**Guidance on end of life care procedures**

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring good end of life care procedures is essential to ensure that people receiving care services are able to experience a good death.

It is important at this time that each person is given the opportunity to discuss whether it would be appropriate for them to have a DNACPR (Do Not Resuscitate) order with their GP. This discussion is of a particularly sensitive nature and therefore, the person should receive support from a person who knows them well if they wish. It may be appropriate for a friend or relative to support the person through a video call. If a person lacks capacity in relation to this decision, a capacity assessment must be completed by the GP and the decision must be made in line with Best Interest Decision procedures.

Similarly, a discussion regarding future care preferences is essential at this time to ensure that people can receive any required treatment in the most appropriate place, taking into consideration their symptoms and reversibility of condition. This is a GP led discussion based on the person’s preferences and co-morbidities. This process is known as a Anticipatory Care Planning.

Where a ReSPECT document has been issued, this document will contain details of current DNACPR status and future care wishes.

Each person should have the opportunity to discuss their end of life care preferences which will include discussions regarding their preference for burial or cremation, if they have a funeral plan in place, preferences regarding funeral directors and how they would like their end of life care to be delivered. This can include whether they would like music playing, if they have any religious considerations and any cultural considerations that they may wish to be respected.

All staff must have access to this information in order to ensure that the person can receive their end of life care in accordance to their wishes.

In the event that a person is subject to an approved DoLS, the GP must be made aware of the expiry date of the order and the restrictions that the person is subjected to.

**After death care**

Once a person has passed who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or if they may have been in contact with someone who has, PPE must be worn when carrying out any after death care procedures such as personal care and/or changing of clothes.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Funeral Directors have been issued new guidance regarding the handling of a person after death which co-insides with the change in procedures for the issuing of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and cremation procedures.

There is evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 virus remains live for a period of time after a person has passed away. Therefore, once the person has been transferred into the care of the funeral directors at the Care Service, no further interventions will occur with regards to the person’s body with the exception of the removal of a pacemaker or defibrillator. If the person has a pacemaker or defibrillator in place, the funeral directors are to be informed on arrival.

As such, the following must be completed prior to the person being transferred to the care of the funeral directors:

* If the death is an expected death and therefore does not require a post-mortem examination and the person has requested that, as part of their end of life care plan, they would like for staff to carry out personal care and changed into clothing of their choice, this is to be carried out by two staff members who are confident and willing to do so. PPE must be worn as per the guidance for those who have confirmed COVID-19
* Any jewellery should be removed (unless there has been a specific request for it to remain with the person) by two people. This must be documented and signed and any items stored securely until such time as they are collected
* If a person has requested any particular items to be with them after they pass such as a photograph or other item of comfort, the funeral directors are to be informed of this before they complete their procedures
* The room must remain locked until the funeral directors have arrived and they must be informed of the service current COVID-19 status on arrival
* Any procedures completed as above, must be documented.