



Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for Families and Carers Following Bereavement



*Excellent, Compassionate and Safe care for **every patient**, every day*

We are sorry you have lost a loved one.

Please accept our condolences.

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Our Condolences

The staff at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital wish to express their condolences to you, your family and friends at this difficult time.

The aim of this booklet is to explain:

- the medical examiner service
- registering a death
- arranging a funeral
- what happens if a death will be looked into by the coroner.

The days following a bereavement can be extremely hard but there are formalities which must be dealt with promptly. We hope that you will find this booklet helpful for some of the arrangements that need to be made. It is designed to provide practical advice and guidance on who can help and where further information can be obtained, as well as explaining procedures such as registering a death and arranging a funeral.

The Patient & Family Support Team

The first thing you need to do is to contact our Patient & Family Support Team who provide our bereavement service on **0151 600 1038/1639/1517**. The team are available Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm (excluding Bank Holidays). There is a voicemail facility if there is no one available to take your call and the team will call you back as soon as they can.

You can also email the team at PFSteam@lhch.nhs.uk. If the death has occurred after 4pm on a Friday you will need to contact the team the next working day.

You may also wish to visit the Bereavement Section of our website at www.lhch.nhs.uk as this provides information and details of how you can obtain further advice and support.

Things you may wish to do next:

- Arrange a viewing of your loved-one at the hospital mortuary
- Inform people of the death or contact someone to do this on your behalf
- Talk to a member of our Spiritual Care Team e.g. chaplain
- Talk to someone who is not a relative or friend
- Contact support agencies - contact details are at the back of this booklet

Medical Examiners role

Medical examiners are senior doctors who are employed by the NHS and who have completed specialist training. Their role is part of the statutory death certification process introduced in September 2024.

Their job is to give an independent view on causes of death and the care and treatment provided. Medical examiners review all deaths apart from those that need to be investigated by a coroner, and they are required by regulations to make all enquiries they consider relevant.

Normally they work in this role part time in addition to their normal clinical duties which can be in any medical speciality, but they will never review the death of a person they provided care to.

Medical examiners and officers offer relatives and carers of the person who died an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns about the causes of death, or about the care the person received before their death. This will usually be through a telephone call. They can explain any medical terms and make it easier to understand what happened.

Medical examiners also look at medical records and discuss the causes of death with the doctor who is completing the official form (known as the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death or MCCD). They will also check if any of the circumstances mean doctors have to notify the death to the coroner.

Medical Examiner Officers role

Medical examiner officers work with medical examiners, supporting them by working in local medical examiner offices. They play an important role in the operation of the office by obtaining and reviewing files, keeping records and updating cases.

They provide a constant presence in the medical examiner office and help answer queries from bereaved people and can discuss any concerns they may have.

They also work with other people involved in the bereavement process to keep everyone informed and offer advice when needed.

Questions you may have about the medical examiner service

Question 1: Why am I being asked if I have any concerns?

Medical examiners or medical examiner officers will get in touch to ask if you would like to have a conversation about the cause of death and they will answer questions and listen to any concerns you may have.

You can talk about anything that may be worrying you about how the person who has died was cared for. You may want a better understanding of why the person died, what happened in the days or months before their death, including having medical terminology explained.

You may want to raise something about the care which did not feel right or ideal. This is your opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns.

Medical examiners and medical examiner officers will discuss your feedback and will consider any issues with treatment or care that need further investigation, they will refer these to someone who can then follow on with this work.

As well as answering your questions, talking to a medical examiner helps the NHS provide better care for other patients and carers in the future; for example, by identifying ways in which patient and family care could be improved.

Question 2: Can I ask the medical examiner to talk to someone else on my behalf if it's too difficult for me to talk to them?

You do not have to speak to the medical examiner or officer if you feel unable to or it is difficult for you, it is voluntary for bereaved people. An alternative is to request they speak to someone else of your choice.

The medical examiner or medical examiner officer will usually telephone you for a conversation before the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is completed, but they can arrange another way of contacting you if you let them know what you prefer.

The medical examiner staff understand this is a very difficult time and they will try their best to make it as easy as possible for you.

