

## **Student Wellbeing Service**

### **Procedures to follow in the event of the death of a student**

#### **Introduction**

In the tragic event that a student of the University dies, it is important that certain people within the University are informed about the death as soon as possible so that necessary procedures may be implemented. News of a student's death can be received through a variety of channels and by any member of the University's staff or student body. This document is designed to let you know whom you should contact if you receive news of a student's death and to provide an outline of who does what within the University once that news has been received.

This procedure governs action to be taken in the event of a student's death. However, it is difficult to describe a procedure that will fit every case since circumstances vary so much; the information provided in this document is to be used as a guide and is not meant to be prescriptive. For example, responding to a situation where a student has committed suicide may require a different action plan to responding when a student has died following an illness. The guidance cannot cover every detail of every situation and there needs to be flexibility depending on the circumstances involved. There may be times when, for example, staff unavoidably find out through the media, or where there is a delay in letting those on the distribution list know because staff in the Student Wellbeing Service are managing the immediate crisis situation. This is a difficult situation for all staff and students involved, please try to be understanding of this when responding in this situation.

The overall aim of this document is to identify procedures that will enable the University to respond in a sensitive and appropriate manner. The specific objectives are:

- To ensure a compassionate approach that recognises the distress for the person finding the body or learning of the death, the next of kin and staff and students close to the deceased.
- To identify clear lines of responsibility which support the valuable contributions of various University staff and student's in response to a student's death.

One of the most immediate actions will be that the student records will be changed to show that the student is deceased. This is essential so that no communication is sent out to the student's correspondence address e.g. about debt, library books etc. which would obviously be insensitive to their loved ones.

#### **Discovery of a death on campus premises including accommodation**

The location in which the death of a student occurs will have a significant impact on the consequential actions of the University and its staff members. Certain actions must be carried out on first discovery or notification of any death (this would include the death of a family member or guest on campus):

- If a person on campus dies the Police should always be notified.
- **The person(s) discovering the body must:**
- Ring 6666 – the campus security number. Campus security will then contact the Duty Manager (Accommodation and Hospitality Services) if the body was found in University

accommodation. The Duty Manager will need to know where the body was discovered, by whom and who informed the police.

- Secure the site and ensure that nothing is moved.
- If it is a 'violent, unnatural death, or sudden death of which the cause is unknown' then the Coroner's Act 1988 imposes on the Coroner a duty (usually delegated to the Police at the scene) to establish: who the deceased was, where, when and how the deceased met their death and the details required for the registration of the death.
- The Police should arrange for the removal of the body and any necessary post mortem.
- The Police (or Hospital) should arrange for the next of kin to be informed. In the unlikely event that the Police do not undertake this duty, responsibility will fall to the Head of the Student Wellbeing Service or a senior member of University staff. In the unlikely event that it is necessary to contact the next of kin it is essential that the veracity of the information about the death is confirmed before making any contact with the next of kin.
- Any witnesses whom the Police wish to interview should be taken to a private area removed from the immediate scene as soon as possible.

**The Duty Manager (Accommodation and Hospitality Services) will:**

- Ensure Police can gain entry to the premises.
- In Liaison with Security, assist the Police with the student's details such as name, age, home address, next of kin etc.
- Confirm with the Police they will be making contact with the next of kin and ask that they be informed once this has been done.
- Check on timescales for the removal of the body.
- Offer assistance, e.g. office space, telephone access, as required
- Secure emergency University accommodation for the next of kin if required.
- Find out who else is resident in the flat/corridor and if possible establish their whereabouts as appropriate.
- Ensure all residents in the vicinity are kept informed of the situation whilst bearing in mind confidentiality e.g. only giving basic information, not disclosing or confirming the identity of the student unless this information has been released by the Police.
- Offer other residents in a shared flat re-housing if required.
- If the death is treated as suspicious, Police may require possession of the flat/room for a minimum time period. Arrange alternative accommodation for students as required.
- If the deceased is a family member or guest of a student provide assistance as required in liaison with the Head of Student Wellbeing.
- Staff/students to be made aware that they should not comment to press or refrain from commenting on social media to ensure next of kin learn the news through the appropriate channels. Enquiries from the press should be referred through to the Press Office.

