



Papworth Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

An information booklet for the
Recently bereaved

At this time of sadness, we would like to offer our sincere condolences. The death of someone close to you, whether expected or sudden, can be a distressing and confusing time.

This booklet aims to provide you with information and guide you through the necessary steps you will need to take, following bereavement.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We understand this can be a difficult time, not only emotionally but also in knowing what practical steps to take. We would like to offer you our help and guidance during this difficult time.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service will be your main contact during this time and the PALS team will guide you further and offer support.

If the death occurred overnight or at the weekend, a member of the PALS team will contact you in the morning of the next working day. However, if you need to contact them they can be reached via the switchboard

on 01480 830541 and ask the switchboard to put you through to pager 759.

The PALS office is open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 5.00pm and is located next to the Garden Restaurant. If you wish to see a member of staff from the PALS team, then please call them first as during busy times the staff may be elsewhere in the hospital.

Outside of this time the ward staff where your relative/friend passed away should be able to advise you.

Viewing the body

If you are present when your relative or friend dies, the ward staff will allow you as much time as possible to say your goodbyes on the ward.

If your loved one is in the care of our mortuary team, there are limited facilities available at the hospital to view the body but we may be able to make arrangements for a viewing during normal working hours. In certain circumstances, it may be possible to arrange viewings out of hours and at weekends

but this will be at the discretion and availability of the staff on duty.

You are under no obligation to visit the body in the mortuary. Many people prefer to wait until their loved one's body has been taken to the funeral parlour.

If the death has been reported to the Coroner, permission must be obtained before a viewing can take place. A member of the PALS team can obtain permission for you, but only during normal working hours. The role of the Coroner is explained in full further on in the booklet.

Personal belongings

If you are in the hospital when your relative or friend dies, the nursing staff will try to return all personal belongings to the next-of-kin. If this is not possible, a member of the PALS team will undertake collection from the ward and discuss the best way to return the belongings.

The medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD)

In order to register the death a medical certificate of cause of death is required, and if the death was not unexpected, this will be issued by a hospital doctor as soon as possible. A member of the PALS team will contact you once this has been completed and make arrangements with you for collection of the certificate. How to register a death is explained on page 4.

Reporting a death to the Coroner

In certain circumstances the hospital must inform the Coroner of a death, eg where the death is sudden and unexpected, occurs during or shortly after surgery or simply when the person has been ill but the doctor confirming the death is not certain why it happened at that particular time.

The Coroner is an official, rather like a Judge, whose job is to supervise the investigation of deaths under these circumstances. This process is there to protect both the deceased and their relatives

and to ensure that accurate cause of death is recorded. Not all Coroners' referrals result in a post-mortem. In some circumstances the Coroner may decide that no further action needs to be taken. If this is the case, Papworth Hospital will be able to issue you with the relevant documentation.

The Coroner's Officer helps the Coroner with the investigation into the cause of the death, and is responsible for contacting the nearest relative. While the enquiry is continuing, the Coroner's Officer provides help and advice and is the main point of contact with the Coroner's Office for relatives.

In some cases, the Coroner may decide that a post-mortem examination must be carried out to establish the exact cause of death and in this case, a post-mortem is a legal requirement and does not require the permission of the next-of-kin.

If the Coroner takes legal responsibility for the body of the deceased person you will always be informed and

this is known as a coronial post-mortem examination. The Coroner's Officer will also phone you to ensure you understand the action they are taking and will let you know when the funeral can take place; however, you should still contact a funeral director as soon as possible to let them know of the Coroner's involvement.

If a coronial post-mortem is required, you will not receive the MCCD and the Coroner will inform the Registrar of the cause of death. A member of the PALS team will also provide you with an information leaflet detailing the post-mortem examination of an adult.

During a Coroner's post-mortem examination, small tissue samples are taken from the body and these are used to confirm the cause of death. Once the cause of death is known these samples are destroyed in a safe and lawful manner according to the rules set out in the Human Tissue Act (2004). Following the post-mortem, you may be asked if research staff from

Papworth Hospital can also look at the tissue samples to look for underlying disease and trends to help plan future care. Tissue samples are not kept at Papworth Hospital unless the next-of-kin gives permission to do so. You are under no obligation to provide consent for Papworth Hospital to keep tissue samples, but if you do agree you will be asked to read an information booklet and sign a consent form.

Hospital post-mortem

In certain circumstances, the doctor who certified the death may ask you for permission to carry out a post-mortem examination to help advance medical knowledge and teaching and will use this knowledge to plan future care of other patients with similar conditions. Unlike a Coroner's post-mortem, you are under no obligation to agree to a hospital post-mortem and this cannot be done without the agreement of the next of kin and after completion of a signed and witnessed consent form.

Registration of death

A death must be registered at the Registrar of Births and Deaths in Cambridgeshire within five working days of the death where possible. The contact details for the Registrar are given below:

The offices of The Registrar of Births and Deaths in Cambridgeshire are in Huntingdon, Cambridge, Wisbech and Ely. To book an appointment telephone 0345 045 1363 and they will ask you which office you wish to attend.

An appointment for registration can be made once the MCCD has been completed by the doctor or issued by the Coroner's Office. If you live within a twenty mile radius of the hospital it is hoped that a family member will be able to register the death.

If you do not live close to the hospital a member of the PALS team may be able to register the death on behalf of the family. The certificates will then be passed on to the funeral director and then forwarded to the next-of-kin.

You may prefer to register the death at your local Registrar of Births and Deaths and this can be done by declaration. However, please note that this may delay funeral arrangements, as all required certificates will be issued by the Cambridge Registrar and posted to the family.

