

Bereavement follow-up

Standard operating procedure (SOP) | HSP-SOP-005

Document type	Standard operating procedure (SOP)
Title	Bereavement follow-up
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Prepared by	{{roles.quality_lead.name}}, Quality lead
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Effective date	{{document.effective_date}}
Next review	{{document.review_date}} (12 months, or sooner after any incident or change)
Replaces	None (new document)
Standards and criteria supported	Standard 10 (Hospice and Palliative Care), criterion 10.8
Evidence basis	E-006, E-009
Status of this document	Recommended best-practice model. A hospital may adopt, adapt or replace it with an equivalent that meets the same criteria.

At a glance: what to do

1. Families are offered follow-up after each death, within the set time.
2. The offer and the answer are recorded (HSP-FRM-003).
3. Families who accept are referred to a bereavement service.
4. Follow-up is offered again if the family asks later.

Stop and get help straight away if: a death is recorded with no bereavement offer to the family.

1. Purpose

To offer families help after a death and record the offer (10.8).

2. Scope

Applies to	Clinical and support staff in the hospital
Locations	All wards, clinics and departments of {{facility.legal_name}}
When	Whenever the activity described is carried out
Does not apply to	Activities covered by another document listed in section 15

3. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning in this SOP
Clinical lead	The doctor or nurse in charge of the area at the time

4. Background and rationale

To offer families help after a death and record the offer (10.8).

5. Responsibilities

Role	Duties in this SOP	Competence needed
Social worker or nurse	Makes the offer and refers	Nurse
Lead palliative clinician	Reviews the follow-up record	Clinician

6. Equipment, materials and resources

Item	Specification or standard	Check before use
Records and forms named in this document	Current version	Checked before use

7. Safety and infection prevention

- Stop and call for help if a patient is at immediate risk. Do not delay urgent care to complete paperwork.

8. Before you start

- Confirm the forms and equipment named in this document are available and current.

9. Procedure

Follow the steps in order. Where a step says "If", take the action for the case that applies. Do not skip a step. If a step cannot be done, use section 11 and section 12.

Step	Action	How to do it	Key point
1	Offer.	• Offer bereavement follow-up to the family within the set time after the death.	Offered after each death.
2	Record.	• Record the offer and the answer on HSP-FRM-003.	Always recorded.
3	Refer.	• Refer families who accept to a bereavement service.	Referred when accepted.

Decision points

- No decision points in this procedure.

10. Special situations

Situation	What to do
Out of hours	Follow the same steps. Use the on-call contact on the wall of the area.

11. Problems and escalation

- Any serious problem goes to the duty clinical lead at once and to the clinical director the same day.

12. Monitoring and compliance

What is checked	Target	How often	Who	If the target is missed
Deaths with a bereavement offer recorded	100%	Monthly	Lead palliative clinician	Escalate to medical director

13. Records

Record	Where it is kept	Kept for
Record named in this document	Patient record or the area file	{{facility.records_retention_years}} years

14. Training and competence

- Staff are trained in this document at induction and refreshed each year, with a recorded competency check.

15. Related documents

ID	Title	Relationship
HSP-FRM-003	Family support and bereavement follow-up record	Record

16. Evidence

ID	Source and status
E-009	Based on the WHO Palliative Care fact sheet and the Lancet Commission on the Global Access to Palliative Care and Pain Relief (2017).
E-006	ASF Policy Framework v1.2. Adapted.
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.

EC = ASF Expert Committee consensus. Items marked EC are reviewed by the Committee each year.

17. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approver and signature
1.0	{{document.effective_date}}	First version	Pending Expert Committee approval