

# DURHAM CONSTABULARY



*Altogether Better Policing*

## Death in Service Policy

<b>Application</b>	Police Officers, Police Staff and Special Constabulary
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Human Resources
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## **1.0 DEATH IN SERVICE**

### **2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 2.1 To provide a source of information to guide those called upon to manage the arrangements following the death of a serving member of Durham Constabulary.
- 2.2 The guide provides the Co-ordinator with a comprehensive list of the tasks which may need to be undertaken however it should be recognised that each situation will be unique.
- 2.3 Throughout the operation of this policy Durham Constabulary will seek to take the least intrusive action which fits within the working policy criteria and will act fairly and proportionally to achieve the proposed purpose.

### **3.0 THE LEGAL BASIS AND LEGITIMATE AIMS**

- 3.1 Durham Constabulary is required to comply with the requirements of the Police Act 1996 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

### **4.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 4.1 When a death occurs, the information will come from a variety of sources and it is therefore imperative that the Head of Command / Department (or the member of the Senior Management Team on call) must be informed immediately. In the case of HQ the appropriate contact will be the Duty Superintendent.
- 4.2 The Force recognises the contribution of its entire staff and is committed to creating a fully inclusive working environment. This will be achieved by making reasonable adjustments where appropriate, valuing the differences that a diverse workforce can bring and challenging unlawful and unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment, victimisation and other unfair treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

## **5.0 SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS**

- 5.1 If the circumstances surrounding the death require police investigation the Senior Investigating Officer must be consulted immediately to establish whether any tasks in this guide are not appropriate and if so where the completed record will be retained.
  - 5.1.1 When a death occurs, the information will come from a variety of sources and it is therefore imperative that the Head of Command (or the member of the Senior Management Team on call) must be informed immediately as responsibility for managing all arrangements on behalf of Durham Constabulary will rest with the Head of Command in which the individual worked at the time of death.
  - 5.1.2 The Head of Command may delegate tasks as required however it is his/her role to ensure that appropriate organisational support is offered and in place both for bereaved family and colleagues.
  - 5.1.3 Every situation will present a unique response. Sensitivity and compassion are of paramount importance and whilst this guide highlights many considerations the list cannot be exhaustive. In every case it is important to consult with families (and their representatives eg priests, funeral directors etc) to ensure the level of care provided is compatible to the needs of each family.
  - 5.1.4 Staff should be reminded of their personal responsibility and the sensitivities around their personal use of social media. Very careful consideration should be exercised when considering any posts on social media sites and any posts which potentially could cause distress for a grieving family, could undermine any investigation process or could cause embarrassment to the organisation will not be tolerated and such action will instigate further investigation and possible further action.

## 6.0 **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TASKS**

6.1.1 The tasks have been broken into two sections:

- **PRIMARY TASKS** and **SECONDARY TASKS**

6.1.2 The task checklists are not exhaustive and it should be noted that the order in which they have been set down does not indicate priority.

6.1.3 **PRIMARY** tasks will require **IMMEDIATE** attention.

6.1.4 **SECONDARY** tasks are usually performed over a timescale dictated by the circumstances of each individual situation.

## 7.0 **INDIVIDUAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **PRIMARY TASKS**

### 7.1 **HEAD OF COMMAND**

7.1.1 Upon receipt of a notification of death, the Head of Command needs to ensure that the following **PRIMARY** tasks are completed

Inform Executive Officer on call
Inform Next of Kin
Inform Immediate colleagues
Inform Marketing and Media Team
Inform Welfare Officer
Inform Health and Safety Advisor
Inform Chaplaincy Team
Inform Relevant Staff Association(s)/Trade Unions

7.1.2 The Head of Command needs to address two main considerations:

- the care of the bereaved family
- the care of colleagues of the member of staff who has died

### **Care of the Bereaved Family**

7.1.3 Next of kin details ought to be accurate however the Head of Command may need to consider any recent changes in circumstances, divided or estranged families and other relationships. Local knowledge will complement the personnel information held.

7.1.4 If for example, parents are separated ensure that wherever possible both are informed and kept up-to-date equally. Take into account any other significant relationships e.g. children from a previous relationship living elsewhere, relationships with other members of staff etc.

7.1.5 Are we aware of any special needs of next of kin? If so how can we cater for this? For example, if next of kin is deaf how will we manage communication effectively? Do we require the services of an interpreter? Would next of kin require support of a carer?

7.1.6 The religion/culture of the family may mean that appointment of an officer of a particular gender, race, and religion is most appropriate. If in doubt seek advice. Advice may be sought from any Force Chaplain, HR Manager (Diversity), HR Dept, the Black and Asian Police Association (BAPA), the Lesbian and Gay Police Association (LAGPA), Disability Support Network (DDSN). You may also wish to consider the Clergy Major Incident Response Plan available via Force Knowledge which contains a list of useful contact numbers for Senior Clergy and Faith Communities.

