



## **London Anatomy Office**

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# **BEQUEST OF A BODY FOR ANATOMICAL EXAMINATION**

Procedure to be followed by next of kin or executor in the event of the death of a potential donor

## **What to do when the death occurs**

In the event of the death of a potential whole body donor you should telephone the London Anatomy Office on 020 7848 8042 as soon as possible after the death occurs. The office is closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. There is a voice mail system at the office so please leave your name and telephone number as a recorded message. The offer of the bequest will be considered immediately the office re-opens. The co-ordinator at the office will contact the doctor in charge of the deceased and make a decision on whether or not the donation is acceptable. You will be informed within a short time about the decision.

**During the major public holidays at Christmas, New Year and Easter, when the Medical Schools are closed, the London Anatomy Office is also closed and as such is unable to accept bodies on their behalf. During these times, you are advised to make arrangements for a funeral. From time to time our medical schools reach capacity and it is with regret that we are not able to accept donors at such times and normal funeral arrangements would need to be made.**

If the death occurs in a hospital the body should remain in the mortuary until such time as the London Anatomy Office confirms acceptance of the body. If the death occurred in the donor's own home, a nursing home, or a medical establishment that does not have a mortuary, please make arrangements for the body to be moved to a funeral directors with refrigerated facilities as a matter of urgency. If the body is in a refrigerated facility the London Anatomy Office must receive the body within five days of death. If the deceased has to be taken to an undertaker's premises it is important to understand that the transport and the cost of the undertaker must be borne by the next of kin or the donor's estate.

If the bequest is accepted the undertaker employed by the London Anatomy Office will be instructed to transfer the body from an appropriate facility (as above) to our premises. If you would like to make a contribution towards the work carried out by the London and South East Medical Schools, please make cheques payable to the London and South East Committee of Anatomists (or LSECA) and send to the London Anatomy Office.

The death must be registered with the local Registrar as a matter of urgency.

## Criteria for Accepting a Bequest

The London Anatomy Office endeavours to accept all body donations offered. However, it is not possible to guarantee that a donation will be accepted. There is no upper age limit, but potential donors must be over seventeen years old. Although not exhaustive, the following is a guide to reasons for non-acceptance.

- Post-mortem examination.
- Some infectious diseases: e.g. viral hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, active tuberculosis
- If organs, other than corneas, have been donated for transplantation or medical research
- Obesity or very low BMI
- Some forms of dementia
- Severe bedsores or varicose ulcers, or recent surgery where the wound has not healed
- Gross peripheral oedema: mild to moderate oedema may be acceptable
- Severe deformity of the spine
- Jaundice

In addition to the medical exclusions it is not possible to accept a donation if a death occurs abroad or if a death occurs over the Christmas or Easter periods when the medical schools and the London Anatomy Office are closed.

**If the body is not suitable for anatomical examination you will be informed as soon as possible so you may make funeral arrangements.**

## What to do if the Bequest is Accepted

If the bequest is accepted the institution that receives the body may retain the body for a significant period of time. Depending on the options selected by the donor they may have consented to the medical school retaining their body for a maximum of three years or allowed the medical school to retain the body indefinitely. The London Anatomy is unable to give any indication as to how long the medical school may retain the body other than to quote the permissions given by the donor.

### Procedure:

1. **The death should be registered before the London Anatomy Office can collect the body.** Collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) from the issuing doctor and take it to the local register office. The death must be registered in the area where the death occurred. It may be necessary to make an appointment to register the death, in which case please stress the need for an urgent appointment due to the time limit within which we can operate. The registrar will issue you with a green certificate (Certificate for Burial or Cremation) and a death certificate (Certificate of Registration of Death).
2. You will be sent **pink and yellow forms** from this office. These call for a decision on the eventual disposal of the body. You will be given a choice of the following options:

- a. *Arranging a funeral yourself at a place of your choice.* In such circumstances all expenses involved in such arrangements become the responsibility of the next of kin or executors.
- b. *Instructing the London Anatomy Office to make funeral arrangements.* If the London Anatomy Office arranges the funeral, a cremation will be conducted (currently at South London Crematorium between the hours of 8.30am and 10.00am) and all costs will be met by the London Anatomy Office. If you choose this option you will then be given further options:
  - i. To be notified of the date and time of the cremation
  - ii. To attend the service at cremation. This is a very short committal service which lasts for approximately 10 minutes.
  - iii. To take possession of the ashes.

If you would like to make a contribution towards cost incurred please make a cheque payable to "London and South East Committee of Anatomists" or "LSECA".

3. Each year an interdenominational Service of Thanksgiving is held for relatives and friends of those who have donated their bodies. The service commemorates everyone who donated their body in the previous calendar year. On the pink and yellow forms you will be asked if would like to be notified of the service.
4. When you have completed and signed the pink and yellow forms send them, together with the green certificate (if not left with the funeral directors or hospital) and a copy of the death certificate to the London Anatomy Office. It is very important that we receive these documents as soon as possible.
5. If the deceased has had to be maintained at an Undertakers prior to acceptance the cost will be borne by the estate of the deceased. The medical school only pays from the time its undertakers take charge of the deceased.

### **If a donation is not accepted**

Proceed with normal arrangements for burial or cremation. It is regretted that the LSECA cannot make a financial contribution to these private arrangements.

#### **Footnote:**

*The use of bodies donated for anatomical examination is governed by the Human Tissue Act 2004, which is enforced by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). As part of its regulatory remit the HTA issues Codes of Practice and other practical advice about the Human Tissue Act. The HTA is responsible for ensuring that teaching institutions comply with the requirements of the Human Tissue Act 2004 and the HTA codes of practice.*