

Bereavement Specification

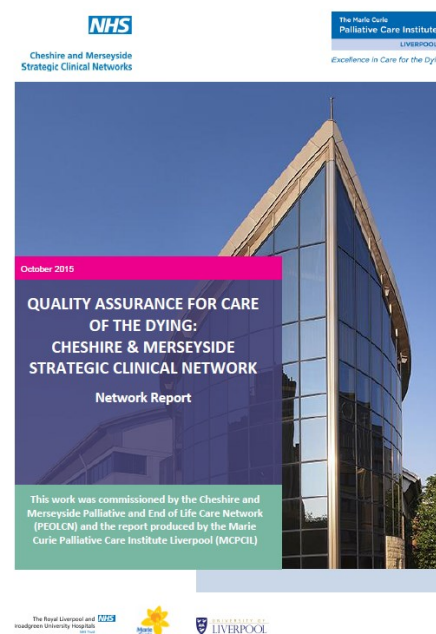
Guidance to support bereavement care in Acute Hospitals

Cheshire and Merseyside
Palliative and End Of Life Care Network

The Cheshire and Merseyside Palliative and End of Life Care Network has produced this guidance for Acute Hospitals in developing appropriate bereavement services. The Network commissioned a survey to seek the experience of bereaved relatives. The survey “Care of the Dying Evaluation (CODE)”, published in 2015, showed wide variation in the availability of support, information and facilities for families and carers of those dying in the hospital setting.

Despite a national drive to support more patients to die in their own home, in reality the majority will spend their final weeks, days and hours of life in a hospital setting. A few may express a preference to remain in hospital at the end of their life but for the majority, dying in hospital comes at the end of a period of acute illness and, sometimes intensive, treatment. At times, delays in discharge processes or a scarcity of resources to provide care in the place of their choosing means that dying in hospital is an undesired inevitability. Subsequently, it is often a time of great uncertainty, emotion and fear for many families and carers and we, therefore, have an essential duty to provide timely, proactive information, facilities and support, and ensure our bereavement processes make this period of transition and distress as smooth as possible.

The Network Transforming End of Life Care in Acute Hospitals Group and the People’s Voice Group worked closely together to produce guidance, ensuring the views of bereaved relatives were at its core.



A bereaved relatives survey was undertaken to explore both positive and negative experiences of losing a loved one in hospital. Trust websites and information leaflets were examined and, following this, a workshop was held to discuss the main themes and resources that carers felt would improve or enhance the services available, and additionally a small subgroup undertook a more detailed project to outline the gold standard requirements for mortuary visiting facilities.

Timely access to information and resources is essential and many bereaved relatives expressed the wish that staff had been more proactive in exploring end of life and bereavement wishes, and been offered information prior to death to help them better prepare. This guidance should, therefore, be read in conjunction with ‘What to expect when somebody close to you dies’ (WTE1) and Bereavement Leaflet Recommendations (BL1), two further joint pieces of work undertaken by the two network groups, which give guidance on the information needs of patients and carers in the days before death and into early bereavement.

Given the challenges faced, we recognise that developing an exemplary bereavement service is an aspiration that will take time to realise. However, there are many aspects of services that the project group considered essential in providing an appropriate level of bereavement information and support. We have, therefore, developed a dual standard – a minimum standard that all hospitals should ensure is in place, and a gold standard of service, which should form part of the longer term end of life strategy for the Trust.

We hope you will find this guidance of value in developing and evaluating your services.

Dr Julie Raj

Sharon Bird

On behalf of the
Transform Acute Hospitals and **People’s Voice** groups of the
Cheshire and Merseyside Palliative and End of Life Care Network