The following people can register a death:

- A relative of the deceased.
- The person who is arranging the funeral.
- A person present at the death.
- A member of the PALS team from Papworth Hospital (if there has been an inquest only a family member can register the death).

The death certificate is a certified copy of the entry in the death register and has to be paid for.

Purchasing additional copies can be useful as they are often required for sorting out financial affairs such as insurance policies, pension claims or bank accounts. You may qualify for the free 'Tell

Us Once' service which could reduce the number of copies you will need to purchase. The Registration Officer will advise you during your appointment.

When you register a death, the Registrar will ask you for some information and this is listed below. It would be helpful if you could ensure that you have as much of this information as possible before you go to register and the appointment will take approximately 20 to 40 minutes.

If you have any queries concerning the registering of a death, a member of the PALS team will be able to assist you.

Remember to take the medical certificate of cause of death with you if you have one.

Information required to register a death:

1. Correct date and place of death.
 2. Full name of deceased including any other names used by deceased. You will also be given the opportunity to provide a nickname. For example a person's name was William but he liked to be known as 'Bill'.
 3. Date and place of birth.
 4. Home address including postcode.
 5. Marital state at time of death.
 6. Occupation - think about how the deceased person would like to be remembered. The last job they had before they retired/passed away may not reflect what occupation they had for the majority of their working life.
 7. Full name of spouse. This is still required even if their spouse has already passed away. This information is not required however if they were legally divorced.
 8. Date of birth of spouse.
 9. Occupation of spouse.
 10. Name address and phone number of funereal director.
 11. Burial or cremation, and where it is going to take place.
 12. NHS number.
 13. Was deceased in charge of staff when employed. If yes how many?
 14. How long was the deceased in hospital? Was it over or under six months?
- What the Registrar will give you:*
- You will be given a 'green' certificate for burial or cremation. This certificate needs to be passed to the funeral director.
 - You will also be given a white BD8 form which must be completed if the deceased was in receipt of any Government benefits, including a pension. There are instructions on how to complete this form and what to do with it.
- Both the green and white BD8 are given to you free of charge.

Funeral arrangements

We recommend that a family member or close friend contact a funeral director as soon as possible and it is a personal decision as to which funeral director's services they use. Most people use a local company as you will need to arrange an appointment to discuss the type of funeral you want.

Funeral directors are very experienced in dealing with bereavement issues and they will do their best to guide you through this very difficult process. They will advise, assist and support you through the early stages of your bereavement and will deal with matters such as liaising with the hospital, cemetery or crematorium, minister of religion and all other funeral arrangements. They will also inform you about funeral costs.

One of the first and most important decisions you will need to make is whether to choose a burial or cremation. You should check whether a Will exists and whether any requests are in the Will regarding burial or cremation. This enables the correct type of documentation to be issued.

When you have chosen a funeral director please inform a member of the PALS team at Papworth Hospital.

Assistance and advice

Sometimes relatives and close friends have outstanding questions about the final care their loved one received at the end of life. Especially if the death happened quickly, was unexpected or when a family member was not present at the time of death.

If you would like to speak to a member of the medical team or ward manager, then this can be arranged for you via the PALS office at a time when you feel able to discuss events.

Pastoral and spiritual care

The hospital Chaplains are available to provide spiritual, religious and pastoral care to everyone in the hospital, including bereaved relatives and friends. This service is available to anyone, whether they follow a faith or not. The chapel is located in the wooden portakabin near the Garden Restaurant and is open from 8.00am to 8.00pm. If you wish to visit outside of these hours there are instructions on the door.

The Chaplains can provide a listening ear, without prejudice and in confidence. They can also put you in touch with other faith representatives.

The Chaplaincy Service can be contacted by telephone on 01480 364121 and you can leave a message on the answering machine. For urgent matters please contact the switchboard on 01480 830541 and they will do their best to contact the Chaplain for you.

Please note that the chaplaincy building and mortuary are located in different parts of the hospital.

Contact details and other organisation that may be able to help you

Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Main switchboard 01480 830541

PALS Bereavement Officer

Tel: 01480 364963 or 01480 830541 ask for Ext. 759

Email: papworth.pals@nhs.net

The Papworth Hospital chaplaincy answering machine

Tel: 01480 364121

Papworth Hospital urgent chaplaincy

Tel: 01480 830541 ask for the on-call chaplaincy service

Ashley Jolly SAD Trust UK

Provides support and information for those who have lost a loved one suddenly and unexpectedly as a result of a cardiac condition. This may appear on the MCCD as sudden arrhythmia death syndrome.

Helpline: 01277 230 642 - 9.00am to 5.00pm

Email: info@sadsuk.org

www.sadsuk.org

Citizens' Advice Bureau

www.adviceguide.org.uk for your local office.

If you do not have internet access, the PALS bereavement officer will find out the contact details for you.

Samaritans

Helpline: 08457 909090

www.samaritans.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care RD4U (the road for you)

Support, advice and a website for bereaved young people.

Freephone: 0808 808 1677 (Mon to Fri 9.30am - 5.00pm)

www.rd4u.org.uk

Email: info@rd4u.org.uk

Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project

Support and advice, including arranging funerals (sympathetic clergy and secular officials).

Tel: 0207 403 5969 (Mon, Tue and Thurs, 7.00pm to 10.30pm)

British Humanist Association

Information and facilitators for non-religious, non-spiritual and atheist funerals.

www.humanism.org.uk

Email: info@humanism.org.uk

Compassionate Friends

Support for bereaved parents, grandparents and siblings

Tel: 0845 123 2304

Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Papworth Everard

Cambridge

CB23 3RE

Tel: 01480 830541

Fax: 01480 831315

For more information about Papworth Hospital please visit our website www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk

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