# Dealing with Dying, Death and Bereavement of a Service User

# Westmorland and Furness Care Services

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## Policy

To ensure all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities when a service user is dying.

## Procedure

For any specific information about end-of-life care / last wishes refer to the person-centred care plan and the P15 person centred advanced care statement.

### Deterioration of the service user’s health

1. If a service user is taken ill or their physical condition deteriorates to an extent that causes concerns, the following procedures must be followed:

* Request either a health care professional, appropriate specialist or the emergency services and record the details on the daily records / communication records.
* Ensure all staff members are aware of what is happening and updated as required.
* Amend the service users person centred care plan / person centred advanced care statement / risk assessments including manual handling assessments and any other health monitoring documentation if required.
* Ensure the service user is cared for as agreed and recorded in the person centred care plan / person centred advanced care statement including administration of pain relief.
* Consider staffing levels.
* Ensure the service user’s possessions are at hand.
* Ensure the cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs of the service user are respected.
* Privacy and dignity must be respected at all times.

Other aspects to consider:

* Appropriate lighting, music, curtains etc.
* Other personal care requirements.
1. Staff must follow all appropriate personal care procedures. These should all be recorded on the person-centred care plan.

3. Ensure the next of kin / preferred contact is informed and offer them an opportunity to stay with the service user in accordance with the service user’s wishes.

4. Next of kin / preferred contacts should be asked when and how they wish to be informed of the death, e.g. if death occurs in the middle of the night.

5. Staff must be aware of the possible heightened emotions which may be directed at them and try to be understanding and empathetic.

6. Other service users should be informed of the welfare of the dying service user, if they ask.

### When death is imminent – (following medical advice)

1. Where the service user’s death seems imminent the following actions must be taken:
* Inform the GP of any deterioration. Record any visits, information or advice received from the GP on the daily / communication records including the GP name, the date and the time.
* Inform the next of kin / preferred contact and offer them an opportunity to stay with the service user in accordance with the service user’s wishes and ensure refreshments are offered.
* Ensure the service user is cared for in accordance with the person-centred care plan and Person centred advanced care statement.
* Ensure staff are available to spend time with the service user in accordance with the service user’s wishes, where reasonably possible.
* Ensure staff members respect the dying person, N.B hearing is the last faculty to diminish.

### When suspected death occurs

1. Staff must never assume that death has occurred.
2. The primary health care provider / GP / District Nurse / CHOC / Emergency Services must be telephone immediately and their instructions followed. They must be informed if there is a DNAR (Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation) in place if known.
3. Once the emergency services are in attendance they will take the lead and continue with emergency procedures before confirming the death.
4. Once the emergency services have confirmed the death, the manager or senior member of staff on duty must contact the preferred / emergency contact to inform them of the death.
5. The G.P will still need to certify the death.

### Managing Bereavement – Service Users

1. Other service users should be informed about the death of the service user.

2. Any request from other service users to visit the deceased should be facilitated by the staff if appropriate and in accordance with the deceased’s wishes if captured. If not captured consent must be sought from the deceased’s preferred contact / emergency contact.

3. Staff shall be aware of the feelings of other service users, be open with them and offer them support.

### Managing Bereavement – Staff

1. Staff on duty must be offered the opportunity to discuss the matter and be provided with support and understanding as required.

The Appendix 1 checklist form must be used

### Appendix

[Appendix 1 Death of a Service User Checklist](https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/327/38541/38630/45236174124.docx)