Question 3: What questions will I be asked?

The medical examiner or medical examiner officer will explain the reasoning behind the cause of death and explain what is written on the official form, called the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

They will ask you if you have any questions or concerns about the proposed cause of death and they will also discuss the review they have completed to get to this decision.

The medical examiner will also ask if you have any concerns or questions about the care the person received before their death. This is the best time for you to ask any questions and raise anything that concerns you.

Question 4: What if I don't want to talk to the medical examiner or medical examiner officer, or tell them about my concerns?

This is likely to be a difficult time for you and it is your choice whether you wish to talk to a medical examiner or officer. If you are unsure, you can contact the medical examiner officer on 0151 600 3202 (this is a part time service - if urgent please contact the Patient and Family Support Team number), and ask for more information or advice before deciding if you want to go ahead – they are trained to help bereaved people and will be very understanding.

Medical examiners and medical examiner officers provide an independent view, so if you feel able, it is encouraged that you talk to them. They can help with explanations and are specially trained to answer your questions.

If medical examiners find any potential issues, they will raise these with the relevant healthcare organisation or people who were responsible for the care of the person who died or refer the issues to someone who can investigate further.

Talking to the medical examiner or medical examiner officer can help improve the care and services provided to other patients and carers in future.

Question 5: What will happen if I raise concerns?

The medical examiner and medical examiner officer are here to listen to your concerns, answer your questions and, if necessary, contact someone who can investigate them further.

You can be confident medical examiners and medical examiner officers will provide an independent view and will pass on concerns wherever appropriate.

Medical examiners will not investigate further themselves, as

this may be a complex process, and they must complete their work in the time before the death has to be registered by law.

Question 6: Will funeral plans or release of the body take longer if there are concerns?

Medical examiners and medical examiner officers make every effort to avoid delays and work with families and carers of the person who died to meet the legal requirements for registering deaths.

Medical examiners and medical examiner officers will try to be flexible, for example where relatives would like the body to be released quickly, they will work to help fulfil these requests as much as possible.

Question 7: What can I do if I have questions or concerns about the medical examiner process?

If you are not happy with any aspect of the medical examiner or medical examiner officer's work or conduct, please first discuss this with staff in the medical examiner's office who contacted you.

If you are still not satisfied with the advice you have received, you can also contact the Patient and Family Support team on 0151 600 1038/1639/1517.

Question 8: What happens next?

Once the medical examiner has completed their review of the case and the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been finalised, they will arrange for it to be sent to the Registry Office.

Staff at the medical examiner office (or Patient and Family Support) will explain to you the local process for registering the death and how you will be provided with the final 'death certificate' by the registrar.

If for any reason a referral to a coroner is required and the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death cannot be finalised, staff will explain the next steps to you.

Whilst the medical examiner service is performing their role described in this booklet you can contact the Patient and Family Support Team who can support you in:

- Arranging for you to collect any personal belongings such as clothing, cash and valuables belonging to your loved-one.
- Offering any further help or support you may need. The team do not provide counselling but can put you in touch with appropriate counselling services. Please ask if you have any concerns about the quality of care your loved-one has received.
- Arranging a viewing of your loved-one at the hospital mortuary if you wish to.

After someone dies in hospital

We routinely review the health records of all patients who die under our care to identify if any concerns were raised by family members or carers. In addition to this, we routinely undertake what we call a Mortality Review when a clinician (usually a doctor) and a nurse who were not directly involved in the care of your loved-one, will carefully review their health records. They will look at each aspect of care and how this was provided. The outcome and any learning is discussed at a meeting attended by senior managers and clinicians.

In a very small percentage of cases, a more detailed investigation may be undertaken to find out what happened and why, in order

to identify if there is any potential learning and reduce the risk of something similar happening in the future. If this type of investigation is held, we will inform you and explain the process to you and meet with you to discuss the outcome.

