

SFJGB13

Support families following death in custody

Overview

This standard is about providing appropriate support to the families of individuals who die in custody. It includes informing the family, providing support and relevant information.

There are three elements

- 1 Prepare to inform families regarding death in custody
- 2 Inform families regarding deaths in custody
- 3 Provide ongoing support to families

**Performance
criteria**
Prepare to inform families regarding deaths in custody**You must be able to:**

- P1 check personal details of the deceased person, including details of their family, in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P2 check relevant details regarding the circumstances of the death in accordance with your organisation's procedures, including:
 - P2.1 what happened
 - P2.2 when the death occurred
 - P2.3 where the death occurred
 - P2.4 whether the death was witnessed
 - P2.5 whether a message was left
- P3 check who needs to be notified as requested by the deceased person in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P4 establish whether there is any recent anti-social behaviour relevant to the death in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P5 establish the nature of the deceased person's offence in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and whether:
 - P5.1 the death will impact on any victims
 - P5.2 there are any family issues in respect of the offence
 - P5.3 there is potential for media interest
- P6 deal with media interest in line with the agreed media strategy in your organisation
- P7 establish if an interpreter is required to accompany you when announcing the death in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P7.1 if there are wider cultural issues
 - P7.2 make necessary arrangements
- P8 determine information relevant to assessing risks when you announce the death in custody in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P9 assess risks in accordance with your organisation's procedures utilising available police intelligence
- P10 take actions to address risks in accordance with your organisation's procedures

Inform families regarding deaths in custody

- You must be able to:**
- P11 make contact with relevant people in accordance with your organisation's timescales and procedures
 - P12 check that you are addressing the correct person in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P13 identify yourself and any accompanying colleagues to family members before announcing the purpose of your visit in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P14 deal with circumstances when the relevant people are not available in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P15 announce the death sensitively in accordance with your organisation's procedures, making sure that you:
 - P15.1 deal with it directly
 - P15.2 use words that cannot be misinterpreted
 - P16 provide factual accounts of what occurred in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P17 explain your role in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P18 explain the support you can provide in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P19 determine whether the relevant people would like the support of their family and friends in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P19.1 contact them when requested
 - P20 communicate at a level and pace appropriate to individuals in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P21 invite questions in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P21.1 answer these
 - P22 inform relevant people when requests cannot be met
 - P23 record key points in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P23.1 explain the purpose of taking notes
 - P24 explain what will happen next in accordance with your organisation's procedures
 - P25 provide your contact details and agree future contact arrangements in

Support families following death in custody

accordance with your organisation's procedures

- P26 provide details of relevant bereavement support agencies in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P27 justify actions you take based on the information available in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P28 make funeral arrangements when requested in accordance with your organisation's procedures, and:
 - P28.1 explain custodial organisation's position in this
 - P28.2 explain finance support options

Provide ongoing support to families

You must be able to:

- P29 provide practical support to families within your levels of authority in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P30 provide single point of contact services between families and your organisation in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P31 maintain appropriate contact with the family, extending this to beyond the inquest where necessary, in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P32 offer families the opportunity of memorial services to include relevant other prisoners and custodial staff in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P33 arrange appropriate transport for the deceased person's family to facilitate access to the place where the death occurred in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P34 hand over deceased's personal possessions in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P35 review your assessment of risks associated with families dealing with the death in accordance with your organisation's procedures, including:
 - P35.1 risks to you
 - P35.2 risks to your colleagues
 - P35.3 actions to deal with your assessments
- P36 assist investigating teams in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P37 notify relevant people of verdicts of inquests in accordance with your

organisation's procedures

- P38 make relevant information available to those who need it in accordance with your organisation's timescales and procedures
- P39 check that information is shared only with those entitled to receive it in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P40 maintain a complete record of documents in accordance with your organisation's procedures
- P41 disengage from families in accordance with your organisation's procedures

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the role and responsibilities of relevant prison service staff
- K2 organisational procedures to follow after a death in custody
- K3 the range of support to be offered to bereaved families
- K4 actions to take by organisations following a death in custody
- K5 the reporting requirements of organisations following a death in custody
- K6 the range of support offered to others including staff and prisoners following a death in custody
- K7 responsibilities of organisations in relation to investigation and inquest
- K8 procedures for informing families of a death in custody
- K9 issues in respect of culture and diversity that should be considered when working with families
- K10 types of reactions to the death which people may experience
- K11 strategies for addressing different types of reactions
- K12 types of dilemmas that may be faced by those involved in supporting families following a death in custody, and:
 - K12.1 strategies for dealing with these dilemmas
- K13 issues to be addressed on first contact with bereaved families
- K14 what skills are required for those supporting bereaved families
- K15 actions to take when relevant people are not available
- K16 what information to gather about deceased individuals before speaking to their families
- K17 what information is required to make effective assessment of risks when informing the families of a death in custody
- K18 how to undertake effective risk assessments
- K19 strategies for addressing risks when informing families of a death in custody
- K20 procedures to follow where the appropriate people are not available when you arrive to announce the death
- K21 the information to provide to families
- K22 techniques for providing information with sensitivity
- K23 behaviours associated with bereavement
- K24 bereavement agencies and associated support available to families

following a death in custody

K25 the importance of keeping accurate decision logs throughout the process

Additional Information

Glossary

Relevant people can refer to individuals, others relevant or significant to individuals, staff in your own agency including investigating teams or staff from other agencies.

Organisational procedures can include prison service instructions, prison policies, legislative policies and any other policies and procedures used across custodial care in the UK.

SFJGB13

Support families following death in custody

Developed by	Skills for Justice
---------------------	--------------------

Version number	2
-----------------------	---

Date approved	January 2013
----------------------	--------------

Indicative review date	January 2018
-------------------------------	--------------

Validity	Current
-----------------	---------

Status	Original
---------------	----------

Originating organisation	Skills for Justice
---------------------------------	--------------------

Original URN	SFJ GB13
---------------------	----------

Relevant occupations	Officers; Public Service Professionals; Youth Justice Officers; Youth Offending Team Officers; Family Liaison Officer
-----------------------------	---

Suite	Custodial Care
--------------	----------------

Key words	Next of kin; bereavement; deceased; risks; support services
------------------	---