**The Role of the Designated Person (Key Contact Person)**

**Guideline**

Patients who have suffered harm and their relevant person(s) will need practical, emotional and psychological support and this should arrive seamlessly. The early assignment of a named designated person (also known as the key contact person) is essential to ensure that the person affected/their relevant person and staff do not feel isolated. Their support and communication needs in respect of the plans for the management of the incident (including review) must be identified, communicated and addressed. This person should have the necessary skills and experience required to fulfil this important role. The name of the designated person must be recorded in the incident management/open disclosure record and a direct line telephone number provided to the patient/relevant person and staff members involved. The designated person will act as the liaison person between the service provider and the patient/relevant person. This person should not be the lead discloser.

**PRIOR TO THE FORMAL MEETING THE DESIGNATED PERSON WILL:**

Liaise with the patient/relevant person to assist them in preparing for the open disclosure meeting by:

* Providing an overview of what will happen at an open disclosure meeting and forwarding them the relevant patient information leaflet.
* Checking their willingness and availability to attend a meeting and agreeing the date and time of the meeting.
* Agreeing the location for the meeting taking into consideration any concerns /requirements they have such as:

(i) Anxiety about coming to the hospital/service following a death or traumatic event

(ii) Disability access

* Providing information, if required, on transport to the venue and car parking arrangements.
* Establishing the expectations of the patient/relevant person in relation to the meeting, attendees and apology.
* Establishing any questions, clarifications or concerns that the patient/relevant person needs to have addressed.
* Providing accurate, honest information to help manage any unrealistic expectations.
* Informing the service provider of the expectations of the patient/relevant person and any questions, clarifications or concerns that they have.
* Identifying and arranging any specific supports that are required e.g. disabled access, interpreter, communication supports.
* Encouraging the patient/relevant person to bring a support person with them to the meeting.
* Supporting them in organising the services of an independent advocate, if required.
* Informing the patient/relevant person that following the meeting they will receive a written summary of the matters discussed at the meeting.
* Ensuring that the patient/relevant person has the name and direct line contact details for the designated person.

**AT THE TIME OF THE FORMAL MEETING THE DESIGNATED PERSON WILL:**

* Attend the meeting as a person who is familiar to the patient/relevant person and who has established a rapport with them.
* Meet and greet the patient/relevant person at a pre-determined location and time and accompany them to the meeting room.
* Explain the meeting arrangements and confirm who will be in attendance. Explain that the meeting will involve a two way discussion where they will have an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on any matter.
* Offer refreshments, provide direction to rest rooms and ensure their comfort. Have tissues available.
* Ensure that all staff introduce themselves to the patient/relevant person by name and role.
* Maintain support throughout the meeting.
* Check in with the patient/relevant person towards the end of the meeting in regard to any final questions or concerns they may have.

**AT THE END OF THE FORMAL MEETING THE DESIGNATED PERSON WILL:**

* Check in with the patient/relevant person as to how they are feeling post meeting.
* Offer and agree a follow up call to obtain feedback on the meeting and to check for any outstanding questions/clarifications/concerns arising for them post meeting.
* Ensure that the patient/relevant person is aware of the actions to be followed up, proposed time scales involved and the agreed communication process.
* Provide relevant information leaflets such as Bereavement Support or information on other support services.
* Accompany the patient/relevant person to the exit of the building. Provide tickets for car parking, if available.
* Advise the other members of the Open Disclosure Team of any initial feedback provided by the patient/relevant person including concerns or outstanding questions raised by them prior to leaving.

**FOLLOWING THE FORMAL MEETING THE DESIGNATED PERSON WILL:**

* Provide a follow up call and establish the patient/relevant person’s experience of the meeting using the Patient Experience Questionnaire.
* Maintain communication between the service provider and patient/relevant person.
* Ensure that the patient/relevant person receive minutes of the meeting within agreed / legislative time frames.
* Ensure that actions agreed and any supports offered have been followed through.
* Manage requests from the patient/relevant person for any additional information or clarification of information.
* Follow the above process if a further meeting is required.