

Policy And Procedure Area	Sudden Death Policy and Procedure
Date Created	December 2018
Policy Holder	Group Director of Business performance
Date Approved by ET	09/1/19
Date Approved by the Board (if required)	n/a
Date of next review	December 2023
Target Group	All Housing Staff
Training/Dissemination	
Location of policy/procedure	Insight
Related external documents	
Related Internal Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Incident policy and procedure › Tenure management policy and procedure › Infectious diseases policy and procedure › Code of conduct › Relevant HR policies for supporting staff

1. Objective

- 1.1 This policy and procedure applies to any staff involved with the death of a customer.
- 1.2 It covers the process to follow when finding a body, which includes working with the police, specific management tasks, supporting staff and Residents, communication and what to do afterwards in relation to funerals, reviews and ongoing interest.
- 1.3 It does not include other incident reporting or risk management procedures, or the involvement HR may have in supporting staff. Please see the relevant policies.

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 When someone dies within YMCA St. Paul's Group accommodation it is a disturbing experience for both staff and Residents. YMCA St. Paul's Group is committed to ensuring there are robust policies and procedures in place for dealing with this difficult time appropriately.
- 2.2 YMCA St. Paul's Group offers accommodation to people with a range of support needs . In situations where medical problems are known, it must be assumed that death may occur while a person is a resident of an YMCA St. Paul's Group service. When a death occurs, it may be treated as suspicious by the police, which, on rare occasions, may prove to be the case.
- 2.3 Members of the Executive Team are responsible for approval of major incident reports and contact with the press.
- 2.4 Human Resources will ensure appropriate support is provided to staff.

- 2.5 Local managers are responsible for ensuring the policy is complied with and managing all requests in accordance with this policy. They will also complete major incident forms for submission to commissioners after approval by the Executive Team.

3 Diversity impact assessment

- 3.1 This policy fully recognises an individual's right to dignity.
- 3.2 Therefore, this policy ensures equality by allowing for the same level of respect that is afforded to people in life to be applied in death.

4 Guidance

4.1 Working with the police

- 4.1.1 When the police arrive on site they will have to follow a certain procedure.
- 4.1.2 They will need to know and have access to the following information:
- › Who found the body?
 - › Who was the last to see the dead person and when?
 - › Who was last in the room?
 - › Who is the next of kin?
 - › Details of the person's medical history etc.
- 4.1.3 The police will have to satisfy themselves that there are no suspicious circumstances. Until this happens no one will be allowed to enter the room without police permission. They will usually place someone outside the door and will record everyone who enters the room, such as the doctor and funeral director who will come to remove the body.
- 4.1.4 If the police do believe the death to be suspicious, they will also be likely to want to:
- › Access and remove CCTV footage and records of other security measures; they may require identification of people shown on CCTV
 - › Access photographs and the file of the deceased
 - › Access this information for others within the organisation, possibly
 - › Interview staff and Residents
 - › View duty logs
 - › Access a variety of practical information such as plans of the building etc
 - › Access contact information, such as drug or alcohol agencies, probation etc
 - › Speak to staff who may have been in the room or vicinity over the preceding few days, or who met the deceased, such as cleaners or maintenance staff
- 4.1.5 They will need access to a quiet, confidential area to do this.
- 4.1.6 Staff should obtain the names, ranks, teams and telephone numbers of the officers involved; and provide the officers with liaison contacts for YMCA St. Paul's Group.
- 4.1.7 The police may uncover information which can form the basis of a timeline. It would be valuable to put this together and continue to update it as the situation develops.
- 4.1.8 Once the body has been removed the room should be secured until such time as the police authorise access.
- 4.1.9 It is vital to ensure the body is removed as discreetly as possible. Even when this has been done, it is important that no one enters the room until the police give approval. This must include family and other staff. Do not attempt to remove any personal belongings, even if requested to do so by family or others.

4.2 Management tasks

- 4.2.1 The team leader or team manager should take the lead if possible and be the point of contact for police and other official parties until a more senior member of staff arrives. This may include speaking to the person's family, but if the death is in any way considered suspicious these contacts should be passed directly to the police without comment.
- 4.2.2 If available, then a member of the Chaplaincy team should be contacted to provide support to staff and affected customers.
- 4.2.3 The CEO should be informed who will inform the Chair of the Board as quickly as is practicable.
- 4.2.4 A senior member of staff (Usually the Area Manager) should initiate contact with the coroner as soon as possible to ensure YMCA St. Paul's Group are kept informed of developments.
- 4.2.5 In consultation with the area manager and the Executive Team, the manager should:
 - 4.2.5.1 contact Supporting People to inform them of the incident
 - 4.2.5.2 complete a serious incident form
 - 4.2.5.3 submit the major incident form to Supporting People when it has been approved
- 4.2.6 A member of EMT will inform the other board members as soon as is practicable

