

# What to do during your Bereavement



For more information, please contact  
Bereavement Services.  
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Tel: 01904 725445

INSIDE FRONT COVER  
Sponsor

The hospital staff wish to express their sincere sympathy to you at this time.

This booklet aims to provide some practical help and advice during the early days of your bereavement.

Please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unclear about any matter, our Staff will always be pleased to help.

**Disclaimer**

Whilst York Hospital is very grateful for the support given by those placing advertisements in this booklet, the Hospital regrets that it cannot accept any liability for any of the services provided.

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## **Bereavement Services\***

York Hospital  
Wigginton Road  
York  
YO31 8HE

Telephone: 01904 725445

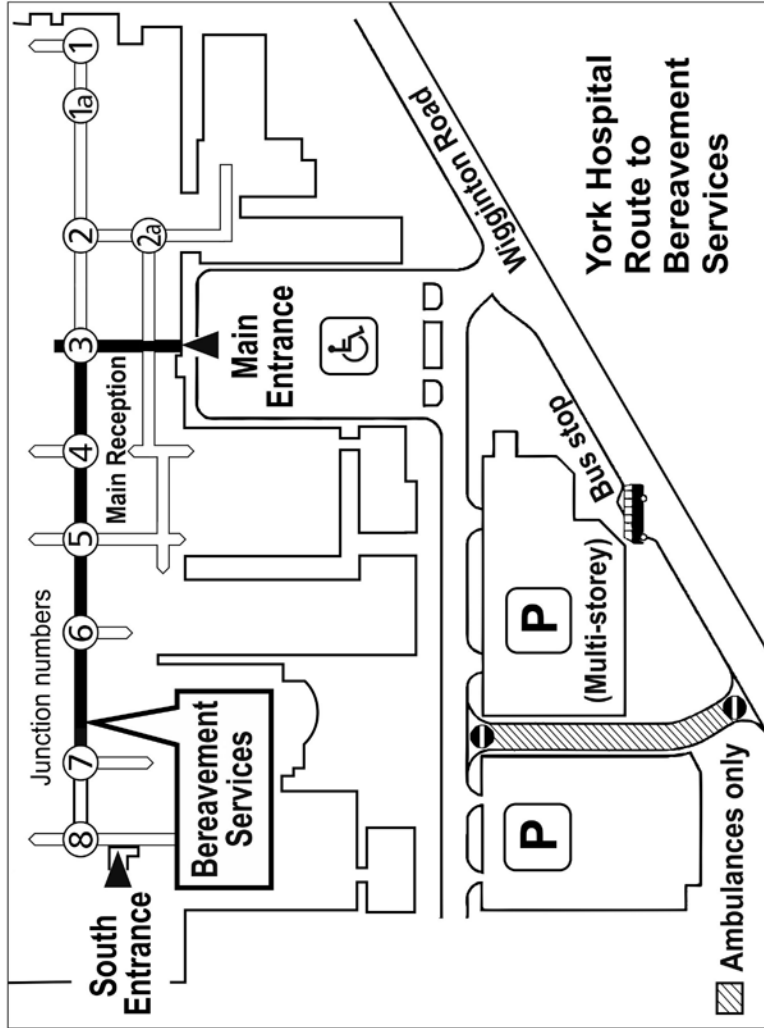
Office opening times: 8.30am - 4.30pm

*\*See map illustrating the interior layout of the Hospital shown on page 2.*

Parking is available in the multi-storey car park at the front of the hospital site. Parking spaces for disabled visitors are available at the main entrance of the hospital.

Please access our website:  
<http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/>  
Bereavement Services is under the “Services” heading of the homepage.

## York Hospital: interior layout



## **What do I do next?**

On the next working day after the death has occurred please call the Bereavement Services team on 01904 725445 who will advise you on the availability of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and any patient's property and valuables.

