

POL57 – Unexpected Death Policy and Procedure

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
Unit 5, Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
S41 8ND



1. Purpose

- 1.1 To outline the policy and procedure that staff are expected to follow in the event of a sudden death of a Service User.
- 1.2 Where there is absolutely no doubt that the Service User is deceased the following procedure must be followed. Otherwise, basic life support will be started and the Emergency Services called.
- 1.3 To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

EFFECTIVE	E1: Are people's needs and choices assessed and care, treatment and support delivered in line with current legislation, standards and evidence-based guidance to achieve effective outcomes?
EFFECTIVE	E2: How does the service make sure that staff have the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective care and support?
RESPONSIVE	R1: How do people receive personalised care that is responsive to their needs?
RESPONSIVE	R3: How people are supported at the end of their life to have a comfortable, dignified and pain free death?

- 1.4 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:
 - The Care Act 2014
 - Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009
 - The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice
 - Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Legislation

2. Scope

- 2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:
 - All staff
- 2.2 The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:
 - Service Users
- 2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy

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- Family
- Advocates
- Representatives
- Commissioners
- External health professionals
- Local Authority
- NHS

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To ensure that staff are clear what actions they must take if a Service User is found deceased and the death is sudden or unexpected, whilst ensuring that the Service User is treated with dignity and respect.
- 3.2 To ensure that staff are provided with support following an unexpected or sudden death of a Service User and that the family and representatives are also supported at this time.

4. Policy

- 4.1 The sudden death of a Service User will be dealt with in a timely, sensitive and caring manner, respecting the dignity, religious and cultural beliefs of the Service User's relatives and carers.
- 4.2 All staff will adhere to related policies at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd.
- 4.3 All staff will work co-operatively with the Emergency Services and Coroner's Office.
- 4.4 The Registered Manager will ensure that staff have received basic life support training and understand the procedure in the event of a sudden or unexpected death.
- 4.5 The Registered Manager will ensure that staff understand and follow the Mental Capacity Act and comply with the Code of Practice as well as understanding the implications of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.
- 4.6 The Registered Manager will ensure that any Advance Directives (Living Wills) including any 'Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation' (DNACPR) instructions are included with the Care Plan and that this information is shared with the relevant staff. Staff will also be trained to understand the Resuscitation Council ReSPECT process.
- 4.7 When a Service User's circumstances change or a review is required, the validity of the Advance Directive and/or DNACPR will be checked to ensure it is still valid.

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5. Procedure

5.1 Sudden Death

- Try not to disturb the scene, do not touch, move or disturb anything
- Do not remove, change or stop any medication infusions
- Do not remove or touch any life-prolonging medical equipment before the Police arrive on the scene
- Call the Emergency Services, ask for the Police and Ambulance. Give directions if necessary. Do not leave the home
- Inform Serendipity Healthcare Ltd or the Out of Hours as soon as possible
- Co-operate with the Emergency Services when they arrive
- Death will need to be confirmed and the Police will inform the Coroner before the Service User's body can be removed
- Complete the incident form at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as soon as possible

5.2 The Registered Manager's Responsibilities

- As the Care Worker may not be able to complete the care visit record or remove it from the home, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will need to ensure that a timeline of events is clearly recorded by asking the Care Worker to provide a detailed report. This may be required if there is a Coroner's inquest
- Any care records, medication records, visit logs, Care Worker rotas etc. must be safely stored in the event that there is a request for information from the Police or Coroner
- The Registered Manager will need to submit a CQC Statutory Notification of Death via the Provider Portal or via email to the Care Quality Commission
- The Registered Manager will need to ensure that if the Service User's care was commissioned by the Local Authority, the Social Services Duty Team or named social worker, they are informed of the death
- Details will need to be given to the commissioner about when the service stopped
- If there are any concerns about Care Workers failing to fulfil their role, e.g. the Care Worker failed to attend, or there had been concerns about the Service User prior to their death and this was not reported and escalated, a Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Investigation will need to be commenced. Local reporting procedures will need to be followed and a Statutory CQC Notification will need to be completed
- If the death is a Notifiable Safety Incident under the 'Duty of Candour', the Registered Manager must notify the 'relevant person' about the incident and follow the Duty of Candour Policy and Procedure at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
- The incident will be reviewed as part of the governance procedures at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd to understand if there are any lessons that can be learnt

