

## INFORMATION ON DONATING YOUR BODY FOR ANATOMICAL EXAMINATION

### And instructions for the next of kin / executor

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### A message from the Anatomy team

Thank you for your interest in bequeathing your body to us after your death; your generous action is greatly appreciated and could benefit a great many healthcare professionals.

Detailed instructions are enclosed. It is important that you understand all the information before signing and returning a bequest form. If you have any questions, please contact us on the above telephone number or email address.

This booklet has been designed using guidance given by the government regulatory body, The Human Tissue Authority (HTA). For more information on the HTA, you can visit the website:

[www.hta.gov.uk](http://www.hta.gov.uk) and click on the "Donating your body to medical science" link

May we also express our hope that it will be many years before your wishes have to be considered.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for expressing your wish to bequeath your body to us after death. We have a continuing need for generous individuals to bequeath their bodies for anatomical examination for the purposes of teaching, training and research in Medicine and Healthcare Sciences.

Donations may be used for one or more of the following purposes:

### **Medical education**

Your body will be used to study the structure and form of the human body. This benefits medical students and students on related healthcare courses and healthcare professionals.

### **Training**

Healthcare professionals gain great benefit from the opportunity to develop surgical skills and other clinical procedures on the body.

### **Research**

Students undertaking research projects within the MBBS course or as an intercalated Masters in Clinical Research will use your body to develop new strategies and clinical or surgical procedures. In addition, your body may be used to develop new surgical techniques and procedures.

***All activities carried out are supervised by a member of staff and in accordance with the Human Tissue Act 2004***

Donations are accepted for either our taught programmes or our postgraduate courses / training. Acceptance criteria is more flexible for our postgraduate courses / training are more variable in frequency.

Once a donation has been accepted into the Anatomy department, the department will take responsibility for costs incurred following the acceptance (from when our contracted funeral directors collect the remains). This includes the cost of our standard cremation and ash scattering at Colney Wood. Other arrangements can be made if you wish, however these will need to be made by your next of kin or executor and any additional costs incurred will need to be met by your estate.

If the donation is not suitable for anatomical examination, a funeral or cremation will need to be arranged by the donor's next of kin / executor. Norwich Medical School will have no further involvement.

A decision on whether a donation will be accepted can only be made once a potential donor has passed away.

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### 2. COMPLETING THE BEQUEST FORMS

If you decide to continue with your bequest, please fill in the bequest form in the presence of a witness and return it to the address on the front of this booklet. We will send you a photocopy back for you to keep with your will or legal papers.

#### *Why do I need to fill in these forms?*

Human bodies are not property and therefore legally cannot be "owned". They cannot be bought or sold nor be given away by someone else following your death. If it is your wish for your remains to be used for medical education, training and research following your death you must express this wish whilst you are alive and of sound mind to do so.

#### *Why do I need a witness?*

We ask you to complete these forms in the presence of a witness to confirm that these are truly your wishes and that you are capable of making this decision.

Your witness should be able to verify that the details given are accurate and honest.

#### **Part A**

**Must be completed by the person wishing to bequest their body and must be done in the presence of your witness.**

#### *Option 1 or 2*

Sometimes we come across interesting or unusual anatomical features or may just find an excellent example for teaching. It is extremely useful for us to be able to retain these parts to use for teaching beyond the time of cremation.

Option 1 - It is rare for us retain whole bodies beyond our 3 year timescale, but this option allows us to do so should we need to.

Option 2 - Will place a restriction on the length of time that your donation can be used by the Medical school. If you are happy for the Medical school to retain any useful parts following cremation of your body, please select option **2a**. If you would prefer your whole body to be cremated and no parts retained, please select option **2b**.

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### *Option 3*

Selecting this option allows us to retain images to use in the future. Photographic images are an incredibly useful resource for teaching or for use in presentations at scientific meetings and publications. They are particularly useful if you decide not to allow parts to be retained as this enables us to keep accurate records and use them for teaching following cremation of your body.

All images are anonymised and stored securely. They are treated with the same respect and dignity as your remains.

If you would prefer for us not to retain images, please leave this box blank.

### *Option 4*

This option informs us of your wishes following the end of your time within the Medical school. We confirm these wishes with your next of kin / executor following acceptance of a donation. As part of our duty of care to the next of kin, we will ask them to confirm this wish. If they have a preference for an alternative arrangement, we will respect this.

Our standard practice is to cremate the remains of our donors. The ashes of our donors can then be scattered on our plot in Colney Wood Burial Ground. Alternatively, the next of kin / executor can collect the ashes from Colney Wood Burial Ground. These will be available at, or after, our service of thanksgiving at Colney Wood Burial Ground.

We are unable to offer burial as an option due to the nature of the plot we hold in Colney Wood Burial Ground. If it is your wish to be buried, the cost (over and above the cost of our standard cremation) and organisation of this will fall to your estate.

If you select option **4a** and would like us to contact someone to give them the opportunity to attend our service of thanksgiving, please fill in their name and contact details in the space provided.

If you select option **4b** please fill in the contact details of the person you would like us to contact to arrange for release of the ashes. (We are able to arrange for ashes to be couriered to other areas within England and Wales at an additional cost to your estate.)

