



Staffordshire Police Equality Impact Assessment



The purpose of this EIA is to ensure you consider any equality issues as part of your decision making when developing / reviewing your policy / procedure.

Please complete the sections below and send to the Equality and Diversity unit to be quality assured. New / revised policies cannot be published on the policy database until the EIA has passed the quality assurance process.

Title of policy/procedure:	Sudden Death
Department:	Operational Services
Date:	11/05/2012

1. Identify the aims and purpose of the policy

This Policy applies to any death that has come to the attention of Staffordshire Police by reason of it being a death that has not occurred naturally. This includes a death that can be described as unnatural, the cause is unknown, or is violent, or unexplained. Such instances are commonly and collectively referred to as 'Sudden Death'.

The aims of this policy are:

- When investigating a case of sudden death to ensure that all residents of Staffordshire receive a service that meets or exceeds their expectations. At all times, particularly during bereavement, to recognise and take account of the multicultural nature and diverse needs of anyone affected by a sudden death.
- To ensure the dignity of the deceased.
- To ensure Staffordshire Police personnel recognise and understand their responsibilities when dealing with a report of a sudden death.
- To promote best practice or indicate where best practice advice may be found.
- To ensure there is a consistent standard of approach by Staffordshire Police across the different Coroner's administrative areas and that the needs of the Coroners are met.
- If other agencies are involved with the Police in the investigation of sudden death to distinguish, by agreement, between those areas for which the Police

are accountable and those that are the responsibility of those other agencies. Together with those other agencies to ensure the exchange of appropriate information.

The policy provides for a structured approach for dealing with reports of sudden death from initial action to the conduct of an investigation through to final disposal at court or inquest.

The correct classification of the death provides decision makers with a framework to select the least intrusive interventions to complete the investigation and to ensure that any action taken is proportional to achieve the objectives of the investigation.

2. Identify the individuals and organisations who are likely to have an interest in, or be affected by the policy.

Her Majesty's Coroners, Members of the public (in particular bereaved relatives), West Midlands Ambulance Service, Health & Safety Executive, HMIC, IPCC, Staffordshire Police Officers.

3. Data

Summarise the findings of any monitoring data / information which you have considered regarding the impact of this policy on people from all or any of the protected groups. This could include national or local data.

Bereavement is a consequence of any death whether it is sudden or expected. Bereavement and its affect on friends, family and colleagues of the deceased must be taken into consideration by police officers and police staff in all cases where they are called upon to attend the scene of a sudden death. The affects of bereavement in the context of the protected characteristics should be borne in mind in adopting an approach that does not hinder or exacerbate the grieving process. Individuals respond differently to grief and some of the different responses may be as a result of diversity issues. What is common is the time needed to cope and come to terms with the loss. Anyone suffering from the affects of bereavement may need specialist counselling or support for which police officers have no training and no role to play. However where the death is a result of homicide or following a fatal road traffic collision Staffordshire Police are able to deploy family liaison officers who may have experience of or come from a particular minority group. There is some academic research concerning bereavement and diversity but it inevitably focuses on different coping strategies. There are many useful web sites that give advice to those from an ethnic or minority background about the likely affects of bereavement and how to get support or advice. A main contributor being the National Health Service:- <http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/guide/bereavement/pages/bereavementsupport.aspx>

Further internet sites containing information are shown below and explain what feelings are associated with bereavement and how to get help.

3.1 Age

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/relationships-and-family/bereavement/>
http://www.childbereavement.org.uk/for_schools/children_s_understanding_of_death
<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>

3.2 Disability

http://www.bereavementanddisability.org.uk/BSLD3/BSLD3_App.htm
http://www.heron.nhs.uk/specialist_directory/bereavement/ld_bereavement.htm
<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2010/06/25/114800/bereavement-service-for-people-with-learning-disabilities.htm>
<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>
<http://www.bereavementanddisability.org.uk/>

3.3 Race

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>
<http://www.thedoveservice.org.uk/>

3.4 Religion or Belief

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>
http://www.healthtalkonline.org/Living_with_dying/Bereavement_due_to_traumatic_death/Topic/3709/

3.5 Sex

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>
http://www.healthtalkonline.org/Living_with_dying/Bereavement_due_to_traumatic_death/Topic/3709/

3.6 Sexual Orientation

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>
http://www.healthtalkonline.org/Living_with_dying/Bereavement_due_to_traumatic_death/Topic/3709/

3.7 Transgender

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/Birmingham/index.html>
http://www.healthtalkonline.org/Living_with_dying/Bereavement_due_to_traumatic_death/Topic/3709/
www.beaumontsociety.org.uk

4. Research

Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy for all or any of the protected groups. This could include information you have obtained from other sources e.g. ACPO, Home Office.

