

### **Body Donation – Booklet for Relatives**

This booklet is intended to offer practical guidance to families whose loved ones have 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 that are explained on page 2.

If you require any additional advice or information about your loved one's bequeathal offer, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

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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.

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

**Education and training** - teaching healthcare professionals surgical techniques.

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](http://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. If photographs or other images are taken these will also be given a number and will not be identifiable in any way.

## 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 loved ones 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 for not accepting a bequest

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 a person 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 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 has arthritic deformity.
- If the Donor is overweight or very underweight.
- If the Donor's organs have been donated for transplantation.  
You can donate the corneas of your eyes and still donate your body for anatomical examination. For a donor card please contact 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.

During the major public holidays at Easter, Christmas and New Year the University of Liverpool closed, and is not able to accept donors.

The decision as to whether or not to accept a donor will be made at the time of death. Following the death, we will make enquiries with the relevant medical staff (e.g. G.P. or hospital doctor) to ascertain whether or not the Donor will be suitable for anatomical examination. If a Donor is not suitable we will inform relatives or executor as soon as possible so that funeral arrangements can be made.

## **How we use the information we hold**

The University of Liverpool is responsible for managing and processing the data obtained through the Consent Form and other forms used in the Bequeathal process, as the "data controller". We will use this data to administer a donation request as part of our responsibility to provide teaching, learning and research facilities, and as part of our license from the Human Tissue Authority. The information will be securely stored in a database on the University's servers and will not be shared with any other organisation unless legally required to do so. The data will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), and if a donation is declined or withdrawn, the data will be appropriately deleted. Please refer to our privacy notice at [www.liverpool.ac.uk/human-anatomy-resource-centre/privacynotice/](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/human-anatomy-resource-centre/privacynotice/) for more information.

You have a number of rights with respect to how we process personal data. More information on these rights can be found from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) and on the University website at [www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data\\_protection/](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/legal/data_protection/)

We do occasionally use images of small body parts for administrative purposes such as labels. These images are for departmental use only. A person is never identifiable in these images.

If you have concerns regarding how we deal with data please contact the Data Protection Officer at [legalservices@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:legalservices@liverpool.ac.uk).

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

People who choose to donate their body or organs do so in the hope that they will be useful to others after their death. Despite being separate donation systems, it is possible to remain on both registers to have the highest probability of helping someone after death.

We are not able to accept donations for anatomical examination if any organs other than the corneas have been donated for transplantation. However, if after their death, the person is found unsuitable to be an organ donor, then body donation can be taken forward by the relatives, solicitor or executor of the will.

The organ donation register is run by the NHS. You can call them on 0300 123 23 23 or visit their website [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/).

A person may donate the corneas of their eyes and still donate your body for anatomical examination. For more information please contact the NHS Organ Donation line: 0300 123 2323 or online at [www.organdonation.nhs.uk/](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/).

## Instructions to next of kin or executors when donor dies

We have a **4 day period** between the day of a death and being able to accept.

- 1. Arrange for the deceased to be kept under refrigerated conditions** until the department is able to make a decision about the donation.  
**If death occurs in a hospital**, the hospital staff will arrange for the deceased to be taken to the hospital mortuary. Their body will be held under refrigerated conditions.  
**If death occurs at home or at a nursing home**, please contact a funeral director of your choice to collect the deceased and take them to a Chapel of Rest. The deceased should be kept under refrigerated conditions until the department is able to make a decision about the donation.
- 2. Telephone the University of Liverpool on 0151 794 5442.**  
The Bequeathal Office, is open **Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm**.  
If your call falls within these hours and is unanswered due to a busy line, we will promptly return your call upon receiving your message. Outside of these hours, a voicemail service is available, and you can leave your message by following the recorded instructions. Our team will consider your offer of bequest as soon as the office reopens.

We will need to ask you details about the deceased, including the name and contact number for their usual GP. It will be helpful if you have this information to hand.

We will work with the attending doctor of the deceased to assess the acceptability of the body donation. We will promptly communicate our decision to you once it has been made.

- 3. Make an appointment with the Registrar to register the death**  
You **do not** need to wait until a final decision has been reached to do this. **Register the death with the Registrar** and tell them of the wishes of the deceased. The Registrar will issue a **green form** (Certificate of Burial or Cremation) and copies of the **Death Certificate**. The Registrar should **email** a copy of the **green form** to [bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk) in the event that the bequest is accepted.

### **If the offer of Bequeathal is accepted:**

Our undertaker can collect the Donor once we've received the **green form** and a copy of the **medical certificate of the cause of death** (MCCD). These documents are usually sent to us electronically by the Registrar after registering the death.

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**

Once the teaching or research programme is complete we will arrange a modest cremation and committal service. This would consist of the following:

- Provision of a simple coffin and conveyance to the crematorium.
- A short service at the crematorium, usually taken by a Celebrant.
- Cremation fees.
- Any fees for scattering of the cremated remains at the local crematorium.

If other arrangements are requested, we will carry these out as far as possible, but any extra costs incurred will have to be met from the estate or by yourself.

If you wish, you can arrange a private burial or cremation, but all expenses involved in such arrangements will be your responsibility.

### **How long is it likely to be until the funeral can go ahead?**

Funerals usually take place within three years after death but certain courses or procedures can result in the funeral taking place much sooner, sometimes within six months.

Every two years we arrange a Service of Thanksgiving to recognise the altruism of the Donors we have accepted during that period. Friends and relatives are invited to join staff and students in a non-denominational service in Liverpool.

### **Are there any costs or payments involved?**

If the deceased has to be taken to a funeral directors' premises, the removal cost is borne by the next of kin or the Donor's estate. The University pays for everything else once the Donor is in our care.

If there is a pre-paid funeral plan in place you may want to check with the funeral director that any monies will be refunded to you if the repository is able to accept the donation.

### **Memorial stone**


A new memorial stone has been installed in Abercromby Square to honour our donors. We hope the memorial stone will become a place of quiet reflection for the families and friends of 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 families. 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](mailto: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

The University of Liverpool  
Human Anatomy Resource Centre  
Sherrington Building  
Ashton Street  
Liverpool L69 3GE

 0151 794 5442

 [bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:bodydonation@liverpool.ac.uk)

 [www.liverpool.ac.uk/harc](http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/harc)