10. Transfer of deceased person from ward to care of mortuary/funeral director

NHS Lothian

For sites with mortuary facilities: See section 10.1 below and [Transfer to mortuary flowchart](#)

For sites without mortuary facilities: See section 10.4

10.1 For sites with mortuary facilities

10.1.1 To maintain the dignity of the deceased person and ensure the safety of personnel, staff must identify any risk factors (see Box 9) prior to requesting transfer. This will ensure that the porters have the appropriate equipment and number of personnel required for transfer.

Box 9: Risk assessment for transfer to mortuary:

- Any known risks of infection or contamination?
- Is their weight within the safe working limit of the concealment trolley? These are:
    - RIE – 340 kgs / 50 stone.
    - WGH – 160kgs / 25 stone
    - SJH – 160kgs / 25 stone
- Is their height and width within the dimensions of the concealment trolley?
- standard tray is 55cms wide.
- Are there any risks in relation to their shape and / or position e.g. contracted, lying on their side, etc?

10.1.2 Based on the assessment above, staff must identify:

If the deceased person **can** be safely transferred to the mortuary by concealment trolley, if so follow Section 10.2

If the deceased person **cannot** be safely transferred to the mortuary by concealment trolley, in which case follow Section 10.3

10.2 Transfer to hospital mortuary on concealment trolley

(for overview of process see the [Transfer to mortuary flowchart](#))

10.2.1 When the deceased person is ready to be transferred, staff should contact porters requesting 'transfer of deceased person to the mortuary by concealment trolley'. It is important to use clear and appropriate terminology.

10.1.3 Staff must prepare the room / bed space prior to the porters arriving. This may include removing furniture and equipment so that the concealment trolley can be brought alongside the bed for lateral transfer.

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10.2.4 Porters will collect the concealment trolley from the mortuary and take it to the ward. The concealment trolley ensures that the deceased person is transferred safely and discretely. Prompt transfer to the mortuary is particularly important for larger deceased patients who may begin to deteriorate more quickly.

10.2.5 On arrival at the ward, porters must liaise with nursing staff regarding handover. Nursing staff will:

- Confirm the deceased person has been appropriately prepared for transfer.
- Identify any manual handling risks as required.
- Record the names of porters and time of transfer on the **Mortuary Card DC1** (it is important to know the time of transfer as this may be required e.g. for tissue donation).
- Hand over the **Mortuary Card DC1** and Deceased Inpatient Notification Form to the porters. (**Mortuary Card DC2** should be visible in the clear plastic pocket at the foot of the body bag).
- Ensure that glidesheet(s) and Patslide are available for safe lateral transfer.
- Lead the lateral transfer of the deceased person from the bed to the concealment trolley, together with the porters. This is to ensure that lateral transfer is carried out with the correct number of staff and correct equipment as per NHS Lothian Lateral Transfer Guideline.

10.2.6 Staff must check that the deceased person is positioned in the centre of the concealment trolley, and the sheet should then be folded neatly around the outside of the body bag. No taping is required. This will identify the correct position of the deceased person on the tray to avoid any harm. See NHS Lothian Deceased Patient Handling Procedure and training video for further guidance on positioning and wrapping.

10.2.7 Porters raise sides of the trolley, place concealment cover over the top and transfer the deceased person to the mortuary.

10.2.8 On arrival in the mortuary, porters will select the most appropriate location for ongoing care of the deceased person, seeking support from mortuary staff / Clinical Site Coordinators as necessary (see Box 10 below).

Box 10: Process for placement within mortuary:

- If the deceased person's body **can** be accommodated within the fridge dimensions, porters transfer them to an appropriate space. The Deceased Inpatient Notification Form and **Mortuary Card DC1** should be clipped to the door of the fridge space (RIE / SJH) or placed on board at WGH.
- If the deceased person's size, shape or body position **cannot** be accommodated within fridge dimensions, the process will depend on the site and time when the situation arises (see below).

RIE
- **In hours** – Mortuary staff will oversee transfer the deceased person to Cooled Room in RIE Mortuary.
- **Out of hours** – Clinical Site Coordinator will oversee transfer of the deceased person to Cooled Room in RIE Mortuary.

WGH/SJH

− **In hours** - Mortuary staff will arrange transfer of the deceased person to RIE Mortuary for ongoing care in larger bariatric fridge / Cooled Room or direct transfer to the family appointed funeral director.
On arrival at RIE, porters and RIE Mortuary staff will assess patient for appropriate care in fridge or Cooled Room as above.
Out of hours – Clinical Site Coordinator should establish if transfer of care to a family appointed funeral director can be achieved within a reasonable time frame as this is preferred. They should ask ward staff to contact the deceased person's family to advise of potential transfer to RIE and give them the opportunity for their own funeral director to attend for an out of hours transfer of care. If this is not possible the Clinical Site Coordinator will arrange transfer of the deceased person to RIE Mortuary for ongoing care in larger bariatric fridge or Cooled Room. They will need to liaise with RIE Clinical Site Coordinator to make them aware of transfer, NHSL's contract funeral director (Fosters Funeral Services 0131 629 3131) to arrange transfer to RIE as well as ward staff to update them of transfer. On arrival at RIE, porters and RIE Clinical Site Coordinator will assess patient for appropriate care in fridge or Cooled Room as above.