You will need this certificate in order to register the death; Bereavement Services will be able to advise you how to do this. However, if the death has to be referred to the coroner no certificate will be immediately available, relevant staff will keep you updated about this. Further information about the duties of the Coroner are included on page 9 of this booklet.

## **Registering the death**

Once the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been issued, you must register the death with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages within five days. There is no charge to register a death unless a certified copy of the death certificate is purchased. You may need several copies.

You usually need to buy some copy certificates for banks, building societies, solicitors and other official institutions that require proof that death has occurred.

In order to register a death you must qualify as one of the following;

- A relative of the person who has died
- Not related to the person who has died but you were present at their death
- The person instructing the funeral director

It would be helpful if you can take along the following information about the person who has died:

- the birth certificate of the person who has died, if possible
- the medical card of the person who has died, if possible

When you come to register the death the Registrar will ask you for the medical certificate which gives the cause of death, unless the Coroner has carried out a post mortem, in which case all paperwork will have been delivered to the registrar directly.

The Registrar will ask about:

- the date and place of death
- the full name of the person who has died
- their date and place of birth
- their home address
- their last occupation and whether they were retired



- whether the person who has died was married or a registered civil partner when they died
- name and occupation of the living or died spouse or registered civil partner

If it is a married woman or widow who has died, they will need to know her maiden name and her husband's full name and occupation.

They will ask for the date of birth of any spouse or registered civil partner still living.

When you register the death you will receive a **Green** or **Yellow** form to give to the funeral director to allow arrangements to be made for cremation or burial. You will also receive a **White** form to complete for the Department of Work and Pensions.

The main registry office is located at 56 Bootham, York. YO30 7DA and operates on an appointment only basis. Please call 01904 654477 to make an appointment.

At certain times a registrar may be available within Bereavement Services at The York Hospital and also operates an appointment only basis. Please call 01904 725445 for availability.

## **Tell Us Once Bereavement Service**

When someone has died there are lots of things that need to be done, at a time when you probably least feel like doing them. One of these is contacting government departments and local council services that need to be told.

The Registrars provide a service which will make this easier. This service means that you can just tell the Registrar and these organisations will be contacted.

You can use this service to tell the following organisations about the death:

### **Local Councils:**

- Housing Benefit Office
- Council Tax Benefit / Support Office
- Council Tax
- Collection of payment for council services
- Electoral services
- Blue Badges
- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Council Housing

### **Department for Work and Pensions:**

- Pension, Disability and Carers Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- Overseas Health Team

## **HM Revenue & Customs:**

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit & Working Tax Credit
- Personal Taxation

## **Identity and Passport Service:**

- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Ministry of Defence, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency
- War Pensions Scheme

Information you will need to use this service:

To make sure the right information is given to any organisations that the Registrar contacts for you and so that you get the most out of this service it will help if you can bring along with you the following information about the person who has died:

- Their National Insurance number and date of birth
- Details of any benefits or services they were receiving
- Their Driving Licence or Driving Licence number
- Their Passport or Passport number

We may also ask you for information about:

- Their next of kin
- Any surviving husband, wife or civil partner
- The person dealing with their estate

## What delays may you face

Sometimes there are unavoidable delays in the issuing of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. In these circumstances the person's body cannot be released immediately, and a delay is to be expected.

The main causes of such delays are listed here:

1. When the death takes place at the weekend or on a public holiday.

However staff will endeavour at all times to assist in the fulfilling of any particular religious requirement you may have in relation to funeral practices. If you need to proceed quickly ask the ward staff to contact the Bed Manager to advise you what to do.

2. When the death is reported to the Coroner: see 'What are the Coroner's duties' page 9.

3. When the funeral is to take place out of England or Wales. An 'Out of England' order will need to be issued to you by the Coroner before proceeding.

A 'Free from Infection' Certificate must be issued by the hospital prior to transportation. Your funeral director can arrange this.

