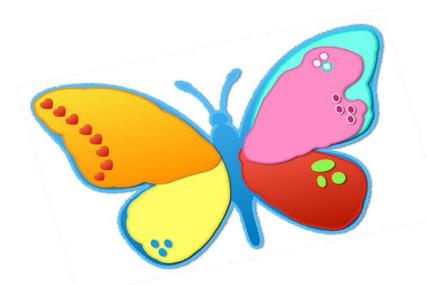


PATIENT INFORMATION

Help and Care in Bereavement

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital



Bereavement Services Team 01704 704135

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We would like to offer our sympathy and condolences at this sad time. Information provided in this booklet may need some explanation. Members of our **Bereavement team (tel. no. 01704 704135)**, or a member of the **Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Team (tel. no 01704 704639)** will be happy to help you. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Spiritual care and Chaplaincy team. A Chaplain is available on call 24/7 via the hospital switchboard (01704 547417) for all urgent situations.

When someone dies there are many decisions and arrangements that have to be made. Whilst it is impossible to cover every detail, we have tried to provide advice and guidance in this booklet on the main issues to be addressed immediately following a death.

The NHS cares for many people at the end of life and that care does not end when a person dies. Bereavement Services are a vital part of the service the NHS gives to those in its care and to their bereaved families and carers. Providing a high-quality bereavement service which respects the dignity of the person who has died, and their families is a key part of effective support for the bereaved.

This booklet has been prepared to help you in those first difficult days following your loss. Its covers both Ormskirk and Southport Hospitals. Following a death in either hospital arrangements are always made through the Bereavement Office based at Southport and you will be guided by one of our members of staff.

STEPS TO TAKE:

1. Contact a Funeral Director

You can contact a Funeral Director as soon as you are ready. Doing so ensures that you have support and guidance. They will also be able to talk about possibilities for appropriate services and potential time scales

2. When death occurs in hospital

Contact the hospital Bereavement Service (details below) to confirm your own details and update on any arrangements you may have made with a funeral director. The Bereavement Service will be able guide through the next steps in the process.

3. Collection of property

Your loved one's property and belongings will remain on the ward for collection. Please contact the individual wards to arrange for collection. Any valuables (cash, keys, loose jewellery) will be transferred from the ward to the General Office for safe keeping. Evidence of identification and signature will be required for you to obtain this property.

4. Register the death

You will need to register the death at the Registration Office. The Registration Office will contact you to arrange this appointment, where you will be issued with a copy of the death certificate. The address for each Register Office can be found later in this booklet.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICE INFORMATION

The Bereavement Service Office is situated at Southport Hospital and the Bereavement Service staff can be contacted:

Monday to Friday between 10:00am & 4:00pm Telephone (01704) 704135

We do our best to ensure all calls are dealt with as soon as possible and we do apologise if you are unable to get through when we are busy.

Please note: the Bereavement Service office is open **10am** – **4pm** and **closed during weekends and public holidays**. The office will not be attended until the next normal working day. It is possible for you to leave a voice message during these times and the team will return your call the next working day.

When you speak to a member of our Bereavement Service Office Team, we will guide you through the step-by-step process and help with any immediate questions that you may have. We will need to establish next of kin and contact number for our paperwork. These details are then passed to the medical examiners. We will also need to ask whether you have made a decision about burial or cremation, to help us ensure that the appropriate paperwork is completed for you.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH (MCCD)

Every patient who dies within the hospital has their care reviewed by the Medical Examiner service within 48 hours of their death within working hours. This service is independent of the hospital.

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is then written by a Doctor who has been involved in the care of the patient. The MCCD is then sent electronically to the registrar.

The MCCD is written by a doctor who has been involved in the care of the patient once the Medical Examiners process has been completed. It is then sent electronically from the Bereavement Service Office Team to the Registry Office with Next of Kin name and contact details. We will inform you by telephone as soon as possible once this has been done to make you aware that the Registrars will be contacting you to make an appointment. Please be aware that this may come up as an unknown number.