Department of Spiritual Care

Regardless of your religion or beliefs, you may wish to seek the support of a minister, priest, chaplain or religious leader. Our Spiritual Care Team will be able to support you and put you in touch with a minister of your own faith. If you feel this would be helpful, please ask a member of staff to contact the chaplain on duty. The hospital chapel and multi-faith room are open from morning until evening for personal reflection and prayer

Arranging a Viewing at the Hospital Mortuary

Following a death, your loved-one will be taken to our hospital mortuary and you may wish to attend the mortuary to visit them. To arrange this, please contact the Patient & Family Support Team to discuss this further.

Visits are usually arranged in the afternoon, Monday to Friday. It may be possible to visit at other times, subject to the availability of staff. We will try to accommodate this where possible and requests for weekend visits can be made via the hospital switchboard by calling 0151 600 1616 and making a request. We request that family members or friends wishing to visit the mortuary attend together and arrive at the arranged time.

You may prefer to arrange a visit or viewing at the chapel of rest and your chosen funeral director will be able to discuss this with you.

Tissue/Organ Donation

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital are supportive of organ and tissue donation. The Critical Care Unit participates in the NHS Blood and Transplant and tissue Programme. Details of the death will be forwarded to the National Referral Centre and you may or may not receive a call from them.

Tissue Donation is the gift of tissues from the deceased such as corneas, skin, bone, tendons, cartilage and heart valves to help others. Most people can donate tissue. Unlike organs it may be possible to donate tissue up to 48 hours after a person has died.

Organ Donation is the gift of an organ to help someone who need a transplant. Kidneys, heart, liver, lungs, pancreas and small bowel can all be transplanted. If organ donation is possible this will be offered as a choice to the family when it is clear their relative is dying or has died. It needs to be arranged by a Specialist Nurse in organ donation and must take place immediately after a person has died.

Please note that tissue donation and being a donor does not delay funeral arrangements. More information is available on our Bereavement Services section of our website, if required.

Depending on the circumstances of death, the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be issued as the process outlined in the medical examiner part of the booklet and you will register in the same way.

The Coroner

The coroner is usually a lawyer, a doctor or sometimes both and is an independent judicial officer. This means that no-one else can tell them or direct them as to what they should do but they must follow the laws and regulations which apply. Coroners are supported by their officers, who receive the reports of deaths and will make enquiries on behalf of the coroner.

The coroner reviews the deaths that are reported to them. It is their duty to find out the medical cause of the death, if it is not known, and to enquire about the cause of death, if it was due to violence or otherwise unnatural.

When is a death reported to the coroner?

In some instances there is a legal requirement for the doctor to refer the death to the coroner.

There are a number of reasons why a death may be referred including:

- If the cause of death is unknown or unclear
- If the death occurred while the patient was undergoing a medical or surgical procedure or by lack of treatment
- The death may have been caused by trauma, violence or physical injury, intentionally or otherwise
- If the death occurred before waking from an anaesthetic
- If the death relates to an industrial illness or injury
- If the death was unnatural or occurred under suspicious circumstances
- If the death may have arisen as a result of self-harm or neglect, intentional or otherwise
- If the death may have been caused by neglect or failure of care by another person
- If the death arose whilst the deceased was in a state of detention (prison or police custody, mental health sections)
- If the death was otherwise unnatural

What will the coroner do?

The coroner's officer will contact the next of kin or representative for the family of the deceased and discuss the case and any cause of death that may have been shared by the attending practitioner or ME.

The coroner may decide that the death was quite natural and will allow the hospital to issue the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. If not, the coroner may ask a pathologist to undertake a post-mortem examination.

The coroner will then take responsibility for issuing the necessary documentation so that the death can be registered. A coroner's officer will contact the nominated next of kin or appropriate person to advise them regarding the procedures. For further information about the coroner's procedures please contact them directly.

Post-mortem

Coroner's Inquest

The coroner will decide whether an inquest is required, to establish the cause of death. An inquest is a fact finding exercise which normally aims to determine the circumstances of someone's death.

If you have any concerns about the treatment we have provided, you can ask the coroner to hold an inquest. It is important to do this as soon as possible after your loved-one has died, as delays in requesting an inquest may mean that the opportunity for the coroner to hold a post-mortem may be lost.

