

Body Donation – Information for Relatives or Friends

This booklet is intended to offer practical guidance to those whose friend, relative or someone close to them has expressed a desire to donate their body after death. It aims to provide useful information on what to expect during the process.

Please note that although we make every effort to accept all bequests, we cannot guarantee acceptance at the time of death due to various factors explained on page 2.

If you require any additional advice or information about body donation, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

0151 794 5442 
bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk 
www.liverpool.ac.uk/harc 

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Introduction

The bequest of a body is an immensely generous act that is greatly appreciated and has far reaching benefits for society. We do all we can to make the best possible use of each precious gift.

Body donations are highly valued by staff and students. A donated body can be used for a number of purposes, which may include:

Anatomical examination - teaching students or healthcare professionals about the structure and function of the human body.

Education and training - teaching healthcare professionals surgical techniques.

Research - scientific studies which improve the understanding of the human body.

Please be assured that for all purposes we keep the bodies securely and treat them with respect and dignity throughout the time that they are in our care. **Our work is regulated and licensed by the Human Tissue Authority www.hta.gov.uk** who ensure that human tissue and organs are used safely and ethically, and with proper consent.

A donor's identity is never revealed during anatomical examination, research or training. All body donors are given a unique identifying number, which can only be linked back to the donor by a small number of highly trained staff.

Consent for body donation

Under the [Human Tissue Act 2004](#), written and witnessed consent for anatomical examination must be given prior to death. **Consent cannot be given by anyone else after a person's death.** Having power of attorney does not qualify you to make the decision to donate a body on someone else's behalf.

Consent is usually given via a paper bequeathal form which, once it's been signed and witnessed, is registered on our body donor register.

Sometimes people leave instructions for their bequest in a Will instead of completing a form. The wording needs to be clear and compliant with the Human Tissue Act's rules for body donation.

Suggested wording for a Will:

It is my considered wish that, after my death, my body be donated to the University of Liverpool (or another medical school) for the purposes of medical teaching, studying or research into the structure of the human body.

We'd recommend checking that consent is valid and in place before your loved one passes away to avoid unnecessary distress when the time comes.

Some reasons we may not be able to accept a body donor

We are extremely grateful to all those who register as a body donor. Unfortunately, there are some circumstances in which we have to decline a bequest. Here are the most common reasons why we may not be able to accept a bequeathal:

- If there has to be a Coroner's post mortem examination.
 - If the donor dies abroad.
 - If the death is the result of an infectious disease (e.g. hepatitis, tuberculosis, HIV, MRSA, septicaemia, coronavirus).
 - If the donor has Alzheimer's disease or senile dementia of unknown cause.
 - If the donor has had a recent operation where the wound has not healed.
 - If the donor has an unhealed surgical opening such as a stoma or wound drain site.
 - If the donor has bed sores, varicose ulcers or oedema (swelling of the body as a result of excessive fluid accumulation).
 - If the donor has jaundice of infective origin.
 - If the donor has severe peripheral vascular disease.
 - If the donor has severe arthritic deformity.
 - If the donor is overweight or very underweight.
 - If the donor's organs have been donated for transplantation.
- A person can donate the corneas of their eyes and still donate their body for anatomical examination. Donor cards can be obtained by contacting the Organ Donor Register on 0300 123 23 23, or [Moorfield's Eye Bank](#) on 020 7253 1199.
- If the University mortuary facility is fully occupied.

Bequeathals are normally only accepted from those residing within the **postcodes** covered by the University of Liverpool: **BB, CH, FY, IM, L, LA, PR, WA** and **WN**. Occasionally we will consider out of area bequests but may ask for a contribution towards transportation.

Bequeathals are not accepted from individuals under the age of 18.

We cannot accept donations during Easter, Christmas and New Year when the University is closed.

The final decision about accepting a donation will be made after death. We'll work with the relevant doctor to check suitability for our teaching programme, confirm we can get all legal documents, and ensure we have space available. We'll make this decision as quickly as possible and inform you promptly if we cannot accept the donation.

How we use the information we hold

The University of Liverpool is responsible for looking after the information provided on a consent form. We use this information to:

- Process the donation request
- Support our teaching and research
- Meet our Human Tissue Authority licence requirements

We store the information securely on University servers and only share it if required by law. We follow [General Data Protection Regulations](#) (GDPR). If we can't accept a donation or if consent is withdrawn, we'll remove the information as appropriate.

