

## Questions & Concerns about your Loved One's Treatment and Care after a Bereavement

Sometimes following the death of a loved relative, those close to them can be left feeling uncertain exactly why things happened the way they did.

Asking questions can be an important part of grieving; putting the missing pieces of the puzzle into place and helping towards understanding why the person you loved died.

This guide is designed to tell you what your choices are and how you can go about trying to find answers to the questions that you may have.

### **Talking things through**

Some people find it useful and comforting to be able to sit and talk things through with someone who looked after their loved one whilst they were in hospital.

Unless the coroner has become involved, or you have decided to seek help from a solicitor, you can choose to do one of the following.

If you have medical questions, you may ask to meet with the Consultant who had overall responsibility for your loved ones' care. Many Consultants are willing to sit down and talk things through with a patient's next of kin, they understand that this is a distressing and difficult time for you and will do what they can to help.

If you have nursing questions or concerns, you can approach the Ward Manager where your relative was cared for or alternatively ask to see the Senior Nurse for the Unit. Nursing staff work very closely with dying patients and their families and most understand how important it is to try and help people make some sense of things

Both of these options can usually be arranged reasonably quickly. If you are anxious to talk things through soon after the death, this is probably the best route for you at this time. The Patient Experience team can help to arrange this, as well as help you prepare before the meeting to ensure that you get the most benefit from it you can. You can contact them on: - 01633 - 238031 or 01633 - 238107.

If you are dissatisfied with the medical or nursing care your loved one received whilst they were in hospital – you can still, if you wish discuss these concerns at an informal meeting with the Senior Health Professional with responsibility for that area. Most Doctors and Nurses are willing to try and help in this way, although they may if they wish direct you to make a formal written complaint.

### **Bereavement Support or Counselling**

You may just want to talk to someone about how this sad event has affected you or your family. The Hospital Chaplains are happy to speak to you, whether or not you attend church on a regular basis. You can contact them on: - 01633 234263

Of course you may if you prefer contact one of the many voluntary sector bereavement support groups, GAVO is a really useful first point of contact their telephone number is: - 01633 - 241550

### **Finding it out more formally**

You may have already met with someone from the hospital and talked things through, and have decided that this is not enough for you or, you may feel it is better for you to set your enquiries on a more formal footing from the outset. There are plenty of options for you to choose from.

### **Looking at the patient's records**

If you are the named next of Kin or the Executor of the Estate, you may decide to make an application for access to health records and look through the medical notes yourself.

An application for Health Records is a lengthier and more formal process – there is a waiting period usually around 40 days – although it may be shorter or longer, depending on how many Consultants the patient has seen and the time span you are asking to look at. There is a fee for administration and photocopying.

If you decide take this route, you will be sent an application form with clear instructions on it.

Contact the AHRA team on: - 01633 740165

### **Making a formal complaint**

If you decide that you do want to complain to the Health Board and do not wish to try a meeting, then you can: -

Email: [abhb.enquiries@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:abhb.enquiries@wales.nhs.uk)

Telephone: - 01495 745656 and chose Option 2

Write a letter of complaint to: -

#### **Dr Andrew Goodall**

Chief Executive  
Aneurin Bevan Health Board  
Mamhilad House  
Mamhilad Park Estate  
Pontypool  
NP4 0YP

You can if you want seek outside advice either through contacting your local Community Health Council Complaints Advocate (see Yellow Pages for the number) or through a solicitor who specialises in medical complaints.