

P 214 **SMALL CHANGES, BIG DIFFERENCE: IMPROVEMENTS
IN HOSPITAL BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

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Background In 2010 new staff were employed and formed into a formal joint Mortuary & Bereavement Service for the Trust.

Aims To develop the service whilst reviewing quality and turn-around time.

Methods Review of existing facilities and practices revealed many areas ripe for development and this presentation describes how the changes were achieved for an area which remains largely hidden to the rest of the hospital.

Results A professional looking uniform and investment in staff training and development; rebuilding and modernization of the entire mortuary and bereavement suite (include colour changing lights for skin effects) on two sites; development of a bed cover allowed dignified, respectful transfer of in patients' beds, rather than a concealment trolley, with resulting reduction in manual handling.

Mortuary sessions for hospital staff improved understanding, reduced fear of the unknown, improved communication with families and compliance with care after death procedures. Procedural changes resulted in improved quality of death certification and the resulting documentation presented more professionally and respectfully in specially designed folders with useful information.

Many small touches – quality 'property bags' for patients' effects; 'last thoughts, words and wishes' cards; 'forget me not' seeded cards; keepsake pebbles; ribbon ties and muslin bags for hair locks; free parking for those collecting certificates have served to improve a difficult experience.

Redesigned, more user-friendly bereavement booklets; staff cards with prompts for discussing tissue donation and departmental cultural awareness posters produced to ensure cultural sensitivity to individual need; support for parents facing the loss of a child and those who have miscarried, ensure burial and cremation facilities are appropriate.

Conclusions Feedback from patients is collated and used in real time to continue change. This presentation describes the difference this sensitivity and creativity have made to bereaved families' experiences.