

1. Support for the family

- 1.1 When a patient is known to be dying, the person and their family should, wherever possible, be accommodated in an area offering privacy. NHS Lothian has adopted the thistle image, from the [When Someone Has Died](#) bereavement information pack as a visual tool to support staff to provide a peaceful and dignified environment for dying patients and their families. Further information and resources can be downloaded from the **NHS Lothian Bereavement Service** section of the [staff intranet](#).
- 1.2 Consideration must be shown to individuals' personal preferences, identity, spiritual, faith and cultural values. Guidance on faith and cultural practices is available in NHS Education for Scotland's **Multi-Faith Resource for Healthcare Staff**, which is available on the [NES website](#). Guidance from NHS Education for Scotland on **Supporting LGBT+ people around death and bereavement** is available on the [Support around Death website](#).
- 1.3 Families should be offered the support of a Hospital Chaplain or other faith representative. Chaplains offer spiritual and pastoral care to people, whatever their beliefs or life situations. An on-call chaplain is available 24 hours a day and can be contacted through the hospital switchboard.
- 1.4 If the family is not present at the time of death, they must be informed by a professional with appropriate communication skills. Staff should consider the family's wishes regarding communication e.g. who is the key contact person, do they wish to be contacted overnight? Breaking news of a death by telephone can be difficult but may be necessary. Helpful guidance can be found on the [Support around Death website](#).
- 1.5 Family members may wish to participate in personal care after death (last offices) or view the deceased person and this should be facilitated as appropriate (see sections 9 & 12).
- 1.6 The bereaved family must be offered a copy of the national bereavement booklet [When Someone Has Died](#) which contains advice on practical issues following bereavement - obtaining the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, registering the death, arranging the funeral, etc – as well as coping with the emotional impact of grief.
- 1.7 Further information and support resources on bereavement are available on the NHS Lothian intranet and public website. This includes information in alternative languages and formats, and resources for different groups including parents and carers, children and young people, older people and people with learning disabilities.
- 1.8 Translation, interpretation and communication support are available through the [NHS Lothian Interpretation and Translation Service](#). These should be used as required in accordance with NHS Lothian's [Interpretation and Translation Policy](#) when communicating with bereaved families. Further information and an online booking system for face-to-face interpreters can be found on the [intranet](#). Staff can also use **thebigword** 24-hour telephone interpreting service. To use this service you will need the [big word user guide](#), [language identification chart](#) and [language codes](#).