4. The body of a deceased person cannot be released from the hospital until the death has been registered, and you have been given the Green or Yellow certificate or the Coroner's white certificate by the Registrar. Please give this certificate to the Funeral Director and/or the person who will then collect the body from the hospital.

## **What are the Coroner's Duties?**

A death sometimes has to be reported to the coroner for legal reasons and the hospital staff will advise you if this has to happen, this is usually when a Doctor is unable to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. The Coroner is appointed to investigate certain types of death.

A death will be referred to the coroner if:

- no precise cause can be established
- it follows an operation, or if it is possible that it could be due to a complication of surgery or anaesthetics
- it is not thought to be from natural causes
- it is due to an injury or a fall, however it happened, or if an accident or negligence is alleged
- it takes place within 24 hours of admission to hospital.

There are other cases that must be referred to the Coroner, for example, death from industrial diseases, poisoning, suicide, murder etc. The Coroner's office will be able to help you and give you advice. If a post-mortem is required, a delay may be experienced before the registration and funeral can take place.

You will have to wait to hear from the Coroner's officer before registering the death. If there is to be a post mortem, the Coroner's officer will explain the procedure to you and advise you when it is appropriate to register the death.

The Coroner's office telephone number is 01904 669332.

## **Can I View the Deceased?**

Staff can help you to arrange a visit to view the deceased in the hospital. Funeral Directors also have their own facilities where you are able to view the deceased.

Viewing can take place on the ward for a limited time just after death, after which viewing can be made by appointment at the hospital mortuary or the funeral directors.

To make an appointment to view at the hospital mortuary, please telephone the mortuary direct on 01904 726803. Viewing is available Monday-Friday 8.00am-4.30pm.

## Organ, Tissue and Body Donation

**Organ Donation-** has to be considered before death occurs, and is only possible in certain hospital areas, for example, the Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department.

**Tissue Donation-** is possible up to 24 hours after death, if this is something you wish to consider please inform the ward staff as soon as possible. The consent of the next of kin is always required for tissue donation.

More information about organ and tissue donation can be found at [www.uktransplant.org.uk](http://www.uktransplant.org.uk)

**Body Donation-** is the giving of a body for use in teaching anatomy to medical students. It may not always be possible to accept this donation. Under the Human Tissue Act, written consent must be given by the deceased prior to their death; consent cannot be given by anyone else after their death.

More information about body donation can be found at [www.hta.gov.uk](http://www.hta.gov.uk) or by telephoning the Anatomy Unit, Hull York Medical School on 01482 464750.



## **Who can help me arrange the Funeral?**

You can contact a Funeral Director 24 hours a day, including weekends. Your chosen Funeral Director can make all the necessary arrangements and can also advise you on all the procedures and documents you will need as well as the timing of the funeral service. They will come to your house if you prefer. They will answer any questions you may have on burial or cremation. Your own Minister, Priest or religious leader and the Hospital Chaplaincy Service may also be of great help during this difficult time.

Most funeral Directors belong to their National Association, which has regulations and standards that must be followed.

The person who arranges the funeral is usually responsible for meeting the costs. This can come from the deceased estate or any funeral scheme he/she may have subscribed to.

Funerals can be expensive although basic costs tend to be similar. However, the final cost can vary considerably. Do not be afraid to mention your budget or obtain estimates from several undertakers.

Financial help may be available if you receive certain benefits. Contact the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) before making any arrangements.

If the person who has died has no next of kin or there are concerns regarding finances or funeral arrangements, please contact our Bereavement Services Office on 01904 725445 before you make any arrangements and we may be able to offer further advice.

## **Who can I contact regarding State Benefits?**

The Registrar of births and deaths will have given you a notification of death certificate (white certificate) and a pre-paid envelope, which you will need to send to the DWP office after you have filled it in. Further information is available in a DWP booklet 'What to do after death in England and Wales (D1027)' available from any DWP office or from the Registrars office.

The number for all advice regarding Bereavement Benefits is: 0845 608860.