**Who Needs To Be Contacted?**

If you receive news of a student's death from any source other than the Head of your School/Section/Service, you should contact the Student Wellbeing Service on 0191 208 3751 or 0191 208 5870, unless you know that someone else has already made contact. You should provide as

much detail as you have been given about the deceased student, including the date of death and the circumstances of his/her death. It may be that staff in the Student Wellbeing Service are already aware of the death from other sources, but please do not assume that this will be the case.

**\*\*Please note that contact must not be made with the next of kin\*\***

### **The Co-ordinating Team and their Roles**

A virtual co-ordinating team, consisting of the Head of Student Wellbeing, the Head of the School and/or Service in which the student was based and the Director of Corporate Affairs (or their deputies), will be established to respond to the incident.

The SMIT Manager should be contacted for Study Abroad or Exchange students, Sponsored international students, or Home students who were studying abroad. The Loyola Center Manager should be contacted about Loyola students. The International Recruitment Officer from the International Office will be consulted as appropriate in cases involving non-British students.

Normally the Head of the Student Wellbeing Service (or his/her nominee) will act as contact person for the next of kin of the deceased student. The Head of Student Wellbeing may choose to involve the University Chaplain(s) in this role to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon the circumstances. Loyola University should be contacted to allow them to contact the next of kin of a Loyola student.

The co-ordinating team will ensure that:

- Appropriate people in the University and externally are informed of the event and are updated as appropriate.
- All legal and other statutory requirements surrounding the event are observed.
- Appropriate people are consulted and involved.
- All concerned have confidence that the University is acting in a responsible, compassionate and sensitive manner.
- No routine administrative procedure is continued which may cause additional distress to relatives or friends of the deceased.
- Follow-up enquiries, internal or external, are channelled appropriately.

The co-ordinating team will be solely responsible for issuing any official statements or updates about the incident to individuals or services listed as second tier contacts (below). The co-ordinating team will also advise any second tier contacts on the content of any information that they plan to send out.

#### **a) The Head of the Deceased Student's School (or his/her nominee) will:**

- Inform all relevant staff in the School of the death, first contacting the student's tutor/supervisor and Degree Programme Director. The Faculty PVC and Director of Faculty Operations should also be informed.
- Decide, in consultation with appropriate staff, which students need to be informed of the death in person and make arrangements for doing so.

- Deal with any requests from the family of the deceased student to talk to particular staff or to see where the student studied.
- Ensure that students within the School are aware of the support available from the Student Wellbeing Service and that staff are aware of the availability of support from Occupational Health. Both staff and students can obtain pastoral support from the University Chaplaincy.
- Ensure that School records are amended accordingly.
- Either in person, or in consultation with the Head of the Student Wellbeing Service, ascertains from the student's family details of the funeral arrangements and ensures that the University is represented (in accordance with the family's wishes). This representation should (where possible) be a senior member of the school and may also include a member of the Senior Management Team. A member of the Chaplaincy may also wish to attend.
- Inform appropriate staff in the relevant Faculty Office of the incident.
- Consider (in consultation with relevant Faculty colleagues and the Examinations and Awards Team) the option of awarding the deceased student a posthumous qualification.
- On the advice of the deceased student's tutor, inform the Head of any other School in which the deceased student had been studying.

The Heads of other Schools concerned will have the same responsibilities as outlined above except that they will not need to contact the student's tutor and Degree Programme Director.

**b) The Head of Student Wellbeing Service (or his/her nominee) will:**

- Be the key contact person for the student's family. Advise the deceased student's family of the contact details of any staff (e.g. tutor, Residence Manager) with whom they might wish to make contact.
- Ensure that all second tier contacts (listed below) are informed of the circumstances as soon as possible.
- Contact the Head of School to reiterate what support can be offered to both staff and students.
- Write a letter of condolence to the deceased student's family (to be signed by the Registrar or Vice-Chancellor).
- In liaison with the student's Head of School, obtain details of the funeral arrangements and ensure that the University is appropriately represented at the funeral (see previous section for further details).
- Where deemed appropriate arrange a debrief session at an appropriate time after the incident with all those directly involved, to ensure that all issues have been dealt with and to consider any matters arising as a result of the particular incident which may inform future amendments to the procedure.
- Contact the insurance team within the University Finance Office to ensure that the School and family are fully aware of any insurance cover available.
- Liaise with Public Health England if the death gives rise to any public health concern.