	Minimum Specification	Gold Specification
WEBSITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bereavement Service/ mortuary information included on an existing page on the Trust website. <input type="radio"/> Use of plain English (words not acronyms). <input type="radio"/> Clear & visible contact name and details for bereavement office/ mortuary. <input type="radio"/> Links to NHS Choices Bereavement page. <input type="radio"/> Information on identification requirements for Medical Certificate Cause of Death (MCCD). <input type="radio"/> Small selection of links/signposting to support pages/services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Comprehensive website information with Bereavement Service's own page on Trust website, with mortuary information and access times. <input type="radio"/> Dedicated area on Intranet for staff to find 'after death' information for carers. <input type="radio"/> Generic statement of condolences on the webpage. <input type="radio"/> Online booking service for bereavement office appointments. <input type="radio"/> Detailed online Information on locality/ Trust specific processes for obtaining MCCD. <input type="radio"/> Comprehensive selection of links/signposting to support pages/ services - local and national. <input type="radio"/> FAQ section on website around mortuary processes - What Next?
ADVICE/SIGNPOSTING/INFORMATION LEAFLETS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Care after death leaflet, detailing information about bereavement services/ mortuary processes. <input type="radio"/> Advice on arranging Death Certificate (MCCD) and cremation documents including personal identification requirements for collection. <input type="radio"/> Advice on obtaining Funeral Director white form/if available out of hours. <input type="radio"/> Advice on process for visiting the deceased. <input type="radio"/> Advice on post mortem and coroner involvement. <input type="radio"/> Provision of a list of local undertakers/Funeral Directors. <input type="radio"/> Advice on how to arrange Religious Beliefs/customs for when death occurs. <input type="radio"/> Detailed information regarding the events at point of death - e.g. exact times, people present. <input type="radio"/> Pro-active communication around delays in the MCCD release. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Formal Counselling. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Advice on 'Tell us Once' service from the Government/ Council. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Advice on DWP/Benefits. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Advice on telling children of the death. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Advice on withdrawing from a Care Home. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Organ donation procedures explained. <input type="radio"/> Signposting - Liaison with Police/Coroner/GP/Social Worker etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Trust specific Bereavement leaflet including emotional/ spiritual advice and support and signposting to bereavement support. <input type="radio"/> One Stop Service for collection of MCCD/cremation papers/funeral director white form. <input type="radio"/> Contact details and appointment service for visiting the deceased. <input type="radio"/> Trust specific post mortem/coroner information leaflet. <input type="radio"/> Trust specific bereavement survey and detailed information of how this will be issued and returned. <input type="radio"/> Introduction to Formal Counselling as part of One Stop Service. <input type="radio"/> Trust wide bereavement counselling. <input type="radio"/> Access to family support worker to advise or provide support with telling children of the death. <input type="radio"/> Access to discussion with Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation if required.
BEREAVEMENT FACILITIES FOR CARERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Family rooms available on the ward. <input type="radio"/> Showers and bathrooms available (Public). <input type="radio"/> Dedicated free parking when visiting the mortuary/ MCCD collection. <input type="radio"/> Access to chaplaincy and spiritual support. <input type="radio"/> Bereavement room/Quiet Room. <input type="radio"/> Deceased remains on the ward until transfer to the mortuary is arranged. <input type="radio"/> Ward staff to proactively support carers at the time death occurs and advise on immediate ward processes e.g. last offices, verification of death, personal belongings, how long they can stay with patient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Family rooms with sleep over facilities available on the ward. <input type="radio"/> Showers and bathrooms available (private for carers). <input type="radio"/> Deceased remains on the ward for as long as feasibly possible. <input type="radio"/> Dedicated staff (voluntary or trained) to support carers at the time death occurs.
BEREAVEMENT OFFICE & MORTUARY SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bereavement Office identifiable on hospital map. <input type="radio"/> Staff are aware of Bereavement Office location and able to direct to it. <input type="radio"/> Bereavement office readily identifiable from the car parks and hospital corridor. <input type="radio"/> Trust specific bereavement procedure for NOK who lack capacity. <input type="radio"/> Visiting weekdays (9-5). <input type="radio"/> Property and valuable returns bags (non-transparent, polythene). <input type="radio"/> Plastic wallet to hold MCCD and important leaflets. <input type="radio"/> Neutral and non-clinical visiting area in mortuary. <input type="radio"/> Trust policy on transferring the deceased when death occurs in a non-ward area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bereavement office in suitable location away from busy areas of the hospital. <input type="radio"/> Visiting 24 hours/7 days. <input type="radio"/> Property returns bags (customised) and "non-hospital" looking. <input type="radio"/> Bespoke folder to hold MCCD and important leaflets. <input type="radio"/> Visiting facilities developed in line with the regional Gold Standard (see attached). <input type="radio"/> Processes to offer mementos to bereaved relatives - e.g. seeded memory cards, memory tree/wall, engraved plaques, hand/foot prints, lock of hair or similar, deceased clothing cushion cover).
EDUCATION & TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bereavement staff to have undertaken a minimum of core Communication Skills Training . <input type="radio"/> Ward staff receive core communication skills in speaking to bereaved relatives. <input type="radio"/> Ward staff receive awareness training to utilise Advance Care Planning information in delivering care at the time of death and into bereavement. <input type="radio"/> Ward staff receive training in cultural differences regarding body preparation. <input type="radio"/> Ward staff receive training on performing last offices. <input type="radio"/> Medical staff to receive training on death certification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Bereavement Team staff (including clerical) have access to all levels of Communication Skills Training in line with their needs. <input type="radio"/> Ward staff have received the appropriate level of communication skills training required for speaking to bereaved relatives in line with their needs. <input type="radio"/> Appropriate staff receive full training to develop an Advance Care Plan for care at the time of death and into bereavement <input type="radio"/> Bereavement services processes (including death certification) to form part of corporate induction for all staff