## **Probate and legal advice**

If you have difficulty in dealing with the deceased's property, possessions or guardianship of their children, get advice from a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau as soon as possible. If there is no Will, speaking with a solicitor may be helpful. Many solicitors are prepared to offer up to half an hour of legal advice free.

Probate is a document issued by the Probate Registry confirming that an executor has the right to wind up the estate of the person who has died. The 'estate' is the house, money and savings left by someone who has died (probate may not be necessary if the estate is small).

For applications and enquiries relating to probate please call 0845 302 0900.

## Who do I need to tell?

### Who Needs To Be Told About the Death?

You will probably want to let the family, friends and neighbours know of the death right away. There are several other people who may also need to know.

Priest, Vicar, Minister or Faith Leader	
Family Doctor	
Dept. Works & Pensions (pensions, benefits etc)	
Bank, Giro, Credit Cards, Building Society	
Social Services (home helps, home care)	
Schools, College or University attended	
Place of work (occupational pension)	
Executors of the Estate (Will)	
Solicitor	
Insurance Companies	
Library Service	
Inland Revenue	
<i>Continued on page 17</i>	

Residential or Nursing Home	
Landlord, Housing Department	
Council Tax office	
Electricity, Gas, Telephone, Water Companies	
Post Office (redirect mail)	
Driving Licence Centre (D.V.L.A.)	
Careline	
Cancel any appointments	
CELS for the return of any equipment	

The deceased may have been living alone so you will need to ensure that their home is secure and remove all signs that indicate no-one is there. You may wish to collect spare keys from other relatives, friends and neighbours.

## Sample Letters

Here is an example of a letter that you may find useful when informing people about the death:

<p>[Your Name] [Your Address] [Your Postal Code] [Your Telephone Number]</p>
<p>Date:</p>
<p>[Name to whom you are writing] [Department] [Company] [Road] [City] [Postal Code]</p>
<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p>
<p>I wish to inform you of the death of [name of deceased and date of birth].</p>
<p>Please find enclosed with this letter the documentation/papers which need to be returned to you.</p>
<p>[Name of Deceased] died at [hospital name or home address] on [date].</p>
<p>If you require any further information, please contact me at the above address.</p>
<p>Yours faithfully</p>
<p>[Your name] Encs</p>

Please note if you are writing to a Solicitor, Bank, Building Society or Insurance Company you will need to include a copy of the Death Certificate. Photocopies are not accepted for insurance or legal reasons. You may need to include the relevant account and policy numbers if available.

### **Is there any Bereavement Care provided by the Hospital?**

The Hospital Chaplaincy Service is a multi-faith department whose role is to provide pastoral, spiritual and religious care for patients and their relatives. Chaplaincy can be contacted on:  
(01904) 725579

Both Bereavement Services and Chaplaincy staff are able to provide you with practical advice during the early days of your bereavement. Both can also help to signpost you to find appropriate ongoing support from among a wide variety of local organisations including voluntary organisations, support groups and groups within churches and faith communities.

## **Some advice you may find helpful**

### **Living through Grief**

The death of someone close to you can be a painful experience. There are often intense emotions that are not easy to cope with.

However, this grieving is a normal process that allows you to express your deepest feelings, come to terms with the death of your relative or friend and eventually find ways to adapt to your changed circumstances.

The grieving process is often described in terms of different stages. You may experience only some or all of them and some may happen on several occasions.

The time it takes to go through this process can vary considerably and is often longer than most people imagine. We are all different and grief in one person will not necessarily follow the same pattern as in another. The following are some of the things you may experience;



## **Shock and Disbelief**

When a death happens, even if expected, it is a shock to your system. You find it difficult to deal with and your mind often does not want to believe it.

People talk about feeling numb, as if the events are not real and do not affect them. This is a normal reaction that allows you to cope with the situation over a period of time.

