

Mortuaries Shared Service – Q4/EOY 2016/17

1. SUMMARY

The Public Health Act 1936 grants local authorities the power to provide a mortuary for the reception and storage of dead bodies together with facilities for post mortem examination in their respective areas and if the Secretary of State requires, local authorities must provide a mortuary.

The London Boroughs of Barnet and Harrow have each decided that their respective strategies and objectives will be best achieved by establishing a shared Mortuary Service (“Shared Service”), hosted by Brent at Northwick Park Hospital Mortuary.

Barnet and Harrow have commissioned Brent to provide the Service on behalf of Barnet and Harrow. Brent has the power to provide mortuary services to Barnet and Harrow by virtue of section 1 of the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 working alongside the requirements stated by the Human Tissue Authority and support through the Coroner’s Office.

1.1 SERVICE DASHBOARD

Service Risks	Low	Medium Low	Medium High	High	Reduced/Same	Increased	New
	0	3	4	0	3	0	0

1.2 KEY SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Key Successes

Maintained normal service during a busy period where there was a 30% increase in bodies within the North London Coronial Area. During January through to March we also took on a number of cases from Haringey and Enfield when their mortuary was full.

Additional costs were incurred due to use of agency staff. The service was able to reduce the impact on partners by offsetting against new income generation from 2nd Post Mortems and control of expenditure.

Successfully integrated a Parish Funeral Service alongside the Mortuary to improve the time people remain in storage, when there is no next of kin to arrange the funeral. Increasing capacity at the mortuary and also providing a dignified funeral as quickly as possible.

Key Successes
Key Successes for 2016/17
During 2016/17 a member of staff left, which left the relatively small team stretched to meet demand. Two rounds of recruitment failed to attract quality candidates. A review of pay terms and conditions was completed that enhanced the job profile and has successfully attracted good quality application.
The Shared Mortuary service is now an active member of the Excessive Death Group. Previously not included but now providing expert advice on the planning for excess deaths and ensuring business continuity.
Completed and tested an updated database system to ensure that the Human Tissue Authority legal requirements are met and information is recorded accurately. This system provides evidence for future audits to demonstrate how the licence conditions are met.

Key Challenges	Actions Required
The national shortage of approved pathologists remains a challenge. This is impacting on the mortuary as it leads to disruption, stress and results in some delays.	Continue to press the Coroner to increase the pool of pathologists in the North London Coronial area. Provide flexibility and support for existing pathologists to ensure retention of the same
Future capital expenditure: The mortuary has recently been refurbished and most plant has around 15 years expected life. However there is no provision in the budget for major repairs or unexpected failure of equipment. Partners need to agree arrangements to avoid high in year costs.	To engage with all partners to agree an annual figure to contribute to future planned and unexpected maintenance of items over £5000. Discussion over the following quarter need to take place with London Borough of Harrow to facilitate in creating this capital expenditure budget.
Whilst the excess death group is up and running it is not progressing at any significant pace. The recent increase of 30% from January to March 2017 demonstrated that only a small increase in deaths can put mortuaries at risk of reaching capacity.	Meet with Coroner to progress the excess death group and agree to separate the excess deaths from mass fatalities

2. Finance

2.1 Revenue

	Subjective Level 2 Name	Full year Budget	Transaction Amount YTD	Orders placed	Variance YTD
Brent, Harrow & Barnet Mortuary	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	262,123.00	261,303.60	11,481.25	(819.40)
Brent, Harrow & Barnet Mortuary	TOTAL INCOME	(200,800.00)	(194,644.89)	0.00	6,155.11
Grand Total		61,323.00	66,658.71	11,481.25	5,335.71

Note: Provisional - Not final audited account

3. Customer Experience

Customer Experience description	Comments and Proposed Intervention
Survey of funeral directors	The mortuary is carrying out a survey of users of the service. However the Coroner's Office has not been able to provide lists of users and we have to therefore manually create a list from database and obtain contact details. This has delayed the survey by one month and so will be reported in Quarter 1 2017/18.
Coroners experience	No survey of H.M Coroner is undertaken and we use the meetings that take place three times a year to judge feedback. No negative comments have been received concerning the service provided. Praise was given to the shared service for the support given to the Coroner in taking excess cases from Haringey and Enfield.

4. Risk

The 5 X 5 matrix (heat map) below shows the residual risk assessment (probability and impact scores) for each risk.

IMPACT	Score:	LIKELIHOOD				
		1	2	3	4	5
		Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost Certain
5	Catastrophic	2	1			
4	Major	1				
3	Moderate			2	1	
2	Minor					
1	Negligible					

Risk Commentary:

There are a total of seven risks that have logged on the risk register for the Mortuaries Shared Service.