

DEATH/BEREAVEMENT

For all patients who die in the department, you should notify:

1. Relatives
2. General Practitioner, by phone
3. Procurator Fiscal, if appropriate

It is the duty of the Procurator fiscal to enquire into all **sudden, suspicious, accidental, unexpected and unexplained deaths**. The vast majority of deaths in A&E are in these categories and must be reported. A few deaths will be expected e.g. known malignancy and these can be certified, after discussion with the GP, and without reporting to the PF. Write the names of patients to be reported to the PF on the white board at the doctor's station. Leave the case notes in the death folder. Complete trak questionnaire ([see pathway](#))

It is the responsibility of the Middle grade to report these deaths. It is advisable to contact the GP first, both to inform them of the death and also to get more past medical history. (Also helpful to get old notes for patient) The telephone number for the deaths unit is in the Deaths folder at the doctor's station.

Please inform the nurse in charge of progress, as they will be able to contact relatives for collection of the death certificate if issued.

Where death is unexpected but explained, the PF may agree with you issuing the death certificate after discussion.

Please read the notes in the death certificate book and the booklet "death and the procurator fiscal". Be particularly aware of the list of "deaths to be reported..." and "deaths under medical care/medical mishap"

It is bad practice to pronounce the patient dead in the back of an ambulance. The patient should be brought into the department for proper assessment in a good light before formal pronouncement of death.

There are, unfortunately occasions on which we have to deal with bereaved relatives. They will normally be shown into the relatives room (to the right of Dr Hislop's office) and an offer of coffee or tea and the use of a telephone will be made. The nurses are very experienced at dealing with them. A member of the medical staff should inform them of the death. Most often this will be the responsibility of the consultant/middle grade staff.

It is routine practice to offer relatives an opportunity to be alone with their loved ones so that they are given time to say goodbye.

Information leaflets regarding the registration of death and other paperwork are available in the department.