Coroner's Post-mortem

The coroner may arrange for a post-mortem examination if the cause of death is uncertain. The consent of the relatives is not required. Once the cause of death has been established, the coroner will then issue the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

Pacemakers and Implantable Devices

If the deceased is to be cremated and they have a pacemaker, this will need to be removed by the hospital mortuary or the funeral directors. This is a legal requirement for health and safety reasons.

If the deceased had an implantable cardiac device, known as an ICD, this will need to be deactivated before it can be removed by hospital staff. The hospital will notify the funeral directors of this.



Registering the Death

The death must be registered within 5 days of the medical examiner signing the medical certificate of death, unless the coroner is investigating the circumstances relating to the death.

It is also possible to make a declaration to register a death before any registrar in England and Wales. The registrar will record the particulars on a form of declaration and this will be sent to the registrar for the district where the death occurred. Registering a death in this way may unfortunately cause a delay in making the funeral arrangements as the necessary documents will be sent in the post rather than being issued to the person attending the Register Office.

The Liverpool Register Office is open Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 4.45 pm and is located at:

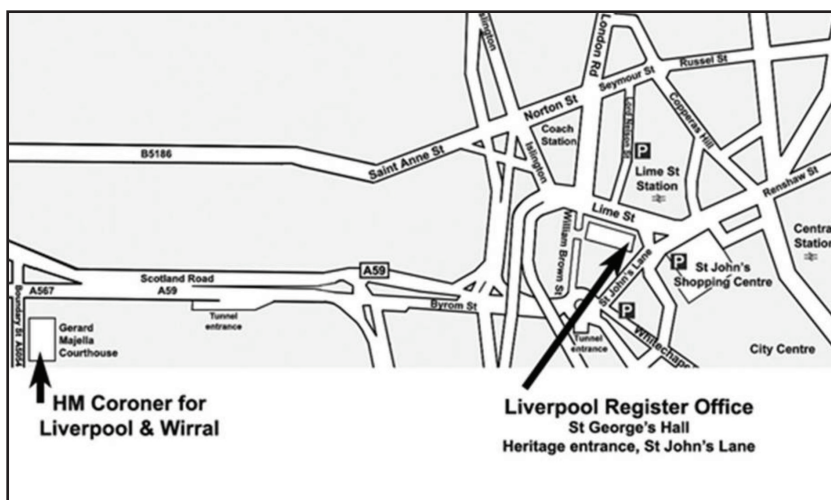
The Liverpool Register Office

St George's Hall

St George's Place (Heritage Centre Entrance)

William Brown Street

Liverpool L1 1JJ



Contact the Liverpool Register Office on 0151 233 3004 to book an appointment to register the death

Who can register the death?

- A relative
- Someone present at the death
- An occupant of the house
- An administrator from the hospital
- A person making arrangements with the funeral directors

Most deaths are registered by a relative. The registrar would normally only allow other people, if there are no relatives available, therefore common law spouse is able to register a death if they fall into one of the classes above and there is no relative available, but do check with the Registrar first.

Attending the Registrar:

If you have them available, you may take your loved-one's:-

- Birth certificate
- Council tax bill
- Driving licence
- Marriage or civil partnership certificate
- NHS medical card
- Passport
- Proof of address (eg utility bill)

Please do not worry if you do not have any of the above available, you will still be able to register the death.

The registrar will need to know:

- The deceased's full name at the time of death
- Any names previously used, eg maiden name

- The deceased's place of birth
- Their last address
- Their occupation
- The full name, date of birth and occupation of a surviving or late spouse or civil partner
- If they were receiving a state pension or any other benefit

The registrar will issue the following:

- **A Certificate of Burial or Cremation:** this is 'the green form' and gives permission for burial or an application for cremation.
- **A Certificate of Registration of Death:** this is a white form called BD8 and is to be completed if the deceased was receiving a state pension or benefits. The form will come with self-addressed envelope.
- **The Death Certificate:** this is a copy of the entry in the Death Register. You may need one or more death certificates for the will and for any pension or insurance claims. These are available for a fee. Further copies can be obtained at a later date if required but may cost more than they do at the time of registration. The registrar will advise you of this.