7.1.7 Where family have to be notified of the death by Durham Constabulary then the member of staff who delivers the death message should always be a senior officer who should be in possession of the facts surrounding the death, procedures which may be required by law, and s/he needs access to transport should the family need or wish to attend hospital/mortuary. The Welfare Officer and/or Chaplaincy Team may be of assistance at this stage

7.1.8 Is it likely that the family may need protection from the media? If so, who will do this? Is it appropriate to post an officer outside of the family home and if so the selection of this officer requires careful consideration? Can the Media Team assist?

### Care of Colleagues

- 7.1.9 When a death has occurred ON DUTY consider if it is appropriate for neighbouring stations/forces to provide cover in order to allow colleagues to be withdrawn from operational duty.
- 7.1.10 If colleagues need to be notified of the death consider carefully the venue to be used. It should be private, free from interruption, ideally access to drinks/toilets should be ensured and importantly staff may need time to overcome the initial shock of hearing of the death. They should be afforded access to telephones whereby they can speak to their own families – bear in mind if the press is aware families may become aware of a death and be anxious to know that their loved ones are safe.
- 7.1.11 The Welfare Officer and/ or Chaplaincy Team may assist with this task.
- 7.1.12 Before colleagues leave for home it is important that an officer with responsibility for their welfare speaks to them to ensure they are capable of driving home safely (where necessary transport should be provided) and that they have sources of support available to them. Contact numbers should be obtained in order that follow-up calls to check on their welfare can be undertaken as necessary.
- 7.1.13 Particular attention needs to be paid to colleagues who are ARD, AL, on sick leave, courses etc. and they need to be included in any welfare support arrangements.
- 7.1.14 Even at this early stage it is helpful if the following post-incident considerations are also considered:
- Pocket Book Entries/Statements.  
**If circumstances warrant appointment of an SIO then s/he will instruct staff in this regard.** Are staff fit to undertake this task? If not, is it possible to negotiate an alternative arrangement taking care that evidential integrity is not compromised?
  - What support is there at home for staff? Are there any members of staff who might benefit from additional support? If so can the Welfare Officer or Chaplaincy Team assist?
  - Staff will need to know how they will be updated with further information, e.g. health and welfare of other colleagues, funeral arrangements, any investigation process etc.
  - Can the team be brought together one or two days later with appropriate welfare support?
  - Are colleagues fit/able to return to work? If in doubt, can Occupational Health assist?
  - What will be the best way to support colleagues on re-entry to the work environment?

- 7.1.15 It is also the responsibility of the Head of Command to ensure that arrangements are made to lower flag at Force HQ and at any other stations as appropriate

**Preparation of Force-Wide Notification**

- 7.1.16 In the early stages sufficient information needs to be circulated to pre-empt rumours and inaccurate information. At this time other details eg. funeral arrangements are unlikely to have been confirmed or in some cases even considered so the circulation should indicate how additional information will be shared eg via circulator message

- 7.1.17 It may also be necessary to inform another Force e.g. where a member of staff is a transferee from another Force and there may be occasions where Partner Agencies need to be advised.

**8.0 EXECUTIVE OFFICER ON CALL**

- 8.1. The Duty Executive Officer will normally act as the media spokesperson in the initial stages when a death has occurred and s/he will manage the release of timely and appropriate information. The Press Officer will assist in this regard.
- 8.2 Bereaved families may welcome direct contact and reassurance and support.
- 8.3 Any investigation process will be overseen by an Executive Officer.
- 8.4 Legal advice may be required in order for the Executive Officer to decide what response is appropriate in relation to legal demands around disclosure/ coroner's inquests/ public enquiry etc.
- 8.5 Consideration may need to be given as to whether any internal investigation is appropriate.
- 8.6 The Chief Constable will be responsible for liaising with the Police and Crime Commissioner. In the event of a death in service, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary must also be informed and by this route the Home Secretary will be informed.
- 8.7 Funeral/memorial/remembrance service arrangements will be overseen by an Executive Officer and a member of the Executive will attend any service (subject to any family requests for privacy)

## **9.0 MARKETING AND MEDIA TEAM**

- 9.1. The Duty Media Officer will work closely with the Executive Officer to ensure timely and appropriate release of information to the media.

## **10.0 WELFARE OFFICER**

- 10.1 The Welfare Officer will liaise with the Head of Command to assess where they can assist most effectively? Is it with the bereaved family or with immediate colleagues?
- 10.2 The Welfare Officer will work with the Chaplaincy Team to ensure most effective use of skills and resources.
- 10.3 The Welfare Officer will usually be involved in planning SECONDARY tasks and can assist with funeral planning, flowers, transport arrangements etc. therefore it is important for the Welfare Officer to quickly establish a good working relationship with the Head of Command.