MEDICAL EXAMINERS SERVICE

What is the medical examiner service?

The service provides an independent review of every death in the hospital which does not require a referral to the coroner. The service aims to help improve the accuracy of death certificates, identify problems or concerns, and improve the care of the bereaved.

Who are medical examiners and medical examiner officers?

The Medical Examiner Service is staffed by Medical Examiners (Senior Doctors) and Medical Examiner Officers who have undertaken further training to undertake their roles.

Medical Examiners will review relevant medical records and discuss the cause of death with the doctor who treated the patient.

A member of the Medical Examiner service will contact the next of kin with the medical cause of death for the deceased. The bereaved will then have an opportunity to raise questions or concerns about the causes of death, or about the care the person received before their death. This will usually be through a telephone call. They will explain what medical language means and make it easier to understand.

You can be confident that Medical Examiners and their Officers will provide an independent review, as they will only

review the care of those who have died where they or their officers have not provided care for the patient.

The medical examiner service may identify patients to be referred to the coroner. When the coroner starts an investigation into a death, the coroner investigates the death independently, though the medical examiner may still provide expert medical advice to the coroner. Some deaths must be notified to the coroner.

Why am I being asked if I have any concerns?

A discussion with a Medical Examiner or their Officers provides you with an opportunity to have an open and honest conversation with someone who was not involved in providing care to the person who died and gives you an opportunity to discuss anything about the care that may be worrying about or have concerns.

The medical examiner will provide an independent view of causes of death and the care provided. Medical examiners and their Officers will discuss your thoughts, questions and concerns, and if they find issues with care that need further investigation, Medical Examiners will refer these to someone who can do this.

As well as answering your questions, this can help the NHS provide better care for other patients and carers in future.

What if I don't want to speak to the medical examiner or their staff, or I don't want to tell them about my concerns?

We understand this is likely to be a difficult time for many people, speaking to someone is completely your choice. If you are not sure, you can contact the Medical Examiner or their Officers and ask for more information before deciding if you want to go ahead – they are trained to help people during these difficult family times and will be very understanding.

What will happen if something was not right?

The Medical Examiner and their officers are here to listen to your questions and concerns, provide answers if possible and, if necessary, pass them on to someone who can investigate further. Medical examiners will not investigate further themselves.

Will funeral plans or release of the body take longer?

Medical Examiners make every effort to avoid any delays and work with families and carers of the person who died to meet the legal requirements for registering deaths. Medical examiners and their staff will try to be flexible, for example where relatives need access to the body, or release of the body quickly.

What can I do if I have questions or concerns about the medical examiner process?

If you are not satisfied with the medical examiner's advice, we suggest you discuss this with staff from the medical examiner's office at first. If you are still not satisfied, you can also contact our **Patient Advice and Liaison Service** (PALS) by emailing <u>soh-tr.pals@nhs.net</u> or by telephoning 01704 704703

How can I contact the medical examiner's office?

Medical Examiner's Office

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust,

Town Lane,

Southport.

PR8 6PN.

Tel no. (01704) 704509

soh-tr.medicalexaminerservices@nhs.net

Office opening hours: 9am - 4:30pm

Monday to Friday

CAN I VISIT THE PERSON WHO HAS DIED?

A member of staff can help you to arrange a visit to the bereavement Suite at the hospital for you to spend time with you relative/friend. We have facilities at both hospitals to enable you to spend time with your loved one. However, an appointment is necessary, and we are only able to allow two family members to visit at a time.

Funeral Directors have their own facilities where you can also pay your last respects. Time with your loved one can take place on the ward for a limited time immediately after death, after which visits can be made by appointment at the hospital or the Funeral Directors.

To make an appointment please call the Bereavement Office on **(01704) 704135** Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and an appointment can be made to visit during these opening hours.

Although you will normally be able to see your loved one, in very rare circumstances there may be restrictions for health and safety or evidential reasons. In such cases there is a requirement for the person who has died to be placed in an enclosed protective covering. This is usually for one of the following reasons:

• The doctor has reason to believe the person who has died had or could have an infectious disease which may remain infectious after death.