**c) The Director of Corporate Affairs (or his/her nominee) will:**

- Liaise with the police press office to confirm the level of detail that is in the public domain.
- Prepare a statement for release to the media on request (in consultation with the co-ordinating team).

- Deal with any queries from the media about the deceased student and his/her death in consultation with the other members of the co-ordinating team and the student's family.
- Ensure that copies of any press releases about the incident are forwarded to the other members of the co-ordinating team and police for approval.
- Monitor any social media channels to check whether any inappropriate/misleading information is being posted. This will be directed to the police press office to deal with and to issue any clarification if necessary. Furthermore, any communication posted on social media channels that could provide information to any on-going police inquiry will be forwarded to the police press office.
- Notify the Student Progress Team of any inappropriate/misleading information being posted by Newcastle University students so that they can take any action necessary.

### **Second Tier Contacts and their Roles**

The representative for the Student Wellbeing Service will immediately inform the following, providing as much detail as is appropriate in each case:

- Members of the senior management team, including the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Academic Registrar and PVC Learning & Teaching
- University Chaplaincy
- Student Progress Service to update SLM
- Finance and Planning (including Insurance Officer)
- The Occupational Health and Safety Service
- Accommodation Office
- Student Mobility and Integration Team Manager
- Loyola Center Manager
- University Librarian
- NU Advancement
- The President of the Students' Union
- Chief Executive and Director Membership and Demographic Services, Students' Union

The responsibilities of the second tier contacts listed in Section 3 are outlined below.

#### **a) The University Chaplaincy will:**

- Contact the Schools in which the deceased student studied, in order to indicate its willingness to offer support and help to staff and students who knew the deceased student.
- Contact the Hall of Residence/accommodation of the deceased student, in order to indicate its willingness to offer support and help to staff and students who knew the deceased student.
- When the coordinating chaplain receives notification of the death, they will request details of the funeral from the Head of the Student Wellbeing Service. At least one chaplain will attend the funeral where possible.
- In consultation with the Head of Student Wellbeing, write to the family to discuss the potential for a form of community remembrance or memorial service.
- Put staff/students in contact with leaders of particular faiths if requested.

**b) The Student Wellbeing Service will:**

- Through the Heads of Schools in which the deceased student studied, offer support to students who knew the deceased.
- Through the co-ordinating team, offer therapy as appropriate, to house/flat mates of the deceased student, where these can be identified and it is deemed necessary.
- Provide support for any individual or group of students who request it.
- Provide details on request of external bereavement counselling services.
- Provide a link to the student's family including arrangements for visiting the University.
- Issue a 'Notice of Withdrawal' to appropriate sections within the University, indicating the reason for withdrawal (i-team).

**c) The Student Progress Service will:**

- Issue a 'Notice of Withdrawal' to appropriate sections within the University, indicating the reason for withdrawal.
- Where appropriate, inform the Student Finance England or other bodies such as Research Councils of the death.
- Amend accordingly the deceased student's records held within the Student Progress Service.
- Notify the Home Office with regard to the Sponsor Management System if the student was in receipt of a Visa (Student Data Officer).

**d) The Finance and Planning Office will:**

- Halt all finance-related correspondence to the student, e.g. fee invoices.
- Reimburse any outstanding finance to the family, if appropriate.

**e) The University Insurance Officer will:**

- Liaise with the Head of Student Wellbeing to pursue any relevant University insurance actions and ensure that the School and family are fully aware of any insurance cover available.

**f) The Occupational Health and Safety Service will:**

- Liaise with the Health and Safety Executive, if necessary.
- Support the University in any accident investigation.
- Liaise with appropriate Head of School/Line manager of the staff who has been involved/affected by the student death, extending advice/support on the immediate and long term actions required.
- Organise where deemed necessary independent counselling support for staff.

**h) The Accommodation Office will:**

- Ensure that appropriate site staff liaise with the police when required. This is likely to be the Residence Manager or Duty Manager out of hours.
- Ensure that an appropriate member of staff is available when required to provide the deceased student's family with access to the student's room to collect belongings.