To begin with you may be surprised at how well you cope and are able to organise matters, such as the funeral. However, you may find a few weeks later that you are having difficulty making even the simplest of decisions. This too is quite common when you have more time to think about the situation and less to distract you.

## **Sadness and Depression**

As the numbness wears off, there are often periods of intense sadness and crying, leading to exhaustion. You may feel that you are not in control and have days when you feel depressed. This experience will usually alternate with time of being focused, organised and able to cope.

These changes in mood can go on for several months, although the intensity should diminish over time. Being able to express your emotions and share your feelings with someone you trust can be a great help.

## **Anger and guilt**

Anger and depression can also be expressions of grief and responses to the loss of somebody close.

Anger can be directed at what has happened or the apparent injustice that death brings.

People often become angry when hurt and want to blame someone, even if that person is not at fault.

Guilt happens when anger is directed at yourself. Instead of blaming others you blame yourself for what has happened. "If only I'd done this or that...." This is all part of the wish for things to be different and to find a reason for what has happened.

Again, it helps to talk to somebody about how you are feeling as this often puts matters into perspective.

## **Acceptance**

There will be a time when your inner resources are replenished and feelings of strength and purpose return.

Life will be different but you will be able to talk about the deceased person by name, recall happy memories, laugh over various things that have happened and all without bursting into tears or plunging into the depths of despair. All this may seem far away at the moment but that day will come.

## **Talking to children about death**

As adults we feel the need to protect our children from things that we might find difficult. It is easy to assume children will not understand death and bereavement, or that it will be too upsetting for them.

However, we can often underestimate a child's ability to cope. Like adults, children find it harder to cope if they are not told what is happening and can be more frightened by their own imagination.

Children should be told facts in a simple manner, using appropriate words, e.g.: dead, rather than lost or asleep.

Give them plenty of time to ask questions, and offer plenty of love and reassurance. It is helpful for adults to share feelings with children, such as feelings of sadness. By doing so they learn that it is natural to feel sad when someone dies. Children often like to draw pictures or write stories as part of their way of saying goodbye.

## Help

People do not always find it easy to talk about death. You may feel that you cannot show your emotions or are expected to put on a brave face. However, talking about your feelings often helps. If you do not feel able to confide in a friend, a religious leader or your doctor may be able to help. We have also provided a list of contact numbers of various organisations to offer you support, which are located in the “Advice and Support Organisations” of this booklet.

Do try to look after yourself and take extra care. Do allow yourself time to work through your grief as this is an important part of your future well-being.

## **Advice & Support Organisations**

### **Age UK York**

01904 627995

Norman Collinson House  
70 Walmgate  
York  
YO1 9TL

Works with the elderly.

### **British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**

01455 883316

Help and advice finding an accredited counsellor in your area.

### **Macmillan-Cancer Backup**

0808 808 00 00

A telephone information and advice service offering support for people with cancer, their relatives and friends.

## **Citizens Advice Bureau**

08444 111 444

[www.yorkcab.org.uk](http://www.yorkcab.org.uk)

Advice can be given on all legal and practical matters following a death.

## **Compassionate Friends**

[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

0845 123 2304

An organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering understanding, support and encouragement to others after the death of a child or children.

## **CRUSE Helpline**

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

0844 477 9400

## **York**

(01904) 481162 (24hr answer phone)

Offers counselling, support and advice. A newsletter and extensive list of books and leaflets are published.

## **CRUSE Bereavement Care Youth Line**

[www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

Freephone: 0808 080 1677

A website for children and young people aged 12 – 18 who have been bereaved. Also has details of a confidential telephone for professional confidential Bereavement counselling.

## **Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)**

0800 055 6688

Provides benefits and services for a wide range of people, including the social fund funeral payment.

## **Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project**

020 7833 1674

Offers advice and support to people bereaved by the death of a same-sex partner through a telephone helpline, provide advice on suitable clergy for the funeral, funeral directors and solicitors for any legal matters.