4.1 Age

Not applicable

4.2 Disability

Not applicable

4.3 Race

Not applicable

4.4 Religion or Belief

Not applicable

4.5 Sex

Not applicable

4.6 Sexual Orientation

Not applicable

4.7 Transgender

Not applicable

5. Consultation

Summarise the opinions of any consultation for all or any of the protected groups.

Who was consulted and how e.g. survey, discussion, forum.

If there was no consultation please justify why.

This policy is largely unchanged from its predecessors but reflects changes in force structures in resource availability and the attendance criteria for the Police who will be attending fewer episodes of sudden death. It is recognised that the finality of death and the consequences and emotional impact that follow are universal to all people and cultures. This assessment acknowledges that bereavement may occur in different ways and intensity but addresses the two things that matter most to the bereaved which are that the dignity of the deceased is preserved and information is provided to those that need it. Historically the police have attended and dealt with deceased persons, their friends and family from all strands of diversity. The approach taken has been subject to Police supervision, oversight by HM Coroner, funeral directors, members of the clergy and medical personnel and West Midlands Ambulance Authority. During that time no adverse incidents have been reported in its operation in relation to diversity

5.1 Age

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

5.2 Disability

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

5.3 Race

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

5.4 Religion or Belief

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

5.5 Sex

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

5.6 Sexual Orientation

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

5.7 Transgender

No specific consultation in relation to the protected groups.

6. Conclusions

Taking into account the results of the monitoring, research and consultation, set out how the policy impacts or could impact on people from the following protected groups? (Include positive and/or negative impacts)

6.1 Age

Sudden unexplained deaths often cause shock and increased emotions in surviving relatives & friends and this can be exacerbated in cases involving young people in particular infants. Cases of infant death have to be investigated in particular ways and in some detail in an effort to establish the cause of death. These processes can cause increased concern amongst relatives and the situation must be handled sensitively and with empathy.

6.2 Disability

If there are communication difficulties because the partner/family member of the deceased person is deaf or hard of hearing then a qualified sign language or lip speaker interpreter will be employed.

6.3 Race

Where English is not the first language of the partner/family of the deceased person and if there are communication difficulties then a qualified linguistic interpreter will be employed and where available multi lingual literature will be used.

6.4 Religion or Belief

Issues of religion may need to be considered when dealing with the partner/family of the deceased person in particular the need to explain the legal requirements of UK law which may conflict with religious cultural requirements and expectations of relatives.

6.5 Sex

No adverse impact identified.

6.6 Sexual Orientation

It is important to recognise that lesbian, gay, bisexual relationships and families come in many different forms, and that a range of particular issues may arise in bereavement care. For example, a same sex couple may have been living together for some considerable time but may not have entered into a civil partnership. In the

event of bereavement, it is important to remember that the surviving partner should be given support notwithstanding the fact that the couple did not have a civil partnership, and that the surviving partner's views and wishes are taken into consideration.

There may also be other complications. For example other members of the bereaved person's family who would ordinarily become involved in the event of the death may never have met or be aware of the surviving partner's relationship with their deceased relative. They may not be aware of, and/or may not accept, the bereaved person's sexual orientation. This can lead to misunderstandings and possibly conflict if not handled sensitively.

6.7 Transgender

People who have commenced or undergone all or part of the process in sexual re-alignment may in the process have been rejected by their family and friends and in the case of bereavement the situation can be complex and requires handling with particular sensitivity.

Members of the deceased person's family may not accept the deceased person's situation and if they have lived with new partners and have new close friends this can lead to misunderstandings and possibly conflict if not handled sensitively.

7. Decisions

If the policy will have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how the policy will change or why it is to continue in the same way.

If no changes are proposed, the policy needs to be objectively justified.

No negative impact is perceived to be a consequence of this policy.

This Policy addresses any death that has come to the attention of Staffordshire Police by reason of it being a death that has not occurred naturally. This includes a death that can be described as unnatural, the cause is unknown, or is violent, unexpected or unexplained. Such instances are commonly and collectively referred to as 'sudden death'.

The policy provides for a structured approach for dealing with reports of sudden death from initial action to the conduct of an investigation through to final disposal at court or inquest. It ensures dignity of the deceased and that family members or partners are kept informed on the progress of any investigation either by the police or by HM Coroner's Officers.

It is important to correctly identify the circumstances and context in which the death has occurred at the earliest opportunity.

The correct classification of the death provides decision makers with a framework to select the least intrusive interventions to complete the investigation and to ensure that any action taken is proportional to achieve the objectives of the investigation.

8. Monitoring arrangements

If the policy is new what consideration has been given to piloting the policy?
If monitoring is not already in place what arrangements have been made to monitor the effects of the policy on equality and diversity?

Policy & Procedures concerning police operational investigations of Sudden Death have been in existence for many years and this policy and its procedures are a review and update of those policies. No pilot is required.

There are regular meetings between the police, HM Coroners and other interested parties where the operational effectiveness of policy is discussed.

This equality impact assessment will be published on the force website.

EIA Form Dated
01/11/11