

BEREAVEMENT COVID-19

We would like to extend our sincere condolences to you at this very difficult time. Please note that since the publishing of our bereavement booklets, many temporary practical changes have been introduced due to COVID-19. The following information has been developed to support you through the process following bereavement.

You may not have been able to visit your relative while they were in hospital. We acknowledge that this may have added to the distress you are experiencing.

For the foreseeable future it will not be possible to view the deceased at the Hospital Chapel of Rest. However, advice regarding viewings should be discussed with your chosen Funeral Director.

Bereavement Services

You will need to contact the Hospital Bereavement Team as soon as possible (usually the next working day) on:

Walsall Manor Hospital 01922 656837

The Bereavement Officer will ask for confirmation about contact details and will provide information regarding the formal and legal process of Death Certification, Registration of Death and when you will be able, to start making funeral arrangements.

Arrangements for processing of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, and the Registration of Death

You will not be required to come to the hospital to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), this will be sent directly to the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths by the Hospital Bereavement Services Team.

You will need to go online to make an appointment with the Registrar; they are based at the Town Hall in Walsall. The Registrar will need to contact you at the date and time of your appointment to confirm the following information required to formally register the death;-

- The date and place of death
- The deceased last address
- The deceased first name(s) and surname (and maiden name if applicable)
- The deceased date and place of birth
- The deceased occupation and the name and occupation of spouse (if application)
- Whether the deceased was getting a pension or allowance from public funds
- If the deceased was married, the date of birth of the surviving widow or widower

The Registrar will then be able to inform you about the arrangements for sending your Funeral Director the 'Green Form' to allow the service to take place. Your Funeral Director will be able to tell you the latest guidance regarding funeral arrangements.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Patient Relations Team

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the Patient Relations Team. They offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our Patient Relations Team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can escalate your concerns with the Patient Relations Team, who can investigate your concerns formally. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact Patient Relations Team:

Telephone: 01922 656463 or via email: patientrelations@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk
Opening times: 9am-4pm

The telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am-4pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

Feedback

Feedback is really important to the Trust, if you let the bereavement team know, they will post you a VOICES bereavement survey with a pre-paid envelope, which will allow you to give complaints, comments or compliments.

Advice for relative/family member on collection of property

There is currently no national guidance regarding COVID-19 and patient property.

Limited research has shown the virus is capable of surviving on surfaces for several days. It is clear that cleaning is very effective for getting rid of the virus.

- Property will be in a sealed (tied) bag when handed over to you.
- Leave the bag of property sealed for several days before opening when you get back home.
- Observe the Government Guidelines around hand hygiene (thorough washing for 20 seconds with soap and water) after handling the property.
- Any soft furnishings/clothes should be washed. Other hard items (phones/keys) should be wiped clean with a detergent or antimicrobial wipe (commonly found in supermarkets) or detergent and water and basic household fabric cleaning cloth (not kitchen roll).
- Fabrics should be washed in washing machine (not by hand) and your hands washed after handling the items while putting them in the washing machine.
- Items that can be wiped should be cleaned. Toiletries and items that are not personal should be thrown away.
- Items that you do not wish to keep can be disposed of in a black bag and put immediately into the household waste stream.

For those relatives who are self-isolating we can offer a drop off service (volunteers) to bring your loved ones property to your door. This can be arranged via General Office on 01922 656207.

Family Liaison Team

There are lots of people involved in the care of your relative, and we realise that the immediate family and carers need to be cared for too. Being in hospital at this time is even more stressful, especially when visiting your loved one has been restricted. The Family Liaison Team is a non-medical team that can support you during/following your relatives' admission to hospital. You may need to be referred to other teams in our Trust. The team will continue to support you, if you agree to this and will liaise on your behalf.

How can the Family Liaison Team help you?

The team can:

- Speak with you and find out more about your relative and your family.
- Listen to any worries or concerns you may have and work with you to find the different ways we may be able to help.
- Speak with other hospital staff and professionals on your behalf, and with your permission. These could include doctors and nursing staff and people involved in the care of your loved one.
- Direct you to other external teams and/or organisations that may be able to help you.
- Discuss any worries you may have about others in your family.
- Help to arrange for an appropriate person to speak with you if you have any specific medical worries regarding the treatment your loved one is receiving/received.

How to contact a member of the Family Liaison Team:

Ask any member of staff on the ward and they will put you in contact with a member of the team. You can also contact them directly via telephone on 07790 981 819

Alternatively you can send an email to:
FamilyLiaisonsCovid19@walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk

The team are available Monday - Friday, 9am-4:30pm, Saturday - Sunday, 9am-5pm.

Bereavement Counselling and Emotional Support

The Bereavement Support Team (based at Walsall Palliative Care Centre) is available to all relatives who have suffered bereavement due to the COVID-19 virus at Walsall Manor Hospital.

You can contact us directly to make an enquiry via our admin team on 01922-602570 (Monday-Friday) 9am-5pm, or just ask a member of staff to refer you to the service.

This sheet has been donated by RNS Publications, who understand it is distressing to deal with a bereavement.

Unsolicited mail can be insensitive and destructive during a grieving process, to reduce this, please visit stopmail.co.uk which has been provided to support you.