

## **Faith Deaths Protocol-Blackburn with Darwen**

It is appreciated that certain faiths require the burial of a deceased person to take place as soon as possible, subject to the law of England and Wales. This Protocol sets out the agreement between Lancashire Council of Mosques, the Coroner, the Superintendent Registrar and the Blackburn Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for the provision of an out of hours service for faith deaths.

### **Muslim Burial Society**

The Muslim Burial Society for the Blackburn with Darwen area, referred to as the Blackburn Muslim Burial Society (**BMBS**) will have thirteen members who will act on behalf of a family and liaise with treating clinicians, the Coroner, the registrars and the hospital mortuary manager. ***No one other than the thirteen members of the BMBS set out below will contact the clinicians, Coroner, registrars or hospital mortuary manager.*** This is to provide clear lines of communication and ensure that the death registration process is dealt with efficiently.

The thirteen members of the Blackburn Muslim Burial Society are as follows:

Quesir Mahmood	Tel	07419 990506
Parwaiz Akhtar	Tel	07951 593929
Suleman Khonat	Tel	07831 566909
Salim Sidat	Tel	07973 657542
Khuram Ishaq	Tel	07885 467377
Sabbir Mohmed	Tel	07971 574983
Musa Ismail	Tel	07790 561429
Mohammed Rafiq	Tel	07715 995975
Abdul Qadoos	Tel	07973 670983
Imran Patel	Tel	07703 228796
Abdul Aleem Keratker	Tel	07888 710091
Ahmed Sidat	Tel	07791 444002
Ismail Alibhai Karolia	Tel	07850 530540

It is a matter for the faith community to determine the most appropriate method for the selection of members of the BMBS and for how long each person serves on the BMBS. It is the responsibility of the members of the BMBS to keep the Coroner, Superintendent Registrar and the mortuary manager informed of those currently authorised to act for the BMBS. The Coroner reserves the right to refuse to deal with any member of the BMBS whose conduct, to either the Coroner, or the registrars or the mortuary staff, that, in the consideration of the Coroner, either does not forward the aims of this protocol or is otherwise unacceptable.

### **In Hours Service**

For deaths occurring during working hours, the family should contact the BMBS who will act as the principal point of contact with the Coroner's officers. The Coroners'

officers will likewise deal with the BMBS and, if contacted by members of the family, refer them to the relevant member of the BMBS. This approach prevents duplication of referrals by different family members and ensures efficient communications. The Coroner's officers will update the BMBS frequently and, to the best of their ability, provide a time estimate when the relevant paperwork will be complete and a deceased person's body will be available for release in burial.

### **Out of Hours Service**

The Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen Coroner's jurisdiction's office hours are Monday-Friday 9 AM-4:00 PM. The Coroner will provide an out of hour's service on weekends and bank holidays from 8 AM - 2PM and the Registrars will provide an out of hour's service on weekends and bank holidays Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday and Bank Holiday 10am-2pm, all subject to the exigencies of normal life. Referrals will not be made by the BMBS to the Coroner or registrars outside these times.

### **Deaths referred to the Coroner**

Doctors can issue a Medical Certificate as to Cause of Death (colloquially referred to as a "death certificate") for a natural disease process running its full course. The doctor issues a certificate and gives the cause of death "*to the best of his knowledge and belief*", which is usually interpreted as "*so far as she/he is aware*". The test is a low-level test to pass. The Doctor issuing the MCCD **must** have treated the deceased person in their last illness in order to issue a certificate. In addition, the doctor **must** also have either treated the deceased within the 14 days prior to their death or have seen the body after death. The Coroner is usually involved in deaths where a doctor has treated the deceased in their last illness but not within 14 days or there is some minor concerning feature regarding the death that the Registrar would not accept without a Coroner's Certificate. In these cases the Coroner should be contacted. Where a doctor is able to give a cause of death, the doctor has a statutory responsibility to give that cause of death however inconvenient it may be to the doctor.

The Coroner should not be contacted in cases where the death was due to:

- accident
- violence
- occurred in suspicious circumstances or was in some way unnatural
- occurred shortly after an operation
- suicide
- is due to exposure to chemicals or dusts in an industrial environment
- occurred in detention, prison or police custody
- has concerning features
- the cause of death is unknown

These types of death require investigation and/or a post-mortem before any burial will take place and cannot be dealt with during weekends or bank holidays. The member of the BMBS should inform the family that the death cannot be dealt with until after it has been reviewed on the next working day.

There is no out of hour's service for sending bodies out of England and Wales.

## Procedure to be followed at weekends and bank holidays

In order to ensure that the process proceeds efficiently, the following steps will occur in order:

1. After a death occurs, a family wishing to have an expedited funeral will contact the BMBS for their community and request the assistance of the BMBS. The BMBS member assigned to the death will ask the next of kin or most senior family member whether or not they have any concerns regarding the death and make a written note of the answer to be forwarded to [coroners@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:coroners@lancashire.gov.uk)

A member of the BMBS will telephone the clinician and arrange to visit him/her as soon as possible. At the same time, the member of the BMBS will also ensure the clinician has access to a book of MCCD certificates. In cases of hospital deaths, whilst the BMBS discusses matters with the clinician, the body will remain in the hospital and be transferred to the hospital mortuary.

2. If the doctor is prepared to offer a cause of death, but for some reason cannot write an MCCD, the BMBS member will then telephone the Coroner, confirm to the Coroner that the family have no concerns regarding the death and hand the phone to the doctor who will then explain to the Coroner the cause of death and the reason for the Coroner's involvement. This ensures that the doctor's and the Coroner's certificates are identical.
3. If the Coroner accepts the doctor's cause of death, the Coroner will email an "A form" to the Registrars. The doctor will hand the completed and signed MCCD to the member of the BMBS.
4. The BMBS member will then telephone the Registrars and confirm that the BMBS member:
  - a. is in possession of a completed MCCD; and
  - b. would like an appointment as soon as possible to obtain the disposal papers.
5. The BMBS member, having obtained the disposal papers, will then telephone the Royal Blackburn Hospital switchboard and ask for the on-call mortuary technician to return their call. The BMBS member will then confirm to the mortuary technician the following:
  - a. the registrar has issued the disposal and release documentation;
  - b. that there is suitable and appropriate transport vehicle for the deceased's body to be removed to the relevant mosque; and
  - c. that appropriately trained attendants are available to move the deceased's body into the transport vehicle.

The BMBS member and the mortuary technician will then arrange a time to meet at the mortuary. In respect of personal attendances on clinicians (step two), the Registrars (step five) and the hospital mortuary (step six) no more than two members of the BMBS and two family members will attend in person. Large groups of people are entirely unnecessary to achieve the purposes of this protocol, disrupt hospital functions and may intimidate those professionals involved with the deceased's death. If this, or any other part of the protocol is not followed appropriately the Coroner will consider whether or not to suspend the out of hour's service for the BMBS.