coroner that they have definitely taken over the case
- Write up and trace out the Medical Notes as before and leave for collection by Mortuary staff. No Audit form needed
- If you have had contact with the family, ring and advise them the Coroner has taken over the case, especially when you know the Coroner's office won't be able to contact them for some time due to workload. Offer them the Coroner's phone no. (439679/81) in case they want to contact them direct.
- There may be property to collect - arrange a convenient time with relatives or inform them it can go with the deceased to the funeral home
- We have no further involvement

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