Arranging the Funeral and Choosing a Funeral Director

You do not have to wait until you have registered the death before contacting a funeral director. Funeral directors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and the earlier they get involved, the sooner they will be able to act on your behalf to support you and find out when the necessary documents allowing the funeral to proceed will be issued. The final arrangements for the funeral should not be made until you have contacted the Patient & Family Support Team and are sure that the death does not have to be referred to

the coroner. If the death has been referred to the coroner, the coroner's officer will advise you what to do. The funeral director will liaise with the coroner for you.

Family friends or clergy may be able to suggest reputable funeral directors. Alternatively, most local funeral directors will be listed on the internet. The funeral director will help you make all the arrangements for the funeral and will usually provide the following services:

- Transfer of the deceased from the hospital mortuary to the chapel of rest
- Care for the deceased prior to the funeral
- Advise on funeral arrangements including the burial or cremation
- Advise on a suitable coffin and hearse
- Arrange optional extras, for example, providing a car for mourners during the funeral, flowers and an obituary notification

If the deceased has been ill for some time and the death was expected, they may have left specific requests or wishes regarding their funeral.

Do I have to use a Funeral Director? Rights and options

The main requirements in England and Wales are that the death is certified by a Doctor or Coroner, is registered with a Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and the body either buried or cremated.

- You do not have to have a funeral ceremony
- You do not have to use a religious minister
- You do not have to use a funeral director
- A ceremony does not have to take place in a crematorium or place of worship

There are more options concerning the content of a funeral ceremony and its duration. Woodland burial and other green options are increasingly available. The majority of people choose to make their arrangements through a funeral director but some people see 'do-it-yourself' funerals as more personal and less expensive. If this approach appeals, and you have time to research and prepare, enquire at the cemeteries and crematorium department of your local authority for guidance. Information is also obtainable from the Natural Death Centre on 01962712690 or visit www.naturaldeath.org.uk.

Funeral Costs

Costs for the same services may vary considerably from one funeral director to another. You may wish to get more than one quote in order to compare costs.

The funeral can be paid for:

- From the financial scheme the deceased had, eg, a pre-paid funeral plan or insurance policy
- By family members or friends
- With money from the deceased's estate, for example from savings. Gaining access to the deceased's estate is called applying for a 'grant of representation' or 'applying for probate'

You can apply for a funeral payment if you have difficulty paying for the funeral. For further information, please visit **Bereavement Support Helpline 0800 151 2012**
www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment/how-to-claim

Please be aware that the maximum payment available is not generally sufficient to cover the full cost of the funeral. If you are using a funeral director, tell them at the very start before you commit to any arrangements if a funeral payment is the only money available. They will advise you accordingly.

See the back page of this information leaflet for contact details.

Age Concern provide advice and information to anyone over the age of 60 about funeral arrangements and welfare benefits and The Independent Order of Odd Fellows publishes an annual survey of funeral costs which will give you an idea of the average prices charged for funerals in your area.

Wills and Probate

Wills

If you have any queries about the will or the absence of a will you can contact:

Liverpool District Probate Registry
Liverpool Combined Court Centre,
Derby Square
Liverpool
L2 1XA

0151 236 8264
Helpline 0300 3030 648

Probate

When a person dies somebody has to deal with their estate (the money, property and possessions left) by gathering together available money, paying any debts and distributing what is left to those people entitled to it. In order to get

authority to do this the designated person usually needs to obtain a legal document called a Grant of Representation from the Probate Registry. There are three types of Grant of Representation.

- **Probate** - Issued to one or more Executors named in the deceased's will. Note: Executors are people named in the will to deal with the estate
- **Letters of administration (with will)** - Issued when there is a will but there is no Executor named or when the Executors are unable or unwilling to apply for the grant
- **Letters of administration** - Issued when the deceased has not made a will, or any will made is not valid

If the deceased left a will, probate will generally need to be obtained. If there is no will, probate cannot be obtained and instead you will generally need to apply for letters of administration, before you can administer the estate. In both cases, the processes involved are very similar and the form PA1 can be used. The form needs to be completed, and sent or taken to the Probate Registry. You can obtain this form from your local Probate Registry or download it from the website indicated below.

