

Outstanding Care,
Compassionate People,
Healthier Communities



Sherwood Forest Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

A hospital arranged public health funeral

Information for you, your family and friends



Spiritual &
Pastoral Care

Who arranges a funeral?

A close family member or executor usually takes responsibility for arranging the funeral of a person who has died. The person may have made provision themselves in a will or pre-paid funeral plan.

Help with funeral costs

Where family are willing to arrange a funeral but can't meet the costs, they may be eligible for a funeral expenses payment if they are in receipt of certain benefits. More information can be found at:

www.gov.uk/funeral-payments

Alternatively, it is possible to explore lower cost funeral options. Money Helper has information about funeral costs and how to reduce them.

Family and friends may also contribute in order to meet the funeral cost, rather than one person trying to afford the full cost.

A hospital arranged public health funeral

Where there is no one able or willing to make the arrangements for a funeral of a patient who has died in hospital, the NHS can arrange a public health funeral under Section 46 of The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.

Where there is no alternative, the hospital will make all the arrangements for a basic funeral (including registering the death) and look to recover the costs from the estate of the deceased.

Where there is no information available about any relatives or funeral provision, the hospital will liaise with the council and housing providers to arrange access to the last known address of the person who has died, to look for any will or funeral plan, relative's details, bank details and cash.

Any relative who is identified and is not able or willing to arrange the funeral and wishes the hospital to undertake this, will need to agree that the cost of the funeral will be recouped from the estate of the person who had died.

Where the person who has died has recorded a wish for either cremation or burial, this will be respected, as will any faith tradition. The hospital cannot undertake to respect any other requests.

Public health funerals are no-frills services and do not include flowers, viewings, obituaries or transport for family members. You cannot choose a funeral director or the date or time of a public health funeral. Burials may take place in an unmarked grave, known as a common grave, that may be shared with other people. Family members who wish to claim cremated remains may be allowed to do so at the discretion of the hospital, but this is not always possible.

The person who has died will be provided with a coffin and the services of the hospital's contracted funeral director. There can be a short committal ceremony for the person who has died, in the chapel or at the graveside conducted by a hospital chaplain.

Recouping the cost of the funeral

The funeral and administration costs are taken from public funds for healthcare in the first instance. Every effort will be taken to recoup these costs.

The hospital will contact any agents known to hold money for the person who has died. If the person who has died has no monies or property in their estate, the hospital cannot recoup the cost of arranging the funeral, which has a direct impact on the provision of vital healthcare provision.

Where the Trust is holding patient's monies that were taken into safe keeping by the Trust when the patient was admitted to hospital, the Trust will use these monies towards the funeral and administration costs before approaching external agencies, such as banks and building societies.

Contact the Spiritual and Pastoral Care Team

Please speak to us if you have any questions or if we can be of any further support.

The Spiritual and Pastoral Care Team office hours are Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Outside of these hours please leave a message and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 3047

Email: sfh-tr.spiritualandpastoralcare@nhs.net

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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