

22. When a child dies – checklist and staff support

The following checklist is a guide to help staff know what to do when a child dies following traumatic injury. This list is not intended to replace local procedures and checklists where they already exist.

SUDIC = Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (applies until 18th birthday) and will include all deaths related to trauma and suicide.

For guidance on when to refer a death to the coroner

<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/when-a-death-is-reported-to-a-coroner>

The following should all be documented clearly and legibly, on a local proforma if this is available:

Child and family details	Child's full name, date of birth and gender
	Child's address
	NHS number and Emergency department ID
	Date of admission
	Next of kin including names, addresses, contact details
	Any other significant family member details, including siblings
	First language and whether interpreter required
	School or nursery
Medical responsibilities	Follow local SUDIC procedure and involve a senior paediatrician
	Document time and place of death, and who certified the death
	Document consultant(s) responsible at time of death
	Make Coroner's referral including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and grade of doctor who made referral • Name of Coroner's officer and contact details • Details and outcome of discussion
	Issue death certificate if the coroner gives permission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of doctor, GMC number, contact details • Cause of death
	Complete Cremation Form if appropriate
	Record police officer name, collar number and contact details
	Consider offering hospital post mortem – if so, arrange for consent
	Consider organ donation and referral to SNOD (specialist nurse in organ donation)
	Inform colleagues previously involved in care of patient
	Inform GP
	Write a formal letter to summarise events leading up to the death, which can be copied to the GP, relevant professionals and the coroner if needed
	If you think you will need to write a statement, complete this in the next week whilst events are fresh in your mind

Nursing responsibilities	Document which nurse(s) involved / present at time of death
	Note any special requests regarding care of child's body / possessions such as clothes and toys
	Organise keepsakes, such as hand and footprints, a lock of hair
	Given written information on bereavement / when a child dies if available
	Make family aware of how to return to see their child after death
	Notify midwife if under 4 weeks old
	Notify health visitor or school nurse depending on age
	Notify local safeguarding team if appropriate
	Notify social care if appropriate
	Identify whether any other agencies involved and notify them
	Identify any local sources of psychology or bereavement support that may be offered to the family
	If you may need to write a statement, complete this in the next week
Leaving the department	Two name bands in situ
	Mortuary card completed
	Mortuary staff informed
	Porters requested
	Update patient information system to record death of the child
	Photocopy all notes and keep them safe

Staff support

The serious injury or death of a child is usually a traumatic event for those involved, including the staff who have looked after the child. After the event, consider holding a meeting inviting all staff involved in the care of the child.

The aims of the meeting should be:

- To review the event and reflect upon what happened
- To provide an opportunity for staff to share their experiences in a safe and supportive environment
- To identify areas of good practice
- To identify any lessons learned
- To identify any further actions that need to be taken, and by whom
- To signpost staff to further support if needed

Staff needing to access further support following an event may do so in the following ways:

1. Individual support from the clinical supervisor / educational supervisor / line manager
2. Referral to the local Occupational Health Service, or local Psychology Service if available
3. Referral to the General Practitioner
4. Referral to professional bodies and unions

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/work-life-support/your-wellbeing>

<https://www.unison.org.uk/>

<http://www.medicalprotection.org/uk>

<http://www.themdu.com/>

http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/pgmde/pgmde/trainee_support/

Appendix 12 - Sources of support for families

<http://www.suddendeath.org/>

Sudden – supporting people after sudden death. An initiative by Brake, the road safety charity

<http://www.brake.org.uk/>

Support for UK residents who have been bereaved or seriously injured in a crash

<https://childbereavementuk.org/>

Support for families after the death of a child, including siblings

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Cruse bereavement care – support for bereaved families

<http://leedssbs.org.uk/>

Leeds suicide bereavement service

<http://www.starwakefield.org.uk/>

Wakefield bereavement support for children

<http://lbforum.org.uk/>

Leeds bereavement forum – charity based in Leeds who will signpost individuals to the most appropriate bereavement service either locally or nationally

<http://www.childfuneralcharity.org.uk/> or <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>

May be able to offer financial support with funeral costs

Children’s Hospices in Yorkshire & Humber

All with the exception of Bluebell Wood offer bereavement support to families not previously registered with the hospice.

<https://www.martinhouse.org.uk/>

Martin House, Wetherby (West, North and East Yorkshire)

<https://www.forgetmenotchild.co.uk/>

Forget Me Not, Huddersfield (West Yorkshire, North and Greater Manchester)

<http://www.standrewshospice.com/andys>

St Andrews (Andy’s), Grimsby (NE Lincs, N Lincs, Hull, East Riding, Lincolnshire)

<http://www.bluebellwood.org/>

Bluebell Wood, Sheffield (South Yorkshire, North Derbyshire, North Nottinghamshire, North Lincolnshire Bassetlaw)