For further information or guidance contact your local Probate Registry or consult the websites indicated below:

Liverpool District Probate Registry
Liverpool Combined Court Centre,
Derby Square,
Liverpool
L2 1XA

0151 236 8264

Opening Hours are 9.00am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Who to inform about the death

You will probably want to inform relatives and friends about the death straight away. Other people who may also need to know could include the following:-

	Informed
General practitioner (family doctor)	
The Benefits Agency (pensions, benefits)	
Bank or building society	
Mortgage company	
Social Services (if appropriate, any home help, social worker etc.)	
Credit card company; loan provider (if appropriate)	
School, college or university	
Place of work or volunteering	
Minister of Faith (religious leader)	
Solicitor	
Executors of the estate (will)	
Insurance companies (e.g. home, car)	
Inland Revenue	
Residential or nursing home	
Landlord or housing department	
Council tax offices	
Electricity, Gas, Telephone, Water utilities, TV licence, Broadband and TV providers	
Post office to redirect mail	
DVLA Swansea	
Hospitals - Cancel any appointments for all hospitals attended by deceased. You will need to contact each individual hospital.	

Should your relative/friend have been living alone, you may need to ensure that their home is secure. You may also need to arrange for any pets to be cared for, collect spare keys from other relatives, friends and neighbours and check the terms and conditions of any insurance/rental agreements covering the property.

It is generally agreed that the following may be helpful at this difficult time:

- Seek the practical help you need from the funeral director, family doctor, a solicitor, welfare officers and human resource departments at work places, your minister of religion, social services department or local Citizen's Advice Bureau
- In the hospital you can also speak to the ward staff, the hospital chaplain or the Patient & Family Support Team
- Allow close family and friends to give you the support and help you need
- Express your emotions
- Let children talk about their emotions and express themselves and encourage them to return to school and let them continue with their usual activities
- Take your time making decisions and do not be pressured into making any changes until you are ready – such as clearing out personal belongings of the deceased until you feel ready for this
- Do not rush into important decisions, for example moving home, while you are still grieving. Give yourself time to adjust to your changed circumstances.
- Contact an agency such as Cruse who can provide help when you feel the need to talk through any difficulties

Bereavement & Grief

You may wish to read the following information about bereavement and the grieving process or you may wish to return to it at a later time. Grieving is a natural process that

can take place after any kind of loss, especially the loss of someone to whom you were very close. Dealing with intense feelings of loss can be very distressing but it is normal, although very difficult, to experience very strong reactions. Bereavement and our feelings of grief are highly personal and each person will experience it in their own individual way and time.

It is important to look after yourself physically. Try to eat, drink and get plenty of rest. It is very easy to overlook your physical needs when you are busy dealing with all the formalities involved after a death, or struggling to cope with your grief.

Everyone grieves in their own way

Remember it is important not to try to hurry the healing process, everyone is different and this can take time. Everyone reacts in their own way when they are grieving for someone who was very close to them. Do not worry if you are not reacting in the way other people seem to be and the way others may expect you to be. The important thing is to allow yourself to feel and do what is right for you, in your own time.

Time to make choices

Your first reaction may be disbelief and confusion. You may find it impossible to take in what has happened. Even if the deceased had been terminally ill or the death was expected, the moment of death may still come as a shock, leaving you feeling unprepared, anxious or even angry.

There will be some practical things to attend to immediately, but do not enter into any financial or legal agreements or rush into important decisions such as moving home, whilst you are grieving. Give yourself time to fully consider the long term implications and do not let others rush you into anything before you feel ready.

Intense feelings

People often find that the first two or three months after someone has died are taken up with practical things. It can be after this period the full impact of your loss may be felt. You may become forgetful or find it difficult to concentrate. You may experience a range of feelings, including physical pain, helplessness, sadness, anxiety, relief and anger that the person has died.

It is not uncommon to feel relief that the person has died and then feel guilty about this. Relationships and situations can be very complicated, but try not to feel guilty because they are also part of grieving.

