

P144 **LEGAL SURGERY SCHEME**

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Introduction In 2009 18 local solicitors agreed to take part in a free Legal Surgery pilot scheme. This was successful and now it is an integral part of the support services the hospice offers.

Aim 'Peace of mind' and 'putting one's house in order' were the main drivers with a focus on accessibility for all patients and family members. It would also avoid the inconvenience and expense of an appointment at a solicitor's office.

How the Legal Surgery operates The Surgery takes place once a month for an hour with a different solicitor each time. Day Therapy takes place at this time so people do not have the inconvenience of 'another' visit. Clients can either make an appointment in advance or just turn up. The solicitor sets up in our main public area for people dropping by and a room is available for private discussion. The solicitor can telephone those who are unable to travel and staff can ask questions on

behalf of patients. There are usually about two or three clients each month.

Administration of the Scheme The rota is set up 6 months in advance and each solicitor holds one surgery every 18 months. Each solicitor signs an agreement setting out the points of the scheme but there is no obligation by the hospice to ensure there are any clients for them to see. The solicitors also sign a Self-Declaration of Criminal Record and are made aware of our Health and Safety, Vulnerable Adults and Complaints policies. No one firm is given preference over another. The arrangements are made by our Legacy Officer – a non-clinician.

Advertising the Scheme There is a leaflet for patients outlining the scheme and posters around the Hospice; most recommendations arise from the social workers and nurses.