For all transfers to RIE Mortuary from other sites
− The [Deceased Inpatient Notification Form](#) and **Mortuary Cards DC1 & 2** must be placed in the top clear plastic pocket on the body bag and transferred with the deceased person.
− The transfer must be recorded on TRAK.
− Ward staff must update the deceased person's family of their transfer to RIE for appropriate ongoing care.

10.2.9   Once transfer is complete, the porters should put concealment trolley back on charge in the mortuary to ensure it is ready for next use.

10.3   Transfer to hospital mortuary on bed (in and out of hours)

(for overview of process see the [Transfer to mortuary flowchart](#)

10.3.1   When the deceased person is ready to be transferred, ward staff should contact porters requesting 'Transfer of deceased person to the mortuary on bed with XCcube'. It is important to use appropriate terminology and to be clear about the type of transfer required to ensure that correct equipment is brought to ward. **N.B.** The XCcube is a piece of equipment that's used to cover the hospital bed (including bariatric) to allow discrete and dignified transfer of the deceased person to the mortuary. Ward staff should advise if additional handlers are required to assist.

10.3.2   If transfer is **out of hours**, staff must also contact Clinical Site Coordinator to inform them of the transfer as this will ensure that they attend the mortuary to complete further assessment.

10.3.3   Staff must prepare the room / bed space prior to the porters arriving. This may include removing furniture and equipment to allow space for the XCcube to be assembled.

10.3.4 Porters collect the XCcube from the mortuary and take it to the ward. It is best practice for porters to transfer the deceased person from the ward to the mortuary within one hour of request so they can be cooled within four hours of death. Prompt transfer to the mortuary is particularly important for larger deceased patients who may begin to deteriorate more quickly.

10.3.5 On arrival at the ward, porters must liaise with nursing staff regarding handover. Nursing staff will:

- Confirm the deceased person has been appropriately prepared for transfer.
- Identify any manual handling risks as required.
- Record the names of porters and time of transfer on the Mortuary Card DC1 (it is important to record the time of transfer as this may be required later e.g. for tissue donation).
- Hand over the Mortuary Card DC1 and Deceased Inpatient Notification Form to the porters. (Mortuary Card DC2 should be visible in the clear plastic pocket at the top of the body bag).

10.3.6 Porters will assemble and position the XCcube over the bed according to manufacturers' instructions and transfer the deceased person to the mortuary ensuring sufficient staff are present to safely manoeuvre the bed.

10.3.7 On arrival in mortuary, porters and / or mortuary staff (in hours) or Clinical Site Coordinator (out of hours) will use a measuring device to identify the most appropriate location for ongoing care (see Box 10 on previous page). This decision must be documented in Section 4 of the Deceased Inpatient Notification Form.

10.3.8 Once transfer is complete, the porters should return the XCcube to agreed location within mortuary to be cleaned and packed by mortuary staff ready for next use.

10.3.9 Any transfers from other sites to RIE Mortuary must be recorded on TRAK. Ward staff must be advised of the transfer so they can inform family regarding transfer and viewing arrangements. For viewings in hours, ward staff should contact RIE Mortuary (who can request support from Bereavement Service / Spiritual Care as necessary), out of hours contact RIE Clinical Site Coordinator.

10.4   For sites without mortuary facilities:

10.4.1 To maintain the dignity of the deceased person and ensure the safety of personnel, staff must identify any risk factors (see Box 11) prior to requesting transfer. This will ensure that the funeral director has the appropriate equipment and number of personnel required for transfer.

Box 11: Risk assessment for transfer to funeral director:

- Any known risks of infection or contamination?
- Cardiac pacemaker or any other potentially explosive device present?
- Any medical equipment left in-situ?
- Any problematic leakages?

> − Are height, width and weight within the safe working limit of the funeral director's transfer trolley?
> − Are there any risks in relation to their shape and / or position e.g. contracted limbs or lying on their side?

10.4.2 Staff must prepare the room / bed space prior to the funeral director arriving. This may include removing furniture and equipment to accommodate the transfer trolley. Staff must ensure that glidesheet(s) and Patslide are available for safe lateral transfer onto the funeral director's transfer trolley.

10.4.3 Ensure that the Deceased Inpatient Notification Form is completed and any variances of care have been recorded.

10.4.4 When the deceased person is ready to be transferred, contact the funeral director to arrange this. First preference is always to contact the family's chosen funeral director.

10.4.5 If the family has not selected a funeral director, or if it is not possible to contact the family within a reasonable timeframe to confirm their wishes, staff should contact the funeral director contracted by NHS Lothian to provide ongoing care until the family has reached a decision. Currently this is Fosters Funeral Services who can be contacted on 0131 629 3131 24hrs / 7 days per week.

10.4.6 If NHS Lothian's contract funeral director is used for interim care, the family must be advised that they will not be charged for this service and they are under no obligation to use this funeral director.

10.4.7 When the funeral director collects the deceased person, staff are required to check the ID bands and the information on the Deceased In-patient Notification Form correspond. **There is now a requirement for three identifier checks with the funeral director i.e. Name/ Date of Birth /Address**. The funeral Director must be advised of any relevant risks regarding ongoing care and the top copy of the Deceased Inpatient Notification Form must be given to the funeral director and the carbon copy filed in the deceased person's health records.