

# KENT SHARED LIVES

## Policies & Procedures

Page 1 of 3

### (12) Death of a Placement whilst in the care of a Shared Lives Host

It is the policy of Kent Shared Lives to ensure that, in the event of the death of an individual whilst in the care of a Shared Lives host, the Shared Lives host knows what to do and understands his/her legal and regulatory responsibilities. Shared Lives will ensure that the Shared Lives host receives the practical and emotional support that they need over this period, which may include bereavement counseling.

#### **Procedure**

##### **If the individual dies whilst at the home of the Shared Lives Host**

Shared Lives will ensure, through advice and ongoing support that the Shared Lives host knows what to do should the individual placed with them die as the result of a serious illness or accident. In that event:

- a. The Shared Lives host must respond to the illness or accident in the same way as he/she would with any family member and contact the doctor or emergency services.
- b. Where the Shared Lives host has had time to contact a doctor or the emergency services, the doctor or member of the emergency services may already have been in attendance when the person died. If, however, this is not the case the Shared Lives host should contact a doctor immediately on discovering that the individual has died.
- c. The doctor will confirm the death of the individual. S/he will either:
  - i. Sign the death certificate (where the death is expected and the doctor has been in attendance throughout the illness) or
  - ii. Arrange for a post mortem (in the case of an unexpected death).  
The doctor may also call the police where the death is unexpected.

The Shared Lives host has no legal responsibility for the person after their death. S/he should contact the person's next of kin as soon as possible after the person has died. If no post mortem is required, the next-of-kin will arrange for an undertaker of their choice to remove the person's body. If the person has no relatives the local authority is responsible for making the funeral arrangements. In that situation the Shared Lives host should ask the doctor or police officer to ring an undertaker to collect the person's body.

##### **If the individual dies whilst in hospital**

1. If an individual dies in hospital, the doctor at the hospital will confirm their death. The doctor will also plan for the post mortem if one is needed.
2. The Shared Lives host may have been named as the contact person when the individual was admitted to hospital. In that case, the hospital will contact them if the individual dies in their absence. The hospital may ask the Shared Lives host to contact any relatives of the person as this may be more appropriate.

# KENT SHARED LIVES

## Policies & Procedures

Page 2 of 3

### Wherever the individual dies

1. The Shared Lives host should contact Shared Lives as soon as possible after the death of the person placed with them and within 24 hours of the death.
2. If a regulated activity under CQC registration, Shared Lives will contact CQC within 24 hours of the notification from the Shared Lives host. [CQC notification finder](#).
3. Arrangement to contact the purchaser and the benefits agency will be agreed.
4. If the person was placed on a long-term basis with the Shared Lives host:
  - a. Shared Lives and Shared Lives host will liaise with the person's next of kin to ensure that everyone important in the life of the person is informed of their death. Where there is no next of kin Shared Lives will support the Shared Lives host to ensure that everyone is informed.
  - b. Once immediate arrangements have been made, Shared Lives will support the Shared Lives host to register the death of the person in the placement if required.

### Benefits and funeral expenses

Family members, if they are still in contact with the person placed with Shared Lives, will usually wish to pay for and arrange the funeral.

Where there is no close family, then if the person placed:

- a. Is receiving benefits and has died in hospital, the health authority or health trust has a responsibility to cover the cost of the funeral.
- b. Is receiving benefits and has died anywhere other than in hospital, the local authority has the responsibility to arrange and cover the cost of the funeral.

### The Limits of the Shared Lives Host's Legal Responsibility

Shared Lives will ensure that the Shared Lives host understands the limits of their legal responsibility and the pitfalls that they need to avoid. In particular Shared Lives will ensure that the Shared Lives host knows that they should **not**:

- Contact a funeral director directly (it should be left for the family, doctor or local authority to do so). If hosts, contact a funeral director they are voluntarily taking personal responsibility for any funeral or other costs.
- Sign anything. To do so means taking personal responsibility for the adult after their death.
- Withdraw cash on the individual's behalf after their death.
- Give the individual's benefits information to anyone else (e.g.: the hospital or next of kin) even if they request them.

# KENT SHARED LIVES

## Policies & Procedures

Page 3 of 3

### **Support to the Shared Lives host**

Shared Lives recognises that it is always traumatic and difficult when someone dies, but even more so when the person has lived as part of the family.

Shared Lives hosts may find that they are giving support to grieving relatives and friends and need to ensure they take time for themselves and ask for the help and support that they need.

Shared Lives will ensure that the Shared Lives host has both the practical and the emotional support they need at this difficult time. The Shared Lives worker will also engage the support of other agencies if that is appropriate and helpful to the Shared Lives host.