If you would prefer for your next of kin / executor to organise your cremation or a burial please fill in the contact details of the person we need to contact to make these arrangements.

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### Part B

It is essential that your wish to bequeath your body is witnessed.

**The witness must sign the form in your presence to confirm that they have witnessed that this is your wish.**

If this section is completed incorrectly, we will not be in a position to consider your donation offer.

If we identify an error on your form, we will return it to you with an explanation of the error and a means for you to correct the error and return the form to us.

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### 3. FAQs

#### *Can I donate my organs and my body?*

Organ donation will always take priority over whole body donation. Organ donation is generally not compatible with whole body donation although we may be able to accept your bequest following corneal (eye) donations. However, we usually find that most donations offered to us are in an age bracket that falls outside the acceptable criteria for organ donation.

Brain donation for research such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease is not compatible with whole body donation.

For information on donating your brain please contact The Parkinson's UK Brain Bank on **020 7594 9732** or [brainbank@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:brainbank@imperial.ac.uk), or The Alzheimer's Society on **0300 2221 122**

#### *What happens at the time of cremation?*

Each year a service of thanksgiving is held at Colney Wood Burial Ground, which allows students and staff to express their gratitude to those that have generously donated their remains. We welcome up to two representatives of your family or friends to attend this service. Details of the service will be sent by post.

#### *What if I move?*

If you move within our catchment area (Norfolk and North Suffolk), please inform us of your change of address. If you move out of our catchment area, let us know and we will identify your nearest institution. Bequest forms are transferrable between institutions. Therefore, with your permission, we can pass on your donation form on.

#### *Do I need to do anything else?*

Please discuss your intention to donate your body with your nearest and dearest. Loved ones can find the process difficult, particularly as it can take up to 3 years for remains to be released following anatomical examination.

We do hold a service of thanksgiving, which up to two representatives of your family are welcome to attend. However, this service does not replace a personal memorial service that the family of a donor may wish to hold.

Please make your nearest and dearest or executor aware of the information contained in this booklet so that they are aware of the process and have access to instructions on what to do following your passing.

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### 4. DONATION OFFERS

#### *Will my donation definitely be accepted?*

In order for us to consider a donation offer, there must be appropriate evidence of informed consent from the potential donor. If no appropriate evidence of consent is present, we will be unable to proceed with our enquiries.

A decision on whether we are able to accept an offer is made at the time a potential donor passes.

We have a definite need for donations that we accept each academic year for our taught programmes. Our postgraduate courses / training programmes are facilitated or delivered on request. Therefore, the number of donations we accept for these over an academic year is variable and we can only consider a donation offer if there is a scheduled course / programme.

We will speak to your GP or Doctor to ascertain whether there is anything medically or physically that would prevent us from accepting the donation offer, before making our final decision.

Our criteria to assess the suitability of a donation offer depends on the activity your donation is considered for, as preservation methods vary. If we feel that we would be unable to preserve and utilise the remains in a dignified manner, we would not be in a position to accept the donation offer.

Some common reasons are listed below:

To ensure that those undertaking the anatomical examination can do so in the safest way possible we are unable to accept donations offered if:

- There is evidence or history of a transmissible disease (HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, septicaemia, active tuberculosis).
- There is evidence or history of Alzheimer's disease / Senile dementia (unless we can be sure that dementia has not been caused by prion disease).
- The potential donor is obese (although we do have lifting equipment, staff will still have to manoeuvre the remains which becomes a manual handling problem if the individual is very large).
- Recent chemotherapy treatment has been given.

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To ensure that we fulfil our teaching commitments we are not able to accept donations offers if:

- A post mortem has been carried out or organs (except corneas) have been removed for organ donation.
- There is amputation of a major segment of one or more of the limbs.
- The potential donor is very emaciated or malnourished.
- There is extensive malignant disease (secondary malignant tumours and some primary malignant tumours).
- There is evidence of a ruptured aortic aneurysm.

In order to preserve the remains in a dignified manner (mainly but not exclusively) for our taught programmes we are unable to accept a donation offer if:

- There is damage to the skin e.g. the presence of bed sores or varicose ulcers (small bedsores may be acceptable); there is a surgical wound that has not yet healed; there is an artificial stoma (ileostomy, colostomy, gastrostomy); the presence of severe oedema (swelling of the limbs due to fluid retention) or skin slip.
- Severe peripheral vascular disease is present (diabetes with evidence of vascular disease or an aortic aneurysm may be unacceptable).
- Severe jaundice is present at the time of death (as this reacts adversely with our preservation chemicals).

We cannot make a decision on whether a potential donor is suitable for our purposes prior to their passing. The exception to this would be the presence of a transmissible disease such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, active tuberculosis or certain types of dementia, which would make the donation unsuitable. If you are concerned that you have a medical condition that would prevent us accepting the offer, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss it with you.

We are sometimes not able to consider donation offers due to logistical reasons (if we have staff shortage, equipment failure or no storage capacity). In this case, with the permission of the next of kin or executor, we will endeavour to offer the donation to a nearby institution to follow the wishes of the donor.

