**Standard Operating Procedure**

**Managing the death of an Overseas Employee**

**Date: April 2020**

**Version: 01**

**Written by: Head of People Operations**

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**1 Purpose**

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been written to describe the procedures that should be followed in the event of death of an overseas worker.

Such a document acknowledges the change in diversity that has been seen across the Trust’s workforce in recent times and details specific cultural differences that Managers will need to consider when dealing with such situations.

**2 Introduction**

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust (The Trust) are committed to ensure that in the sad event of death to an overseas worker during their service at the Trust, that their wishes and those of their next of kin are respected at all times. This will be in accordance with the Trust’s values and any applicable legal requirements

Should the death occur during a pandemic, the Trust will refer to government guidance linked to any specific requirements that might apply to management of the deceased. This would include any guidance on travel restrictions which could affect repatriation.

**3 Responsibility**

The person with overall responsibility for ensuring this SOP is adhered to and kept up to date is the Head of People Operations

**4 Procedure**

This procedure is designed to cover those workers who have been employed from overseas to work in the Trust and provides information on cultural requirements which will need to be adhered to sensitively.

This procedure which should be read in conjunction with the Death in Service Policy is applicable to those Trust employees who have been directly recruited from overseas or who originate from a country outside of the UK.

The procedure also highlights information linked to cultural requirements that the Trust will need to adhere to sensitively.

**5 Informing the next of kin of the death**

Following the procedure outlined in the Death in Service Policy, the Line Manager should contact the OD & People department to request next of kin details.

Unless the clinical team have already informed the next of kin, the relevant Director will contact them to advise them of the news.

These details should be passed to the relevant Clinical Director/Head of Nursing to enable contact with the next of kin to be made

Discussions at this point must establish any specific religious beliefs/requirements (see below) and any requirements linked to repatriation. The Trust is committed to work closely with the next of kin to ensure that such requirements are met wherever possible.

**6 Requirements and observations in the event of death of an overseas worker by religion**

**6.1 Buddhism**

Many Buddhists believe that the soul of the deceased does not leave the body immediately. Therefore it is crucial for the corpse to be treated like a living person and moved with respect. It is customary for Buddhists and family members to chant sacred texts at the time of death.

**6.2 Christianity**

Some Christians will appreciate quiet contemplation while others will value prayers and the reading of scriptures. A priest or minister may be called to say prayers for someone who is dying. Catholics and Orthodox Christians may want to confess to a priest before they die. Funeral services may be held in churches or chapels. People may then be buried or in some cases cremated. Many Catholics oppose cremation, because of the belief in resurrection of the body and soul at the second coming of Jesus.

**6.3 Hinduism**

It is important that jewellery, sacred threads and other religious objects are not removed from the body. The body should then be covered with a plain sheet without any religious markings.. The body should not be washed as this forms part of the funeral rites carried out by relatives.

Post-mortem examinations are not prohibited by Hindu belief however the idea may be seen as distasteful to some Hindus. This topic must be discussed with the next of kin if a post mortem is required All adult Hindus must be cremated not buried; but infants and young children may be buried, and it is usual for this to be done as soon as possible, preferably the same day.

There has been some demand in the UK for a full open air ceremony to be conducted on cremation of the deceased according to ancient Hindu rites. These rites stipulate that the body be cremated by means of a wood-fuelled fire in an open air facility exposed to daylight. At present such practice is illegal in the UK.

**6.4 Islam**

Upon death, those with the deceased are encouraged to remain calm, pray for the departed, and begin preparations for burial. The eyes of the deceased are closed and the body covered temporarily with a clean sheet. It is forbidden for those in mourning to excessively wail, scream, or thrash about. In preparation for burial the family or other members of the community will wash and shroud the body. Muslims strive to bury the deceased as soon as possible after death avoiding the need for embalming or otherwise disturbing the body of the deceased. A post mortem may be performed if necessary but should be done with the upmost respect for the dead.

**6.5 Judaism**

It is usual for a companion to remain with the dying person until death. The dying person should not be touched or moved. It is common for some Jewish communities to have a special group of volunteers, the ‘holy society’ (chevra kaddisha) whose job is to care for the dead. They are responsible for washing the body and preparing for burial in accordance with Jewish custom.

**6.6 Sikhism**

Deliberate expressions of grief are discouraged. When a death occurs, the body is first washed and dressed in clean clothes, complete with the Five K’s (in case of initiated Sikh’s). If the death occurs in a hospital, the body is taken home for the final view of the relatives and friends before cremation.

**7 Repatriation**

Should the need for repatriation of the deceased be a requirement, the Trust will work closely with the family of the deceased and the Bereavement Service, to support the repatriation process as appropriate.

Should repatriation of the deceased be required, the Trust will work closely with the next of kin and the Trust’s Bereavement Service, to support the repatriation process as appropriate.

If repatriation is delayed for any reason e.g. a worldwide pandemic, loss of transport, then the Trust would work in conjunction with the Mortuary and Bereavement Service to scope longer term storage options.