

A large, decorative graphic on the left side of the page, composed of several overlapping, curved purple shapes that resemble a stylized 'C' or a series of concentric arcs.

# Information about investigations into the death of a loved one

Rehabilitation & Support

**A guide for patients and carers**

# Contents

Contacting us .....	1
Understanding what happened.....	1
Investigations.....	2
Independent information, advice and advocacy.....	4
Additional support and information .....	5



If you have been given this leaflet, you have experienced the death of someone close to you and the death of your loved one requires further investigation. This leaflet will explain the reasons why investigations take place and outline the process so you know what to expect. Whilst we hope this leaflet will help to clarify the process at a difficult time we are here to support you through the process as much as you need. We realise that this is a difficult time and so whilst we encourage you to be involved in the investigation and share your thoughts and experiences about your loved one's care, we understand if this is too difficult at this time.

## Contacting us

In addition to this leaflet, you should also have received a letter from us, either in advance, or accompanying this information. The letter should have included the details of someone in the Trust who you can contact for support and if you have any questions. Please do get in touch with them if you want to provide comments, ask questions or raise any concerns. If you need to speak to someone immediately and have not yet received a letter from us, please contact 0151 556 5035.

## Investigations

In a small percentage of cases, there may be concerns that a patient's death could be related to a patient safety incident or that their care could have been improved in some way. A patient safety incident is any unintended or unexpected incident, which could have, or did, lead to harm for one or more patients receiving healthcare. We always investigate when an incident may have occurred, whether or not we know if it contributed to the death of a patient. The purpose of an investigation is to find out what happened and why. This is to identify any potential learning and to reduce the risk of something similar happening to any other patients in the future.

If an investigation is to be held, we will inform you and explain the process to you. We will also ask you if, how and when, you would like to be involved. We will explain how we will include you in setting the objectives of the investigation, including any questions which you want to be looked at. Investigations may be carried out internally or by external investigators, depending on the circumstances.

In some cases, an investigation may involve more care providers than just The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre. For example, your loved one may have received care from several organisations. In these circumstances, this will be explained to you, and you will be told which organisation is acting as the lead investigator.



You will be kept up to date on the progress of the investigation and be invited to contribute. This includes commenting on the draft investigation reports before they are signed off. Your comments should be incorporated in the report. After the report has been signed off, the Trust will make arrangements to meet you to discuss the findings of the investigation in person.

You may find it helpful to get independent advice about taking part in investigations and other options open to you. Some people will also benefit from having an independent advocate to accompany them to meetings. Please see details of independent organisations that may be able to help this leaflet. You are welcome to bring a friend, relative or advocate with you to any meetings.

Where the death of a patient is associated with an unexpected or unintended incident during a patient's care, we have a duty to follow the Duty of Candour. This means we will be honest with you about what happened, why it happened and what steps we are taking to stop it from happening again.

## Independent information, advice and advocacy

If you raise any concerns about the treatment we gave your loved one, we will provide you with information and support; and do our best to answer the questions you have. However, we understand that it can be very helpful for you to have independent advice. We have included details below of where you can find independent specialist advice to support an investigation into your concerns. These organisations can also help ensure that medical or legal terms are explained to you.

Some of the independent organisations may be able to find you an 'advocate' if you need support when attending meetings. They may also direct you to other advocacy organisations that have more experience of working with certain groups of people, such as people with learning disabilities, mental health issues, or other specialist needs.

The list below does not include every organisation but the ones listed should either be able to help you themselves, or refer you to other specialist organisations best suited to addressing your needs.

In addition, all local authorities (Councils) should provide an independent health complaints advocacy service, which is independent of the Trust, that people can access free of charge. This service is provided locally by Healthwatch Wirral. If you would like to use this service, please contact them on **0151 230 8957** or go to **[www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk)** to find your local service if you live in a different area.



---

## Additional support and information

### **Action against Medical Accidents ('AvMA')**

An independent national charity that specialises in advising people who have been affected by lapses in patient safety ('medical accidents'). It offers free advice on NHS investigations; complaints; inquests; health professional regulation and legal action regarding clinical negligence. Most advice is provided via its helpline or in writing but individual 'advocacy' may also be arranged. It can also refer to other specialist sources of advice, support and advocacy or specialist solicitors where appropriate.

**Web: [www.avma.org.uk](http://www.avma.org.uk)**

**Tel: 0845 123 23 45**

---

### **Advocacy after Fatal Domestic Abuse**

Specialises in guiding families through inquiries including domestic homicide reviews and mental health reviews, and assists with and represent on inquests, Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) inquiries and other reviews.

**Web: [www.aafda.org.uk](http://www.aafda.org.uk)**

**Tel: 07768 386 922**

---

## **Child Bereavement UK**

Supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child or young person (up to age 25) is facing bereavement. This includes supporting adults to support a bereaved child or young person. All support is free, confidential, has no time limit, and includes face to face sessions and booked telephone support.

**Web: [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)**

**Tel: 0800 028 8840**

---

## **Child Death Helpline**

Provides a freephone helpline for anyone affected by a child's death, from pre-birth to the death of an adult child, however recently or long ago and whatever the circumstances of the death and uses a translation service to support those for whom English is not a first language. Volunteers who staff the helpline are all bereaved parents, although supported and trained by professionals.

**Web: [www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk](http://www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk)**

**Tel: 0800 282 986/0808 800 6017**

---





---

## **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Offers free confidential support for adults and children when someone dies, by telephone, email or face-to-face.

**Web:** [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

**Tel:** 0808 808 1677

---

## **Hundred Families**

Offers support, information and practical advice for families bereaved by people with mental health problems, including information on health service investigations.

**Web:** [www.hundredfamilies.org](http://www.hundredfamilies.org)

---

## **National Survivor User Network**

Is developing a network of mental **Child Death Helpline:** Provides a freephone helpline for anyone affected by a child's death, from pre-birth to the death of an adult child, however recently or long ago and whatever the circumstances of the death and uses a translation service to support those for whom English is not a first language. Volunteers who staff the helpline are all bereaved parents, although supported and trained by professionals.

**Web:** [www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk](http://www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk)

**Tel:** 0800 282 986/0808 800 6017

---

## **National Survivor User Network**

Is developing a network of mental health service user and survivors to strengthen user voice and campaign for improvements. It also has a useful page of links to user groups and organisations that offer counselling and support.

**Web: [www.nsun.org.uk](http://www.nsun.org.uk)**

---

## **Patients Association**

Provides advice, support and guidance to family members with a national helpline providing specialist information, advice and signposting. This does not include medical or legal advice. It can also help you make a complaint to the CQC.

**Web: [www.patients-association.org.uk](http://www.patients-association.org.uk)**

**Tel: 020 8423 8999.**





## How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

**If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.**

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust  
Clatterbridge Road, Bebington,  
Wirral, CH63 4JY.

Tel: 0151 556 5000

Web: [www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk](http://www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk)

Issue date: January 2020

Issue no: 1.0

Reference: LPIABEINV

Review date: January 2022