



# Compassion

## Follow up after the Death of a Loved One

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# Background - What was our Inspiration?

- ❖ Improve communication with families
- ❖ Be more supportive at a difficult time
- ❖ Demonstrate honesty and openness
- ❖ Deal with complaints in a proactive manner



# Practice already established

Reviewed good practice in areas throughout the Trust

- ❖ ICU
- ❖ Renal
- ❖ Oncology
- ❖ Haematology

**Action** – to roll out this good practice across Trust.



# Actions taken

- ❖ Matron Meeting
- ❖ Sister Meeting
- ❖ Engage with Bereavement Team & Patient Services
- ❖ Article in 'Vital Signs'
- ❖ Ownership – Bereavement Team
- ❖ Design/wording
- ❖ Date for rollout



# Images which were been carefully chosen



# Wording

The card will contain the following message...

*'We understand that when looking back you may have questions about your loved one's final illness or the treatments and care they needed. We would like to offer you the opportunity to discuss these questions with a senior nurse or one of the doctors either by a phone call or in person. If you would like to discuss anything or have any comments about the care or indeed anything you think we could do differently please call the Bereavement Team on 01752 439492. They will be able to contact the matron on your behalf who will arrange someone to get in touch with you.'*

*With best wishes*



*Ann James*

*Chief Executive*



# Process

- A patient's death is reported to the Bereavement Office
- The Bereavement Team confirm the next of kin details
- Bereavement Team check for any complaints, incidents or PALS enquiries
- 4 weeks post death Bereavement Team send a condolence card
- Bereavement Team contact the relevant Matron via email with the family enquiry
- Matron determines who would be the appropriate person to discuss questions and if a phone call or meeting is required
- Matron to monitor and ensure contact is made between appropriate person and the next of kin
- Matron to inform the Bereavement Team of actions taken and when so the query can be closed and the Bereavement office records updated
- Matrons to share learning with staff groups



# Benefits

## Relatives

- ❖ Opportunity to clarify facts with relevant professionals
- ❖ Felt more able to ask difficult/uncomfortable questions
- ❖ Feel better supported
- ❖ For some relatives has removed the need to write formally

## Staff

- ❖ Opportunity to debrief with the relatives
- ❖ Feel they are supporting people better – job satisfaction
- ❖ It takes less time up!!





# Draw Backs

## Relatives

- ❖ 4 weeks is too long
- ❖ 1 individual rang to say he didn't want the card

## Staff

- ❖ Can be uncomfortable
- ❖ If not dealt with correctly can result in a formal complaint



# Going Forward

- ❖ Reduce the timeframes for which the cards are sent out
- ❖ Incorporate in team reviews and governance meetings
- ❖ Share Learning
- ❖ Review feedback regularly and adjust accordingly

