



## **London Anatomy Office**

Room 4.13,  
4<sup>th</sup> floor Henriette Raphael House  
King's College London  
Guy's Campus  
London SE1 1UL

Tel: 020 7848 8042

Email: [lao@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:lao@kcl.ac.uk)

Web: [www.kcl.ac.uk/research/london-anatomy-office](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/london-anatomy-office)

# **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 when the office re-opens. The co-ordinator at the office will contact the doctor who will be issuing the cause of death certificate and will then 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 somewhere that does not have a cold facility, 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 the accepting medical school.

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, currently the oldest person accepted was 107, but potential donors must be over 17 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

- Some Covid positive cases within 28 days of death and/or cited on the death certificate
- If organs, other than corneas, have been donated for transplantation or medical research
- Obesity or very low BMI. Donors must be around the normal healthy BMI range
- 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 Office 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. Sometimes the donor is used for specialised courses and the donor may be released quite soon. This is all dependent upon the need of the medical school at the time of acceptance.

### Procedure:

1. **The death may need to be registered before the London Anatomy Office can collect the body.** The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) issued by a GP, hospice or hospital doctor will be sent electronically 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 a green certificate (Certificate for Burial or Cremation) and a death certificate (Certificate of Registration of Death).
2. You will be sent an HTA(A)1 disposal instructions form from this office. This asks for a decision on the eventual disposal of the body and the ashes. You will be given a choice of the following options:

- a. *Arranging a funeral yourself at a place of your choice.* In these 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 in South London, Monday to Friday, 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 no is ticked to all of these options; direct cremation will take place. This is cremation without a service.

If you would like to make a contribution towards costs incurred, please make a cheque payable to "Teaches of Anatomy Trust" or "TOAT".

- 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 HTA(A)1 form you will be asked if would like to be invited to this service.
- 4. When you have completed and signed the HTA(A)1 form send it, together with the original green certificate (if it has been given to you by the registrar) 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.*