

Role of the Mortuary/Bereavement Services at the Royal Liverpool Hospital

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Governance of Mortuaries

- **All mortuaries in the UK have to have a license regulated by the Human Tissue Authority that was appointed by the Government.**
- **This was set up in the 90's after Alder Hey & Bristol Heart Scandal.**
- **This regulates removal, and use of human tissue for post mortem examination, education & training as well as storage of deceased patients.**
- **New guidelines state that deceased patients must be put into frozen storage 30 days after death if there is no next of kin or family/friends.**
- **This poses challenges for mortuary services especially in busy periods.**

Roles and Functions of the Mortuary

- **The receipt and temporary storage of bodies.**
- **Investigations into the cause of death by performing a PM examination of the body.**
- **The demonstration of PM findings in cases of clinical interest or for teaching purposes.**
- **The viewing and/or identification of a body.**
- **accommodating visiting relatives/next of kin.**

Post-mortems may be required on:

- **Deaths occurring in hospital, which are covered by the local hospital trust.**
- **People brought to the A&E department who are dead on arrival.**



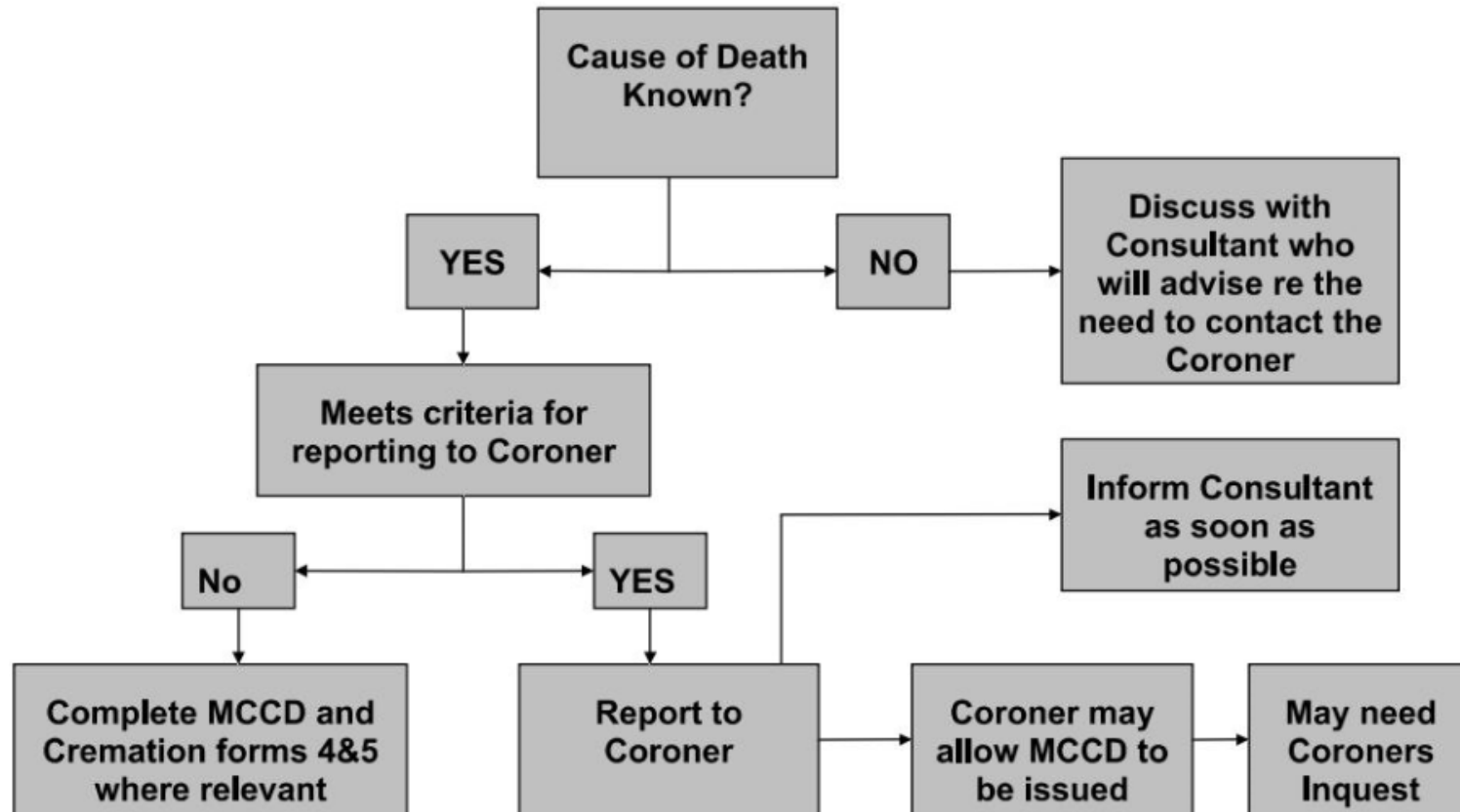
Care after Death includes:

- **Honouring the spiritual or cultural wishes of the deceased person and their family/carers while ensuring legal obligations are met**
- **Preparing the body for transfer to the mortuary or the funeral director's premises**
- **Offering family and carers present the opportunity to participate in the process and supporting them to do so**
- **Ensuring that the privacy and dignity of the deceased person is maintained**
- **Ensuring that the health and safety of everyone who comes into contact with the body is protected**
- **Returning the deceased person's personal possessions to their relatives.**

What does the Mortuary Service provide for the deceased & bereaved families at The Royal Liverpool, Aintree & Broadgreen Hospitals ?

- **Care and Respect of the Deceased until release to the Funeral Director**
- **Liaising with the Coroners staff, police, social workers and General Practitioners**
- **Viewing/Ritual Washing Facilities**
- **Cultural Support**
- **Out of Hours Release**
- **24/7 Mortuary Service with On Call Facility**
- **Emotional support to family, friends and extended relatives**

What Happens After Death?



Who can register a death?

A death can registered by one of the following people:

- Anyone who was present at the death.
- A relative who was present during the person's final period of illness.
- A relative living in the register office district where the death took place.
- An owner or occupier of the part of the building where the death took place if they were aware of the death.
- The person arranging the funeral, but not the funeral director.
- An occupier from the hospital or hospice where the death occurred

So.....what happens if the deceased has no one or nobody will take responsibility of the funeral?

- **Bereavement Services will know in advance if the patient has no next of kin.**
- **Challenges exist when relatives then refuse to take on the responsibility.**
- **Searches will be undertaken to find relatives**
- **Between 2015 – 2017 there was 73 funerals that were dealt with by the hospital or the local council. The average time from date of death to cremation over the 3 years is 37 days. The turnaround time for date of death to release to the funeral directors is 6 days in Liverpool. Most southern mortuaries are 12 working days to cremation.**

Challenges faced by Mortuaries & Bereavement Services in the NHS

- Mortuaries end up with very limited space especially when there are winter pressures.
- Social deprived areas/high unemployment areas have more cases to deal with.
- The process is time consuming.
- There are limited freezer spaces to accommodate 'long stay' patients.
- When the deceased has slightly deteriorated, viewing is harder to conduct for long lost relatives that have been found.
- Identifying that some families cannot pay.
- Families refuse to take on the responsibility.
- The time it takes to recuperate funeral expenses from various financial organisations.
- Distresses staff when patient has no family/friends to deal with the funeral.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!