We occasionally use images of small body parts for labels and administrative purposes. These are for department use only and never identify individuals.

You have rights regarding how we handle personal data. Find out more at the Information Commissioner's Office www.ico.org.uk or the University website: www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data_protection/. For concerns about data, contact our Data Protection Officer: legalservices@liverpool.ac.uk

What if my relative/friend is also on the organ donor register?

People can be registered for both organ and body donation. This gives them the best chance of helping others after death.

However, if organs (except corneas) are donated for transplantation, we cannot accept the body for anatomical examination. If organ donation does not go ahead, you can proceed with the body donation.

A person can donate their corneas and still donate their body.

For organ donation: Contact NHS Blood and Transplant Tel: 0300 123 2323 Website: www.organdonation.nhs.uk.

For cornea donation: Contact NHS Blood and Transplant: 0300 123 2323 or Royal Liverpool University Hospital: 0151 709 0141.

Instructions for when a body donor dies

1) Arrange for the donor to be kept under refrigerated conditions.

If death occurs in **hospital**: Staff will move the donor to the hospital mortuary.

If death occurs at **home** or in a **nursing home**: Ask a local Funeral Director to take the donor to their Chapel of Rest.

2) Contact our Bequeathal Office.

Telephone: **0151 794 5442**

Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00am - 4:30pm (closed Bank Holidays)

If you reach voicemail during office hours, we're likely on another call and will respond quickly. Outside office hours, leave a message following the recorded instructions.

3) Register the death.

When the doctor has issued the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death you can **make an appointment to register the death**. You don't need to wait for our decision to do this. Inform them of the body donation wishes.

Ask the Registrar to email a copy of the green form (Certificate of Burial or Cremation) to bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk.

Our Bequeathal Team will support you throughout the screening process, explaining each step and answering any questions you have.

We need to check three things: that the donor is suitable for our teaching programme, that we can get all the required legal documents, and that we have space available. We'll work with the doctor to make this decision as quickly as possible.

Donors need to be brought into our care within **4 days** of death.

If the offer of Bequeathal is accepted:

Our undertaker can collect the donor once we've received both the **green form** and details of the **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death** (MCCD). These documents are usually sent to us electronically.

Once the donor has arrived safely at the University, **we will send you a form to complete**. This includes questions about the eventual funeral and our Thanksgiving Service.

If an offer of Bequeathal is not accepted:

Proceed with normal arrangements for burial or cremation. It is with regret that the University cannot make any financial contribution to these private arrangements.

Funeral arrangements

When the teaching or research programme is finished, **we will arrange and pay for a cremation unless you want to arrange a private funeral.**

The cremation we arrange includes:

- A simple coffin
- Transport to the crematorium
- A short service led by a Celebrant
- All cremation costs

You will be able to receive the ashes or have them scattered in the garden of remembrance.

Most cremations take place within three years, though some may happen sooner - sometimes within six months.

We hold regular Thanksgiving Services in Liverpool, typically annually but at least every two years. This special event brings together donors' loved ones, staff and students to remember and thank our donors.

Are there any costs or payments involved?

If we can accept the donation, the University will cover the cost of transport to the University and the final cremation. This means you will not have the usual funeral expenses.

If we cannot accept the donation, you will need to arrange and pay for a normal funeral. You will also need to pay any funeral director costs already incurred while waiting for our decision.

Please note: There is no payment made for body donation.

Memorial stone

A memorial stone in Abercromby Square honours our donors. This provides a peaceful place for reflection for all those who wish to remember our donors. You can find Abercromby Square using the postcode L69 7WZ.

Complaints or concerns

At the University of Liverpool, we are committed to providing the best possible service to our donors and their loved ones. However, we understand that sometimes things may not go as planned and you may have concerns or complaints. If you do have a complaint, please let us know as soon as possible by sending an email to bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk. We take all complaints seriously and will work to resolve the issue as quickly and fairly as possible. If you are not satisfied with our response, you can contact our regulator, the [Human Tissue Authority](#) (HTA), who will investigate the matter further.

Contact Us

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Liverpool L69 3GE

 0151 794 5442

 bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk

 www.liverpool.ac.uk/harc