## **Roadpeace**

020 8964 1021

[www.roadpeace.org](http://www.roadpeace.org)

Shakespeare Business Centre

Coldharbour Lane

Brixton

London

SW9 8RR

Roadpeace offers a practical and emotional support service to the bereaved and injured through road traffic accidents.

## **SIBBS (Support in Bereavement for Brothers and Sisters)**

[www.tcfsiblingsupport.org.uk](http://www.tcfsiblingsupport.org.uk)

A sister organisation to Compassionate Friends. A nationwide self-help support group for people who have experienced the death of a brother or sister. Offers the same support as Compassionate Friends.



## **Support After Murder and manslaughter (SAMM)**

0845 872 3440 (Answer phone when office is closed)

[www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)

Help, through befriending, for people who have suffered the loss of a child, relative, or friend of any ages, as a result of murder or manslaughter.

## **Sudden Death Support Association**

[www.suddendeath.org](http://www.suddendeath.org)

Offers help to relatives and close friends of people who die suddenly. It is run by people who have experienced a sudden and tragic loss and would like to help others in their time of need.

## **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)**

0300 111 5065 available 9am – 9pm every day

[www.uk-sobs.org.uk](http://www.uk-sobs.org.uk)

We exist to meet the needs and break the isolation of those bereaved by the suicide of a close relative or friend.

We offer emotional and practical support in a number of ways:

- Bereavement Packs
- Group Meetings (in a number of locations).

## **The Samaritans**

(01904) 655888 24 hour service

Offers confidential telephone support for all in despair.

## **SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity)**

[www.yorksands.wordpress.com](http://www.yorksands.wordpress.com)

07821 605112

## **Terrence Higgins Trust**

0845 1221 200

10am to 10pm on Monday to Friday,  
12 noon to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday.

[www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

Provides practical support, help, counselling and advice for anyone who has lost someone due to AIDS.

## **WAY - Widowed & Young**

0300 012 4929

[www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk)

Offers telephone support and advice and may be able to put widows in contact with people in a similar situation in their area.

## **York Against Cancer**

[www.yorkagaincancer.org.uk](http://www.yorkagaincancer.org.uk)

01904 764466

## **Comments, Queries and Further Assistance**

We hope you have found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, or ask any questions please contact the Bereavement Services Department, The York Hospital on telephone number 01904 725445.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any comments on the service you have experienced, you can make your comments to the person in charge of the ward/department. Alternatively the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) at the hospital can provide assistance if you have cause for concern, compliments or suggestions regarding the care of your loved one or your family. They can be contacted on telephone number 01904 726262. An answer phone is available out of hours or you can email on [pals.york@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals.york@york.nhs.uk).

## Notes

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We appreciate this is a difficult time for you, but it would help us to provide the best service we can if you could share your views with us.

On which ward was your relative/friend cared for prior to their death?

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Was the advice and information you received from the Bereavement Services staff helpful?

.....

Is there anything we could improve on?

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Was this booklet helpful?

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Is there any other information you feel should be included?

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Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this. Please send this form to:

Bereavement Services, The York Hospital, Freepost NEU1112, York. YO30 7ZZ.

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## Notes

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## Our Commitment to You

Caring with Pride: Our ultimate objective is to be trusted to deliver safe, effective and sustainable healthcare within our communities.

You can find further details on our website:  
[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk)

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Providing care together in York, Scarborough,  
Whitby, Malton, Selby and Easingwold.

Please telephone or email if you  
require this information in a different  
language or format

如果你要求本資訊是以不同的語言  
或版式提供，請致電或寫電郵

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne  
są w innym języku lub formie,  
należy zadzwonić lub wysłać  
wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da  
formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon  
ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz



**01904 725566**

email: [access@york.nhs.uk](mailto:access@york.nhs.uk)



Braille



Audio e.g.  
CD



Large print



Electronic

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk)



Notes / Sponsor  
(dependent on layout and content of booklet upon preparing for print)