## **11.0 HEALTH & SAFETY ADVISOR**

- 11.1 On receipt of the notification of death in service, the Health & Safety Advisor will ascertain if the circumstances of the death needs to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR).
- 11.2 If RIDDOR does apply, then it will be the responsibility of the Health & Safety Advisor to ensure that the Health and Safety Executive are informed appropriately.
- 11.3 The Health and Safety Advisor will also liaise with management to ensure all reporting requirements are appropriately completed

## **12.0 CHAPLAINCY TEAM**

- 12.1 In Durham Constabulary the Chaplains are from the Church of England and provide links to the mainstream Christian denominations and the mainstream Faith Communities. **Police Chaplaincy is equally available to those of all faiths or those of none.** Everyone is included in the ministry of the Chaplaincy Team.
- 12.2 Force Communications hold contact numbers for the Senior Force Chaplain and all members of the Chaplaincy team.



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- 12.3 It is expected that the Chaplain who is informed first of the death will liaise with their Chaplaincy colleagues to ensure the most appropriate person responds. Due to the availability of Chaplains, who have other commitments, it has been decided that this method is the most efficient way to handle such an event.
- 12.4 The Chaplain needs to liaise with the appropriate representative for the Senior Management Team to assess where s/he can assist most effectively. Is it with the bereaved family or with immediate colleagues? Is referral to a minister of another Christian denomination or Faith appropriate and how can this be most appropriately facilitated?
- 12.5 Chaplains are keen to provide links directly or indirectly with Contact Points of all Christian denominations and other mainstream faiths. It should be noted that established links already exist through the Clergy Major Incident Plan, therefore the Chaplain can be a valuable resource.
- 12.6 The Chaplain will also liaise with the Welfare Officer to ensure most effective use of skills and resources.
- 12.7 Previous experience has demonstrated that the Chaplain can be particularly helpful with pastoral care and funeral planning. Families may request input to the service by the Chaplain. It is best practice to identify this possibility as early as possible then the Chaplain can liaise with the minister conducting the service to ensure that this is appropriately managed.

**13.0 STAFF/SUPPORT ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES**

- 13.1 Staff/Support Associations representatives need to consider who will attend any funeral service and arrange appropriate flowers.
- 13.2 The Police Federation need to be informed to ensure Group Life Scheme members are identified and arrangements can be put in place to ensure families make appropriate claims.
- 13.3 All Staff/Support Associations are particularly important in offering support to immediate colleagues, particularly if any investigation/inquiry process is necessary.

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## **14.0 SECONDARY TASKS**

### **Head of Command**

14.1 The Head of Command must ensure that all the following tasks are completed:-

<b>Task</b>
Gather info re: funeral arrangements
Circulate funeral arrangements
Put any necessary operational provisions in place
Aftercare

## **15.0 GATHERING INFORMATION RE: FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

15.1 The following consideration will need to be made:

- Consider if it would be helpful for the family to have a Chaplain and/or Welfare Officer present when funeral arrangements are discussed.
- Is service to be private?
- If NOT PRIVATE what is time, date and venue of service?
- Are there any cultural considerations colleagues may need/wish to respect?
- Is any part of funeral private e.g. cremation family only?
- Have police underbearers been requested? If requested, try to comply with family's wish for any specific personnel. Not everyone will be comfortable to perform this duty therefore a senior officer ought to co-ordinate the provision of underbearers. Have any particular colleagues been requested? If the bearing party is to be in uniform then white gloves are available from Welfare and should be returned to the Welfare office after use. A risk assessment must be carried out to ensure that the health, safety and welfare needs of the underbearers are appropriately managed. Advice is available from Health Management Unit. Underbearers will require transport and white gloves and it is the responsibility of the Officer in Charge of the bearers to ensure these arrangements are made. Please note that most funeral directors are happy to advise and assist officers performing this role. Bearing in mind that the bearers may be naturally anxious performing this role, a "rehearsal" can provide important reassurance. The Officer in Charge of the underbearers should arrange this directly with the funeral director.

