



Key principles bereaved families can expect us to follow

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1

Bereaved families and carers are treated as equals following bereavement

- We are mindful that families and carers may not have access to the same resources as the NHS – such as information and knowledge.
- We'll ensure we listen.
- We'll use plain, understandable language to communicate.
- We'll share information on how to access medical and other records.
- We have a clear policy for engaging bereaved families and carers when investigating deaths - this includes a commitment to answering questions and concerns about the quality of care a loved one received.

2

We'll be clear, honest and compassionate, in a sympathetic environment

- Families and carers will only receive the news of a loved one's death once.
- A 'human' rather than 'clinical' approach is important at this time.
- Anyone bereaved is treated with respect, kindness and compassion.
- We'll acknowledge families' and carers' grief.
- Challenges from families and carers are received positively.
- We'll communicate in a timely, consistent and compassionate way - including notification of a death (of an investigation, lessons learned and actions taken, where relevant).

3

Bereaved families 'and carers' confidentiality, values, culture and beliefs are respected and we will provide contacts for specialist suicide bereavement support

- Families and carers are offered information about services that support them, including how to gain access to counselling inside or outside of Oxleas NHS.
- The investigation or complaints process can be damaging for families and carers on top of grieving. We'll share information about counselling and organisations that provide these services.
- Where families and carers receive a letter from us, following the death of a loved one in our care, we'll include information about support and points of contact for questions or concerns.

4

Information about how to raise a concern about the quality of care provided to a loved one will be shared with families and carers

- Families are told about the different ways they can raise concerns and the processes involved explained.
- We encourage a learning culture, so that families and carers can raise concerns - as this may also highlight issues that may not otherwise be identified.

5

Bereaved families' and carers' views help to inform decisions about whether a review or investigation is needed

- We encourage an open and transparent culture and seek to support families through an investigation.
- We recognise that families and carers often have useful information we may not be aware of.
- Where an investigation doesn't take place when requested, families and carers are involved in discussions about why and can appeal or raise issues elsewhere are shared.

6

Bereaved families and carers receive timely, responsive contact and support in an investigation process

- Families and carers need consistent and clear communication from a senior member of staff, with authority to take decisions on the trust's behalf.
- Timescales are agreed and kept to, with any missed deadlines explained, where possible in advance.

7

Bereaved families and carers offer a unique source of information and evidence that can better inform investigations

- Families and carers should not be left to seek out information and learn how processes work through their own initiative and determination.
- Families and carers should be able to contribute to investigations.
- Families' and carers' views should be welcomed and received positively.

We aim to respond fully to points raised - where we can't, we will explain.

8

Bereaved families and carers who have experienced an investigation can work with us to make improvements

- We aim to use families' and carers' experiences in developing our skills by giving staff opportunities to hear their voices first hand.
- We recognise that reviewing and investigating deaths offers an opportunity for learning and a key way to improve the quality of care for all patients.
- Where we receive feedback, including positive and negative comments about the care and support provided, we will share this so others can learn from it.

Confidentiality

All staff abide by a strict code of conduct on confidentiality and only share information in order to provide good quality care. We usually discuss this with you first.

Your opinion matters

We welcome your views on the services we provide. PALS is a free, confidential service which helps patients, families and carers deal with any concerns about our treatment and care.

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
(answerphone available)

Email: oxl-tr.pals@nhs.net

Tel: 0800 9177159 (freephone)

(not free from mobile phones)

Raising concerns

Your complaints, comments and suggestions help us improve the services we provide.

Email: oxl-tr.complaints@nhs.net

Tel: 01322 625751

Accessible information

If you'd like information in your own language, large print, audio or other formats, we can arrange this. Please speak to a member of staff.

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