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### *What happens if my donation offer is not accepted?*

We will always try to accept a donation offer where possible.

If we are unable to accept your donation offer on medical grounds it is highly unlikely that other institutions would be able to accept the offer. In this case we will advise that normal funeral arrangements would need to be put in place by the next of kin or executor. If the donation offer is not accepted, UEA cannot offer any remuneration towards costs incurred for funeral arrangements.

If we are unable to accept an offer due to logistical reasons we will attempt to identify another institution that is able to process your offer and pass all relevant information on to them with agreement of your next of kin or executor.

## 5. DATA PROTECTION

Details of potential donors (who have requested a donation pack) who do not return bequest forms will be destroyed after 3 months or sooner on request.

Details of individuals returning completed bequest forms will be kept until we are informed that the individual has passed away or the individual requests to be removed from our records.

Details of accepted donors will be kept indefinitely.

Some anonymised details of rejected donations will be kept indefinitely for statistical purposes.

All personal data will be kept securely within the anatomy office at the university.

Your data may be shared in the event that you move out of our catchment area. On request and with your permission, we are able to forward your completed bequest form to another institution if you move. This may negate the need for you to complete another bequest form.

Your data may be shared with another institution should we be unable to process your donation offer for logistical reasons.

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### 6. GUIDANCE FOR THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BODY AFTER DEATH OF THE DONOR

#### *When somebody dies*

Donation of remains for anatomical examination is not as urgent as donation of organs. You can notify us of the passing of a potential donor on the next working day (we cannot process donations outside of office hours).

**Please contact us by telephone in office hours to inform us of the death on 01603 591104.**

If there is no answer, your call will be directed to the Norwich Medical School Reception who will take a message. We will return your enquiry as quickly as we can.

Normal office hours are between 0830 and 1700. If the person you are calling about has died outside of these hours and you need further help that cannot wait until the next working day please ring 07768 428461.

We require the remains of the deceased to be moved either to a chapel of rest or hospital mortuary. If the person you are calling about has died in hospital, their remains will be moved to the mortuary. If they have died at home, in a nursing home or hospice, their remains should be removed to a chapel of rest by your preferred undertaker.

Please call us on the office number if you require details for our appointed undertaker (this will have no bearing on our decision to accept the offer).

#### **To process the donation offer we will require the following:**

- **Evidence of Donor's consent** (if the person you are calling about has filled in a UEA bequest form, we will have this in our possession)
- **GP's name and telephone number**
- **The date of and place where the potential donor passed away**
- **Location of the remains of the deceased**
- **Contact details for the person with responsibility for the remains (next of kin / executor or appointee of the aforementioned).** N.B. This person will be our single point of contact for future correspondence unless we are informed otherwise in writing.

We will contact the deceased's GP (and hospital Doctors if they die in hospital) to establish a cause of death and a decision will be made on whether the donation is acceptable.

You will be informed as soon as possible about the decision. We aim to do this within three working days.

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### **If we are able to accept the donation offer:**

The death must be registered for us to be able to officially accept the donation offer. We will ask you to register the death with your local registry office as soon as possible.

When registering the death inform the registrar that the deceased is to be accepted for anatomical examination.

**In order for us to collect the remains of the deceased and officially accept the donation, we must have the green cremation form and a certified copy of the death certificate, both of which you can obtain from the registrar when registering the death.**

These forms should then be left with the remains of the deceased for our funeral directors to collect (this will likely be at the funeral parlour or bereavement office at the hospital).

Once the remains have been brought into the care of UEA, we will send correspondence to the single point of contact by post to confirm this. We are unable to discuss the donation or any further arrangements with other interested parties. Any enquiries we receive from other interested parties will be directed to the single point of contact.

The Norwich Medical School will cover all costs from the time our appointed undertakers collect the remains of the donor. Any costs incurred before this point will need to be met by the estate of the deceased.

**We would be grateful if you could inform us of any change in contact details of the single point of contact to enable continued correspondence.**

The single point of contact will receive correspondence:

- When we take the remains into our care.  
This letter will be to confirm the arrangements for the remains following anatomical examination. These reflect what the donor has expressed on the donation form, but can be altered if necessary. We will also ask whether the single point of contact would like any further contact from us regarding the date the ashes are to be scattered / available for collection.
- Two months prior to the date of the thanksgiving service (if requested to do so).  
This letter advises of the date of the service that the deceased is to be included in. We will also ask for the names of up to two representatives who would like to attend the service and, if appropriate, the name of the person collecting the ashes. (The Thanksgiving service includes all donors that have been cremated within the previous academic year. Therefore, numbers are limited so that family representatives for all of our donors have the opportunity to attend).

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### **If we are unable to accept the donation offer**

Regrettably we are not able to accept every donation we are offered. If this is the case, we will advise you to proceed with your own funeral arrangements.

In this situation, UEA cannot offer any remuneration towards costs incurred for funeral arrangements.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this booklet, please contact the Anatomy Team on 01603 591104 or by email via [anatomy@uea.ac.uk](mailto:anatomy@uea.ac.uk)