4.3 Supporting staff and Residents

- 4.3.1 As facts emerge, rumours may start, some likely to be accurate and others wildly speculative. A memo to staff giving very basic information and expressing reassurance is helpful. Thanking staff for their professionalism and commitment will also help set the tone for how information is shared.
- 4.3.2 Staff should ensure that they are in control of information and events and endeavour to provide support arrangements before they are requested.
- 4.3.3 Residents will go through a range of emotions, and will need to be supported throughout the process; therefore it would be useful to consider having extra staff on duty to support this. Some Residents may start to make assumptions about the situation and it is important that staff control this.
- 4.3.4 It is worth remembering that different people react very differently in such situations and it may not be the most obvious people who are the ones affected.
- 4.3.5 As with Residents, staff will also experience a range of emotions including guilt, anger, sorrow, fear, curiosity and a desire to help as much as possible. Again, it is important to offer support, particularly to those directly involved.
- 4.3.6 The staff members who found the person will need immediate support. They will need to be debriefed as to the circumstances and given the opportunity to talk about the situation from a personal perspective. A report of the circumstances should be taken as soon as possible.
- 4.3.7 The staff who found the person should be given the opportunity, but not forced, to go off duty. It is important to keep monitoring them. If the person takes leave, arrangements should be put in place for them to contact their line manager or a member of the HR to ensure their continuing welfare.
- 4.3.8 The police may wish to contact others including staff, who have been in the vicinity of the deceased over recent times, but were not on the premises at the time of the incident.
- 4.3.9 The local manager should ensure that all staff have the details for the relevant other agencies and are encouraged to use this. In consultation with the area manager, it may

also be appropriate to arrange for access to counsellors to support staff following an incident. Staff can also utilise reflective practice sessions where available.

4.4 External communication

- 4.4.1 It will be the responsibility of the police to inform the family of the death but it is possible that they or others will get in touch with staff to find out some of the circumstances. It is important to be sensitive to the family but they should be passed directly to the police.
- 4.4.2 Find out the details of any Family Liaison Officer/s allocated to the case.
- 4.4.3 For any other parties, such as people claiming to be friends, take their contact details and pass these to the police without commenting on the case.
- 4.4.4 All staff who may encounter such contacts should be briefed in advance.
- 4.4.5 It may be that the family may wish to visit the location of the death; this should also be done via the police.
- 4.4.6 People connected with the deceased, other Residents or staff may wish to make some kind of tribute to the individual and it is important that this is managed correctly. An area may be set aside for floral tributes or cards but it is important that these are not directed towards the room. Flowers or similar offerings should be removed when past their best, but cards retained in case the family should try to claim them at a later date. This period will usually pass with time and it is important that it does not become a permanent 'shrine'.
- 4.4.7 If the police suspect or confirm the involvement of others in the death, these people may also be connected with YMCA St. Paul's Group. It is therefore possible that members of their family or others may get in touch. It is important to be sensitive to their feelings at this potentially difficult time, but to ensure that they are passed directly to the police without discussing the case.
- 4.4.8 Other relationships or responsibilities to be managed may include:
 - › Immediate neighbours
 - › Social workers, drug workers and similar support contacts
 - › Referring agencies
 - › Probation
 - › Homes England/Insurers
 - › Funders
 - › Other regulatory bodies, such as Supporting People
 - › RIDDOR/HSE, depending on the circumstances of the death

4.5 The media

- 4.5.1 Journalists from the local or national paper, radio or TV may make contact. It is important that the Chief Executive deal with all enquiries from the press.
- 4.5.2 Staff receiving enquiries should not make any statement to the press but take the journalist's details and pass these on to the CEO, who will provide a statement and/or seek advice from PR agency and monitor local/national press.
- 4.5.3 Service Managers should remind teams of this protocol regularly.

4.6 Follow-up considerations

- 4.6.1 Members of staff and Residents can attend the funeral if deemed appropriate and with permission from the family. Staff in attendance should be aware of the possibility that they will be asked questions by contacts of the deceased, and be briefed with their responses.

- 4.6.2 A case review should be conducted by the area director or a member of the Executive Team following the sudden death of any customer. Wherever possible, this should be completed within two weeks of the incident. It is important to review the circumstances of the death, to evaluate how effective measures were in dealing with the matter, and to see if any policies and procedures need to be implemented or altered.
- 4.6.3 The police may continue to require information relevant to the case and may repeatedly meet with potential witnesses.
- 4.6.4 Residents, staff and others may remain distressed and uncertain. Other areas of stress in an individual's life may be exacerbated by the situation, and line managers should take a proactive approach to the care of their staff.
- 4.6.5 Negative publicity or gossip may impact YMCA St. Paul's Group's reputation.
- 4.6.6 Media involvement should be kept in mind, there will be certain milestones at which interest may increase, for example when someone is charged, or tried.

5 Procedure

- 5.1 When a person is found and seems likely to be dead, the staff member must call 999 and request an ambulance, then notify the team manager immediately.
- 5.2 If out of hours, the duty manager should be contacted and informed.
- 5.3 When informing other people, staff should use as much discretion as possible so as not to cause alarm. For example, if using a radio to alert the manager, immediate assistance should be requested rather than stating that someone has died.
- 5.4 Do not move the person or disturb anything in the room.
- 5.5 If it is evident that the person is dead, leave the room immediately.
- 5.6 When the police and ambulance have been called, a member of The Executive Team should be contacted.
- 5.7 When notifying the police, inform them that there is a "sudden death situation". They will then inform the coroner and paramedics. Additionally, if anything has been touched or moved, the police will need to be aware of what that is.
- 5.8 Staff should cooperate fully with the emergency services.

7. Risk Assessment

Financial Implications	None
Reputational Risk Implications	Negative press relating to a death in service
Staffing Implications	None