5.3 Unable to Gain Access - No reply

- If the Care Worker arrives at the Service User's residence, cannot gain access but can see the Service User, the Emergency Services must be called

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- If the Care Worker cannot see the Service User and gets a 'No Reply', the Access to People's Homes Policy and Procedure at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd must be followed
- The Care Worker will not leave the home until the Police have advised they can leave
- The Care Worker will inform Serendipity Healthcare Ltd to ensure that any other Service User visits are covered

5.4 Support for Staff

The sudden or unexpected death of a Service User can be distressing and upsetting for staff. Arrangements for staff support following a sudden death incident will be made via the line manager.

5.5 Informing Relatives

The Care Worker must not contact family, friends etc. of the deceased Service User to inform them of the unexpected or sudden death

The Registered Manager, or if unavailable, the person in charge of the service, will first liaise with the Police and/or GP and must not inform the family without prior approval from them

- If the Local Authority is involved in the Service User's care and support, guidance should also be sought from them, where possible, before any family, relatives etc. are notified
- Once the Registered Manager or the person in charge of the service has approval to inform the family, friends etc, contact must ideally be undertaken face to face. The person informing the family, friends etc. must be suitably trained and have the knowledge to carry this out

5.6 Cultural, Religious or Belief Considerations

The Care Worker must be aware of any cultural, religious or belief needs of the Service User. This will be clearly documented in the Care Plan and shared with the Emergency Services

5.7 Death due to Coronavirus

If a Service User dies due to suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19), staff will:

- Ensure that all individuals maintain a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) or are in another room from the deceased person
- Avoid all non-essential staff contact with the Service User to minimise the risk of exposure. If a member of staff does need to enter the room where the Service User is, this must be kept to a minimum and the correct PPE used, as per the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and Procedure at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
- Staff must follow the usual processes for dealing with an unexpected death, ensuring that infection prevention and control measures are implemented

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Contact with the body must be restricted to those who are wearing PPE and have been trained in the appropriate use of PPE. Current GOV.UK guidance states that there is no requirement for body bags when supporting a Service User with confirmed COVID-19. However, there may be other practical reasons for their use. Placing a cloth or mask over the mouth of the deceased when moving them can also help to prevent the release of aerosols.

Where staff are required to deal with any waste, this must be handled in line with government guidelines; waste must be placed in a bag, which is then placed in another bag. This must be tied securely and left aside for 72 hours before being disposed of normally. For further information refer to the Coronavirus Policy and Procedure at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd.

6. Definitions

6.1 Sudden Death

- Sudden death is any violent or unnatural death, a death where the cause is unknown or unanticipated and may include death that occurs under unexplained or suspicious circumstances

6.2 Unexpected Death

- Unexpected death is a term used when deaths occur under unexplained or suspicious circumstances

6.3 Expected Death

- Expected deaths are those that occur as a result of a terminal illness that has been diagnosed by the GP/Consultant and where the Service User has been seen by their GP within the previous 14 days. This is not a case reportable to the Coroner

6.4 Coroner

- A coroner is a person whose role is to confirm and certify the death of an individual. A coroner may also conduct or order an inquest into the manner or cause of death, and investigate or confirm the identity of an unknown person who has been found dead within the coroner's jurisdiction

6.5 Deprivation of Liberty

- The Liberty Protection Safeguards are an amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The Mental Capacity Act allows restraint and restrictions to be used – but only if they are in a person's best interests

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HR Manager – Lisa Ward

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