

NATIONAL CLINICAL BULLETIN 011/2022-23

Confirmation of Child Death in the Community

Situation

Following recent audits, SUDI simulation and the annual review of this document, we have identified the need to re-circulate this document as a reminder for all clinical colleagues.

Background

Although rare, the death of a child is one of the most emotionally traumatic challenging events for anyone to encounter. Following the confirmation of death (COD) of a child or young person and in the absence of any suspicious circumstances, the deceased should be transferred to the same hospital destination, as they would have been, if they were being resuscitated. This is to allow early implementation of the sudden & unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) / sudden unexpected death in infancy, child or adolescent (SUDICA) process and to provide pastoral support to the families and carers.

Assessment

On occasions, there has been some confusion between the Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Health board Emergency & Paediatric Departments as well as Police Scotland, in relation to organisational roles and responsibilities following the COD of a child or young person in the community. I am liaising directly with regional health boards and Police Scotland with the aim of improving the way in which we all deal with these extremely difficult cases.

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Please could colleagues re-familiarise themselves with the JRCALC guideline “Death of a Child” as well as the SUDI Scotland tool kit - <https://www.sudiscotland.org.uk/> (developed by Health Improvement Scotland), in particular the section entitled professional guidance. Please ensure you contact the receiving unit prior to leaving scene, to allow them to prepare an area suitable for the deceased and SUDI /SUDICA process. Emergency driving is not required.

Should you require any additional advice regarding procedure at scene following of the COD of a child or young person, please contact the duty Clinical Team Leader or the Clinician on call via the ACC. As I said earlier, these can be deeply distressing incidents so please also reach out to your line manager, colleagues, or the Clinical Team leader to talk to them. There are a range of ways in which we can support you.

Should you have any further question, please email me – davidlee.bywater@nhs.scot

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