

## 18. Patients with no known next of kin, or relatives who are unwilling/unable to make arrangements



- 18.1 When a patient dies with no known or traceable next of kin, or if family are unwilling or unable to make the necessary arrangements, staff should refer the case to the NHS Lothian Bereavement Service as soon as possible for advice and assistance. Telephone 0131 242 6995 (ext 26995) or email [bereavement.service@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:bereavement.service@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk).
- 18.2 In such cases the Bereavement Service can make enquiries to trace next of kin and, if necessary, will make arrangements to refer to the National Ultimus Haeres Unit, register the death and organise a simple dignified funeral. This can be a prolonged process so early notification to the Bereavement Service is essential to ensure that timely and dignified arrangements can be made.
- 18.3 Mortuary SOPs and service level agreements with funeral directors contracted to provide care for patients who die in sites without mortuary facilities must include the escalation procedure to be followed if the deceased person is still in the mortuary after 5 days and no contact has been made from a funeral director or family representative regarding transfer of care.