- It is felt that the remains of the person who has died are in such a condition that to view them entirely would be too distressing for the bereaved. The implications of this would be discussed with you at the appropriate time and it would be your decision whether you wished to see them. In such cases, when you go to see your loved one, they will remain in a protected covering which will be opened, and you will be advised about close physical contact at that time.
- You should be aware that in such cases, Funeral Directors have their own protocols and guidelines to follow. Therefore, embalming may not take place and viewing may be restricted. You should discuss this with your chosen Funeral Director.
- A Home Office post-mortem examination is required, and it is important that potential evidence is not contaminated. In these circumstances, your loved one will be transferred to a specialist forensic mortuary. Once an examination has taken place you will be able to see your loved one.

A post-mortem examination is not a reason to prevent you from visiting either at the hospital or at your chosen Funeral Directors. We work to a very high standard of patient care with respect and dignity at the heart of our service

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS AND SPIRITUAL CARE SERVICE

Members of the spiritual care and chaplaincy team are available to offer support following a bereavement.

Support from our experienced team can be general, spiritual, non-religious or religious in nature, depending on your needs. If it would be helpful services of blessing, prayer or other rites of passage can be arranged around the bedside or in the bereavement suite. The spiritual care team can also give general advice and support about next steps and funeral planning.

Ward or bereavement staff can make the necessary contacts on your behalf.

As well as generic chaplains, supporting people of all faiths and none, we have denominational and faith specific chaplains.

In urgent situations support is available 24/7.

A prayer room and a garden of reflection are situated on the ground floor of both hospitals and are open and available as a quiet, reflective peaceful space.

Members of the chaplain and spiritual care team can be contacted on **(01704) 704639** or by email **soh-tr.Chaplains@nhs.net** If the matter is urgent the oncall chaplains can be contacted by ward staff of the hospital switchboard.

REGISTERING THE DEATH

Following a hospital death, once the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been discussed and completed, the next of kin details and the necessary paperwork is transferred to the Register Office. The Register Office will contact the next of kin to make the necessary appointment to register the death.

A death should normally be registered within five days of the date of death. This period can be extended in certain circumstances and if the Coroner is involved. The registration must take place in the district where the death occurred.

If it is difficult for you to get to the appropriate registration office, you may visit your local Register Office and complete the relevant paperwork in the form of a "declaration". The declaration will then be forwarded to the Registrar in the district where the death occurred, where it will be registered. The necessary paperwork will then be forwarded to you.

Doing things this way may mean a delay to the funeral as it is not possible for a burial or cremation to take place until after the Registrar has issued the necessary paperwork. In Sefton you can register at either:

Southport Register Office

Town Hall,

Corporation Street,

Southport

PR8 1DA

or

Crosby Register Office

Town Hall

Great Georges Road,

Waterloo

L22 1RB

Telephone Number for both offices:

0151 934 3044



www.merseywestlancs.nhs.uk

Who can register a death?

The death can be registered by:

- A relative
- Someone present at death
- The occupier of the hospital or nursing home where the death took place
- The person making the arrangements with the Funeral Directors (NB the Funeral Director cannot register the death)
- The person who found the body
- The person in charge of the body

Most deaths are registered by a relative of the deceased. The Registrar would normally only allow one of the other people listed above to register the death if there were no relatives available.

What information will the registrar need about the person who has died?

- The date and place of death
- Their full name and any other names they are or have been known by and maiden name of a woman who is/has been married or is/has been in a civil partnership
- Their date and place of birth
- Their last occupation and if the deceased is married, widowed or has formal civil partnership, the full name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner.
- Their usual address
- The date of birth of a surviving spouse or civil partner

 Details of any public sector pension e.g., Civil Service, Teacher or Armed Forces

What information will the registrar need about you as the person registering the death?

- Your relationship to the deceased e.g., son, daughter, widow, widower, surviving civil partner etc.
- Your full name
- Your usual address

It would also be useful if you had details of the deceased's:

- Birth certificate
- Marriage/civil partnership certificates
- NHS medical card

What documents will you receive from the registrar?