Do not feel that you have to hide your feelings. Talk about how you feel, you may need to talk repeatedly through your feelings. Do not ignore your grief or try to move on before you feel ready. There is no right or wrong amount of time to grieve. Recovery is not a constant process, sometimes you will feel worse rather than better but this is normal. You may find that birthdays and anniversaries are difficult times, even when you thought you had moved on.

Grieving within a family

Your family and friends will also be experiencing grief which will be unique to them. It can be difficult if one family member feels angry while another feels sadness and needs to cry, or if one person needs to talk about their feelings while another wants to say very little. Try to acknowledge the differences; sharing your thoughts and feelings can lessen the loneliness.

Supporting children who are grieving

Generally children under four or five years old do not understand that a person who has died will not come back. Children experience the passage of time differently from adults and can therefore appear to overcome grief quickly. However children in their early school years may need reassuring that they are not responsible for the death of a close friend or relative as they often blame themselves for one reason or another. This is something that anyone who is bereaved may experience but is common for this age group.

If you are caring for children it is important to share your grief. Even very young children experience grief and need the opportunity to express their feelings. Children often know more than adults realise and they need honest information to help them make sense of what has happened. If you are unsure about how to support your child, it may be helpful to speak to your general practitioner (GP), health visitor, practice nurse, social worker or support group.

Where to go for support

During the coming weeks and months you may need support from others; it can be very hard to manage bereavement on your own. Many people find close family and friends are a help, so make sure you keep in touch with them. Even if they are also grieving they may want to be close to you to support and care for you.

Everyone reacts differently to another person's grief. It may be that they simply just do not know what to say, or are worried that if they mention it they will upset you. It can be difficult for someone who has not experienced a bereavement to understand how strongly it can affect others and for some it may bring back memories of their own loss so they feel unable to talk without becoming distressed themselves. Perhaps they feel they need to 'fix things' or do something, when there is nothing that can be done.

It may help to talk to someone outside your family or circle of friends. You could contact your GP, practice nurse or minister who may be able to recommend a local bereavement support group or counselling service. See useful contacts at the back of this booklet.

When to seek professional help

The following is a list of symptoms and feelings often associated with grief. Whilst these can be a normal part of the grieving process, if they are persistent and make it difficult for you to manage day-to-day tasks, you may wish to seek professional help if you:

- Are always feeling exhausted, anxious, depressed, helpless, experiencing extreme anger or stress or sleeplessness
- Are becoming withdrawn and unable to speak to or spend time with family and friends, or finding it difficult to cope at work, school etc
- Are becoming dependent on alcohol or drugs
- Have little desire to get involved in activities you once enjoyed

Your GP may be of help, particularly, if you are worried about your own health.

Counselling

Your GP will be able to listen and offer emotional support but if you need more time to talk or longer term support, a counsellor may be able to help. Your GP can refer you to a counselling service or you may wish to contact one of the support organisations listed at the back of this booklet.

Contacting Us

As a family member, partner, friend or carer of someone who has died whilst in our care, you may have comments, questions or concerns about the care and treatment they received. You may also want to find out more information about the reasons for their death. The staff who were involved in treating your loved-one should be able to answer any questions you may have.

It is important for us to know if you do not understand any of the information provided by the staff caring for your loved-one, so please tell us if we need to explain things more fully.

We will arrange to meet with you at a time when you feel ready and if you wish to take up this opportunity please let us know.

In addition, you will receive a bereavement questionnaire in approximately three months time. This will give you an opportunity to provide us with feedback about the care and support both you and your loved-one received.



Accessing Health Records of a Deceased Patient

The Access to Health Records Act 1990 governs access to the health records of someone who has died and grants a small group of people a statutory right to apply for access.

Fees to access health records

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust does not routinely charge for processing access to health records requests.

In line with legislation one copy of the requested information will be provided free of charge. A charge, however, may be applied to requests that are excessive or where disproportionate effort is needed to comply.

Additional copies of the requested information will be subject to an administrative charge (minimum charge £10).

How to apply for access to health records

To see or obtain copies of records a written request must be made to the hospital. Please include the following information:

- Patient's full name, address, date of birth
- Patient's NHS Number, if you have it
- Details of which records or information is required e.g. a complete copy or a copy of a specific section or admission
- Approximate date(s) of admission / attendance and details of treatment

Application can be made using the Trust's standard application form which is available on our website: www.lhch.nhs.uk or from our Information Governance Team.