- Ensure that accommodation is available for the deceased student's family if required.
- Halt all accommodation-related correspondence to the student or the family, e.g. rent invoices.
- Identify and offer re-housing to other residents where appropriate.
- Assist the Student Wellbeing Service in identifying students in the deceased student's residence to whom the offer of support may be made.
- Inform the property's landlord of the incident (if the student was living in private rented accommodation)

**j) The Student Mobility and Integration Team will:**

- Act as a consultant to the Co-ordinating team. Advising them, as required, and contacting if requested
  - The members of the deceased student's immediate family.
  - The relevant Embassy or High Commission in London.
  - The deceased student's sponsor or employer.
  - The relevant British Council office.

Where a UK student has died whilst studying abroad, the Student Mobility and Integration Team will inform the host institution and liaise with relevant individuals at the host institution.

- Liaise with the Student Wellbeing Service and the host institution to look at what support can be provided to other home students who may be affected by the incident whilst overseas.
- Inform and liaise with Foreign and Commonwealth Office (or relevant Embassy in UK if EU national).

**( ) The Loyola Center will:**

- Contact Loyola University Maryland to inform them of the death.
- Act as the main point of contact between Loyola and Newcastle Universities
- Liaise with Student Wellbeing to meet with all the Loyola students
- Provide support for any individual or group of students who request it.

**k) The University Librarian will:**

- Halt all Library-related correspondence to the student.

**l) NU Advancement will:**

- Via the Head of School, advise the deceased student's family of the options, if they wish to donate or establish a legacy.
- Remove the student's name from any contact lists that they may have.

**m) The Chief Executive of the Students' Union will:**

- Inform the Welfare and Equality sabbatical officer and the Student Advice Centre of the death

- Establish if the deceased student was a member of a Students' Union Club or Society and, in the event that he/she was, ensure that appropriate steps are taken to inform other members.
- Liaise with University services as appropriate when students approach the Students' Union for support or advice.

**Other campuses:**

If there is a death of a student at our Singapore campuses the Dean of Newcastle University in Singapore will lead the coordination of the response in line with the Operational framework.

If there is a death of a student at our Malaysia campus the Academic Dean will lead the response using this document as a basis for that response but amending according to local circumstances.

If there is a death of a student at our London campus then the Chief Operating Officer will lead the response using this document as a basis for that response but amending according to local circumstances.

**Key contact details**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Named contact</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Head of Student Wellbeing Service	Sally Ingram /Stephanie Matthews	85870
Counselling and Mental Health Team	Kate Atchison	83751/86133
Academic Registrar	Lesley Braiden	86089
Director of Corporate Affairs	Abi Kelly/ Louella Houldcroft	85893/ 85108
Security	Emergency number Routine contact number	86666 86817
Student Progress Service	Angela McNeill/Jonathan Gray	86587/83423
I-team Manager	Sharon O'Donnell	85908
University Chaplaincy	Catherine Lack	86341
Accommodation Office	Vivienne Robinson/ Lynn Shaughnessy Paul Bandeen	86270/ 85323 85171
Occupational Health	Janice Craggs/ Lorraine Skeen	87344/ 86830
Finance Office	Karen Carvell/ John Davison	86516/ 85009
NU Advancement	Tracey Readshaw	85107
Student Mobility & Integration	Dimitra Boutsoukis	88275
Loyola Center	Grace Barker (07807134328)	87522
International Office	Louise Jackson	88667
The Library	Anne Middleton/Margaret Roxborough	87674/87652
Student Union	Simon Gerry/Lindsey Lockey	0191 239 3916 0191 239 3908
Human Resources	Lynn McArdle/Judith Burr	85600/88773
Student Financial Support	Jim Smith/ Emma Hope	88668/83599
Insurance	Kelly Lovelock/ Craig Longstaff	86520 / 83913
Occupational Health and Safety Service	Brian McBride/Katherine Wilson Janice Craggs/ Lorraine Skeen	86274 87344 / 86830

Executive Office	Alison Pickard, Janice Trewick and Sam Taylor	86061 / 86071
Social Media Team	Anna Brown	86947

Lesley Braiden  
Director of Student Services and Academic Registrar

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