

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD	AGENDA ITEM: 5.1
<p>DATE OF MEETING: 3RD JUNE 2013</p> <p>REPORT AUTHOR DEBORAH GARNER & CONTACT NUMBER: 01582 - (54)6669</p> <p>SUBJECT: REFERENCE FROM EXECUTIVE - PROCESS FOLLOWING SUDDEN NON SUSPICIOUS UNEXPLAINED DEATHS</p>	

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE

1. To apprise the Health and Wellbeing Board of recommendations referred to them from the Executive meeting on 15th April 2013 arising from their decision in relation to the Recommendations of Scrutiny Health and Social Care Review Group on the Process following sudden non suspicious unexplained deaths.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to consider the Executive decisions and respond to the Health and Social Care Review Group.**

BACKGROUND

3. On 7th March 2013, the Scrutiny Health and Social Care Review Group reviewed the procedures and practice of HM Coroner's and associated services relative to the manner in which sudden unexplained deaths in non-suspicious are dealt with.
4. This issue was raised by Members, following feedback from members of the public and community representatives, which resonated with some of their own individual experiences about delays in the process, causing added anxiety and stress at a time when families are already grieving.
5. As well as 25 members of the public and community representatives, 7 other Members were in attendance to provide evidence to the Committee.
6. Coroner's Officers and the Police (who act on behalf of HM Coroner) were represented at the meeting by HM Coroner, Mr David Morris.

Representatives from Luton & Dunstable Hospital, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group and Luton Borough Council were also present.

7. The deliberations and resolutions of the Scrutiny Health and Social Care Review Group were referred to the Executive meeting held on 15th April 2013.

REPORT

8. At its meeting on 15th April 2013 the Executive agreed the following decisions in relation to the Process following sudden non suspicious unexplained deaths:

“(i) Executive supports recommendations (a), (b), (d) to (g), (i) and (j) (as set out below) of the Scrutiny Health and Social Care Review Group to address barriers leading to delays in obtaining death certificates, the release of bodies to families for funeral arrangements and in the registration process, causing added anxiety and stress to grieving families, following sudden non suspicious unexplained deaths:

- (a) That HM Coroner, in consultation with relevant partner agencies, and community representatives, develop the use of imaging/ scanning, on similar lines to trials in Manchester, Leicester and Oxford, to avoid the need for invasive post-mortems, speed the process to establish cause of death, and reduce delays in issuing death certificate and releasing bodies to families for burial;
- (b) That the Luton Clinical Commissioning Group be commended for prioritising end of life care to improve services, and as part of this strategy, be recommended to work with HM Coroner and the Luton and Dunstable Hospital Trust, in consultation with affected communities, to invest in the provision of dedicated imaging/ scanning facilities to establish cause of death, instead of invasive post-mortems in appropriate cases. This should include consideration of the use of qualified volunteer operators;
- (d) That, where fact of death was confirmed and the Police were satisfied no criminality was involved, HM Coroner consider introducing a policy to allow the removal of bodies to private undertakers instead to the hospital mortuary, to improve access by families;
- (e) That HM Coroner be recommended to explore the use of secure e-mails to speed communication with the Registration Service and reduce delays in notification of cause of death and registration of deaths;
- (f) That the Luton & Dunstable Hospital Trust revised its staff training and existing protocol relating to the handling of patient's death, to improve communication, ensure continuity of care and reduce delays in certifying death, to improve bereaved families' experience;

- (g) That the Luton & Dunstable Hospital Trust develop and robustly implement clear guidance (e.g. in a leaflet form) on hand-over procedures from the medical team going off duty to the one coming on, particularly in cases where a patient's death was imminent or expected, to reduce delays in certifying deaths. The written guidance should be easily accessible to clinical staff on all wards;
 - (i) That HM Coroner, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, Luton and Dunstable Hospital Trust and Luton Borough Council be requested to respond in writing to the Committee's recommendations within 28 days of being notified of them;
 - (j) That HM Coroner, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, Luton and Dunstable Hospital Trust and Luton Borough Council be requested to report back to the Committee in the Autumn 2013 on progress achieved against recommendations;
- (ii) That the Executive approves recommendations (c), (h) and (i) (as set out below) in relation to Luton Borough Council:
- (c) That, if imaging/ scanning to establish cause of death was accepted for implementation, in conjunction with its introduction, Luton Borough Council's Executive be requested to instruct its Chief Executive to instigate research to facilitate the process for relevant communities to come together to establish burial societies, to meet the costs of post-mortem imaging/ scanning, where appropriate;
 - (h) That the Director of Environment and Regeneration be instructed to undertake a review on service delivery by the Registration and Cemeteries Services, taking account of different models operating in other areas, with a view to integrating services to provide a potential one-stop shop to speed the burial process;
 - (i) That HM Coroner, Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, Luton and Dunstable Hospital Trust and Luton Borough Council be requested to respond in writing to the Committee's recommendations within 28 days of being notified of them.
- (iii) That all the above decisions be forwarded to the Health and Wellbeing Board for their consideration and for them to respond to the Health and Social Care Review Group.
- (iv) That the Health and Social Care Review Group be notified of the Executive decisions in relation to the process following sudden non suspicious unexplained deaths."

PROGRESS AGAINST HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY PRINCIPLES:

Promoting Integration/Pooled Budgets/Joint Commissioning

Not applicable

Improving Quality and Efficiency – Service/Pathway Redesign

Not applicable

Addressing the Wider Determinants of Health

Not applicable

Focussing on Early Intervention and Prevention

Not applicable

IMPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

None.

APPENDIX

9. The following appendix is attached to this report:

Appendix A - Extract from the 15th April Executive decision sheet.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

Health and Social Care Review Group - reports and minutes.