Applications should be submitted to:
Information Governance Team
Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital
Thomas Drive, Liverpool, L14 3PE

Applications will be processed in accordance with the Access to Health Records Act and the Trust will aim to provide a response regarding the outcome of applications within one month of receiving the fully completed request, proof of identity and supporting documentation.

Proof of identity and right of access

To support your application the Trust will require proof of your identity and your right of access to the health records. Please send a copy your passport, photo driving license or sufficient equivalent identification.

If you are the deceased patient's legally appointed executor or administrator please send a copy of the will or grant of probate. If you have a claim arising from the patient's death you are required to send documentary evidence to support this.

Exemptions to access a deceased patient's health records

- If you are applying on behalf of someone who has died and they originally instructed that the information should not be revealed to the Trust
- The information involves an identified person who does not consent to it being disclosed. This does not include the patient, you (the applicant) or any healthcare professional.

Further information

Contact our Information Governance Team by email infogov@lhch.nhs.uk or phone 0151 600 1845 Monday-Friday during office hours.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to, once again, offer our sincere condolences to you and your family, and hope that the information contained within this booklet will be of help to you during this difficult time.

Useful Contact Numbers

Patient & Family Support Team:	0151 600 1038 0151 600 1517 0151 600 1639
Hospital Switchboard	0151 600 1616

Local Government Organisations

Coroner's Office - Liverpool & Wirral	0151 233 5770
Liverpool Register Office	0151 233 3004
NHS Blood and Transplant	0300 123 23 23

Support Organisations

Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton	0151 330 5678
Age UK - Advice line	0800 678 1602
The Alder Centre , Alder Hey Hospital (Bereaved Parent Support)	0151 252 5391
British Heart Foundation , Heart Helpline	0808 802 1234
Asthma and Lung UK	0300 222 5800
WhatsApp Helpline	07999 377 775
Cruse Bereavement Support	0808 808 1677
Citizens Advice Liverpool	0808 278 7840
Samaritans Liverpool	116 123 Free from any phone 0330 094 5717
Liverpool Bereavement Services 1st Floor, Granite Buildings 6 Stanley Street, Liverpool, L1 6AF	0151 236 3932

Useful Contact Numbers

Natural Death Centre Charity 019627 12690

Useful Websites:

Age UK www.ageuk.org.uk

Bereavement Support Helpline 0800 151 2012

www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment/how-to-claim

The Samaritans www.samaritans.org

Department for Communities www.communities-ni.gov.uk/contact

Probate Service www.gov.uk/probate

If you require a copy of this leaflet in any other format or language please contact us quoting the leaflet code and the language or format you require.

إذا لديك الرغبة في الحصول على نسخة من هذه المعلومات بأي لغة أخرى أو بشكل آخر (على سبيل المثال بخطوط كبيرة) ، الرجاء الاتصال علينا على الرقم 0151 600 1257 موضحاً الشكل أو اللغة التي ترغب فيها.
如果您想索取一份以其他語文或形式（如大字體）編印成的資料傳單，請致電 0151 600 1257 向我們查詢，並說明您所需要的形式和語文。
ئەگەر ئەم زانیاریانەت بەھەر زمانیکى تر یاخود شیوازیکی تر دەوئیت (بۆ نموونە بە چاپی گەورە) ئەوا تۆکایە بە ژمارە تەلەفونی 0151 600 1257 پەیوەندیان پێوە بکە و نامائە بدە بەو زمانەى یاخود شیوەیەى کە دەتەوئیت
W celu uzyskania niniejszej informacji w innym języku lub formacie (np. dużym drukiem), prosimy o kontakt z nami pod numerem 0151 600 1257 podając wymagany format lub język.
Haddii aad u baahan tahay koobiga wargelintan oo luqad ama qaab kale (sida far waaweyn) fadlan nagala soo xiriir 0151 600 1257 adiga oo noo sheegaya luqadda ama qaabka aad wax ku rabtid.

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