

Date: 23/10/2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 012459 – Funerals/next of kin

What happens when a patient dies in the care of the trust and there are no details of the next of kin provided?

The Trust conducts *contract* funerals - 'where a patient has died within The Trust and has no next of kin'.

If a person dies in hospital and has relatives who will not, or cannot arrange a funeral for whatever reason, the death is referred to Dudley MBC for a '*Public Health Funeral*'.

The Trust only arranges funerals when there are no next of kin.

2. Who tries to locate/trace the next of kin if the information is unknown? (name, department and contact details)

Bereavement Officer

Bereavement Office

Russells Hall Hospital

Dudley

West Midlands DY1 2HQ

If the Trust arranges a contract funeral we instruct the funeral directors to place an obituary notice in the local paper.

3. What are the steps taken to locate the next of kin of the deceased patient?

The bereavement staff will look through the patient notes to try and find a next of kin. If no one can be found the Trust instructs Dudley Metropolitan Council to do a property search and bring us any useful information that might help us to contact next of kin. If next of kin cannot be traced the Trust forwards details of the patient to a company called Estates Research who will try to trace family through birth certificates etc.

4. What happens when the trust is unable to locate the next of kin?

The Trust conducts funerals where a patient has died within The Trust and has no relatives.

5. If the patient dies within the care of the trust and the next of kin cannot be traced, whose responsibility is it to provide a funeral? (name and contact details)

Bereavement Officer

Bereavement Office

Russells Hall Hospital

Dudley

West Midlands DY1 2HQ

6. On how many instances has the trust provided a funeral for a patient (time frame January 2014 to present)?

The Trust has provided 1 contract funeral

7. Of these public health funerals please provide:

a) Name of deceased

b) Date of birth and date of death

c) Last residential address

d) Have the next of kin/family members been traced?

e) What date have the details been referred to the QLTR, Bona Vacantia, Treasury Solicitor, Government Legal Department, National Ultimus Haeres, Duchy or Farrer & Co?

If a person dies in hospital and has relatives who will not, or cannot arrange a funeral for whatever reason, the death is referred to Dudley MBC for a 'Public Health Funeral'.

Dudley MBC will hold the information you require.

8. Have there been cases where the trust has referred/or plan on referring details of the deceased patient to the Treasury Solicitor/Government Legal Department, Bona Vacantia, National Ultimus Haeres, Crown Solicitor, Duchy Farrer & Co or QLTR?

The Trust has looked back over a five year period and there have been no referrals to the above

9. Which other organisations have details (of the deceased with no known kin) been passed to and why?

If a person dies in hospital and has relatives who will not, or cannot arrange a funeral for whatever reason, the death is referred to Dudley MBC for a Public Health Funeral.

Also Estates research (see question 3)

10. Does the trust conduct an asset search and/or will search?

No

11. Which department deals with the deceased's assets? (name and contact details)

If property is held at the Trust and if it is valuable:

General Office Manager
General Office
Russells Hall Hospital,
Dudley West Midlands
DY1 2HQ

If it is clothing it is the:

Bereavement Officer
Bereavement Office
Russells Hall Hospital
Dudley
West Midlands DY1 2HQ

12. Is the trust responsible for selling the assets in order to compensate for the funeral costs?

No

13. Does the trust have an Empty Homes department? (name, contact details)

No

14. What is the role of the Empty Homes department?

Not applicable