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- Where should messages of condolence be sent? Particularly if for example a parent's address which may be different from residence of deceased.
  - Are flowers acceptable or have donations in lieu of flowers been requested?
  - If flowers, where should these be delivered to – home or chapel of rest or other place e.g. mosque?
  - If donations then where should these be directed?
  - Would the family like the Constabulary to produce an Order of Service for the funeral service? If so, consider time constraints and permissions that may be required from person officiating at the service. Bear in mind the Welfare Officer and Chaplains have experience in compiling such documents and can liaise between all necessary parties and HQ Printing Unit. Once printed one copy must go to priest/minister officiating at the service and arrangements must be made to transport them to venue prior to the funeral service. Normally two people should be identified to distribute these to everyone attending the service. These could be friends, colleagues or people identified by the church.
  - Have there been any special requests? E.g. Flag for coffin or helmet to place on coffin, Condolence Book etc. If so, the Welfare Officer will usually be able to assist with this. Welfare hold a force flag which can be used as a funeral drape for the coffin and also hold a supply of condolence books. Commands borrowing the flag for use for their staff will be accountable for it's safe return as this is an expensive resource and it is essential that the flag is returned to Welfare office immediately after use to ensure availability for others. Welfare also hold condolence books and can advise re this process.
  - Are colleagues to attend in uniform?
  - It is usual for a guard of honour to form as the funeral procession enter and leave place of funeral? Has the family any objections to this? Occasionally if young children are to be present this may be something they do not want children to face when entering the place where the funeral service is to be held so sometimes a guard of honour will only be acceptable on leaving service? There are no rules for this – the only guide is what families want.
  - Normally Executive Officers attend and sit opposite family. Would the family be comfortable/object to this? Does this conform to religious customs?
  - If any special request has been made by family for friends to meet after service for refreshments then details may need to be circulated.
- 15.2 Bear in mind that for some families the death may have come as an enormous shock and whilst they may be unclear about exactly what they want often families have very clear ideas about what they DO NOT want. It is equally important to respect these requests.

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## **16.0 CIRCULATING FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS**

- 16.1 This circulation needs to be force wide plus bear in mind if the member of staff has served with another force then they should also be made aware. Also an officer who has recently been seconded may have other colleagues there who need to be informed.
- 16.2 The circulation should normally include the following info (subject to family wishes)
- Rank No ( or Job Title)
  - Full Name
  - Include name by which popularly known e.g. Joseph (Joe) Bloggs
  - Station
  - Date of death
  - Age
  - Career details
  - Details of next of kin
  - Details of any dependants
  - Address where messages of condolence may be sent
  - Funeral details – if PRIVATE then simply state this otherwise circulate all relevant info re: time, date, venue, Flowers/donations, police underbearers?, attendance in uniform?, Guard of honour (un)acceptable? etc.
  - If transport is being provided then give details. It is usual for a coach to be provided from HQ or Local Police Office (as appropriate) to transport colleagues. This should be done in conjunction with the Support Manager, Business Services. It may be prudent to ask those colleagues who intend to use this transport to contact a nominated person to ensure adequate provision is made
  - Give details of any special arrangements or considerations re parking etc

## **17.0 OPERATIONAL PROVISIONS**

- 17.1 Once the venue, time and date for the service are confirmed it may be necessary to liaise with local Neighbourhood Policing Team(s) in order that they can make any necessary arrangements for parking, traffic control etc.

## 18.0 AFTERCARE

- 18.1 The family will continue to need support after the funeral. Grieving is often a painful and difficult process, which will be unique for each individual.
- 18.2 There may be specialist services/support groups that could help families through this process and the Welfare Officer and Chaplains will assist families to access these services. Family GPs may also be an excellent source of support.
- 18.3 At a practical level the Pensions Officer will assist with applications under the Pension Schemes and the Welfare Officer may be able to offer other practical help including advice re any police charities.
- 18.4 Bear in mind that associations like the BAPA, LAGPA, *DDSN*, *CRUSE* etc may prove invaluable to ensuring that this support is in place.
- 18.5 Arrange for any force flags to be raised again after the funeral has taken place.
- 18.6 Arrange for any drape, gloves etc borrowed from Welfare to be returned
- 18.7 If a condolence book has been used then ensure that is appropriately returned to the family.
- 18.8 Senior management teams need also to bear in mind that a death which has been witnessed by colleagues may necessitate additional support being put into place. As long as initial support has been instigated, as directed by PRIMARY TASK considerations immediately after the incident, then officers will be aware of how to access additional support as necessary, however, line managers should continue to monitor and support their staff to identify and address any difficulties.
- 18.9 Those who have lost a close colleague may also require additional support. Line managers should liaise with the Chaplaincy and Welfare as appropriate to ensure this support can be put into place.

## **19.0 APPEALS PROCEDURE**

If an individual wishes to appeal against any decision made in connection with this policy, they should write to or email, the Deputy Chief Constable at the below address within 14 days of receiving a decision. The appeal will be considered and consultation will take place with appropriate individuals to establish all facts before a decision with regard to the appeal is made. A response to the appeal will be provided in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Should this period not be achievable the individual will be notified in writing when a decision will be communicated.

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