



“The bags for dignity are a great idea as it stops belongings being handed over in property bags which is the worst thing. It also provides a clean and tidy place to store the persons' possessions until the family are able to collect them.”



• **Assistant director Julie Eskins explains how we're helping to maintain a patient's dignity and to respect the feelings of families and carers by purchasing a number of new bags which can be used to return personal belongings following unexpected deaths.**

• If a patient does not have their own luggage, for instance if they have been admitted urgently, staff on a ward may have to use carrier bags/black bin bags/property bags to put belongings in following unexpected deaths, which is not an ideal way to hand over personal belongings to families. Staff have on occasion brought an old bag/case in from home.

• The patient safety strategy implementation group suggested that the Trust purchased a number of bags that staff can use for this purpose. Unexpected deaths do not occur frequently on the wards, so we've bought a number of bags for everyone to have access to. This also helps with ensuring this approach is implemented across the Trust.

• When an incident is reported from an inpatient ward following an unexpected death, the nurse in charge will identify whether there is an appropriate bag belonging to the individual to store personal belongings. If a bag is not available they will contact the patient safety support team to make arrangements for one to be sent to the ward or picked up.

• Personal belongings are placed in the bag and the ward manager will make arrangements with the family to hand over the property, offering condolences and ongoing support.

• If the bag is returned by the family, although there is no expectation of this, it's handed back to the patient safety support team to be used in supporting another family.

• The bags were funded by the Trust's charity, EyUp!, which helps to bring little extras to services.

• Sadly, there are occasions when patients die unexpectedly whilst under our care on an inpatient ward, but how we treat a patient's belongings demonstrates our approach to dignity and respect in death and how we show that families and carers' feelings matter.

• **Contact the patient safety support team on 01924 316180 or risk@swyt.nhs.uk**

• **www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk**

With **all of us** in mind.