After the information has been recorded into the death register the Registrar will issue the necessary form and certificates.

If a post-mortem has not been held the Registrar will give you:

- A green form (Certificate for Burial or Cremation) to give to the Funeral Director. If a post-mortem has taken place the Coroner will issue the necessary forms.
- A white form (called a DB8) which is for pensions and social security purposes only.
- There is a charge for copies of the death certificate (there isn't a free copy) and you will be able to buy as many death certificates as you think you may need. You will be able to pay by cash, cheque or card.

All certificates issued by the Registrar are certified copies of the original register entry. These will be needed by the executor or administrator when sorting out the deceased person's affairs and need to be originals not photocopies. Anything that needs to be closed down or claimed will need a certificate. Most companies will return the certificate once they have seen it.

MAKING FUNERAL ARANGEMENTS

You can contact a Funeral Director 24 hours a day, including weekends. Your chosen Funeral Director can make all the necessary arrangements and can also advise you on all the procedures and documents you will need, as well as the timing of the funeral service. They will come to your house if you prefer. They will answer any questions you may have on burial or cremation.

Your own faith leader and the hospital spiritual care and chaplaincy service may be of great help during this time. The spiritual care service or Funeral director can advise about non-religious support.

Most Funeral Directors belong to the National Association of Funeral Directors and/or Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors and/or the British Institute of Funeral Directors. These associations have their own codes of practice that must be followed to ensure consistent levels of service

Funerals are expensive. Although basic costs tend to be similar, the final cost can vary considerably. Do not be afraid

to mention your budget or enquire of more than one provider.

Financial help may be available if you receive benefits, or if the person who has died no next of kin. You can contact the Department of Work and Pensions or Citizens Advice Bureau. www.gov.uk/funeral-payments

Help towards the cost from the Social Fund

You may be able to help towards the cost of a funeral if:

- You or your partner arranged the funeral in the United Kingdom
- The person who has died had their main home in the United Kingdom when they died

"TELL US ONCE" SERVICE

What is "Tell Us Once" service?

This is a Government service which makes it easier for you to inform Government and Council departments of a death

How can "Tell Us Once" help me?

As well as coping with the emotional distress that a death may bring, you will need to notify a number of different Government and Council departments.

These could include council tax and benefits, housing and benefits, income support, libraries, driver and licensing agencies and passport services for example. "Tell Us Once" reduces the amount of time you need to spend contacting these departments because you provide all the information to the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) who then pass that information on to the people who need to know.

How does it work?

If you choose to take part, at the time of the registration the Registrar will set up the deceased's details on the "Tell Me Once" national database. This usually take around five minutes at the end of registration.

Once the details have been entered onto the national database, you will be able to supply all relevant information to the DWP: face to face at a Sefton Council One Stop Shop: online at <u>www.direct.gov.uk/death-tellusonce</u>: or by telephone - the Registrar will provide you with the telephone number before you leave.

What information will I need to use "Tell Us Once"? You will receive a letter at the end of your Register Office appointment: this letter will contain a "Tell Us Once" reference number – you will need to quote this when you call the "Tell Us Once " helpline. This letter will also advise you what information you will need when calling the helpline.

THE CORONER

Some deaths have to be reported to the Coroner for legal reasons. This is usually when a Doctor is unable to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. The Coroner is appointed by the Queen to investigate certain types of death. If a post-mortem is required, a slight delay may be experience before the registration and funeral process can take place.

A death must be referred to the Coroner if:

- No precise cause has been established
- It follows an operation, or it is possible that it could be due to a complication of surgery or anaesthetics
- It is not thought to be from natural causes
- It is due to an injury, however it happened or if an accident or negligence is alleged.

If there is need to contact the Coroner, the Coroner will then decide if the hospital doctor can issue the Medical Certificate of Cause of death or whether a post-mortem is needed.

Coroner's post-mortem examination

The next of kin will be informed, but in these circumstances the post-mortem examination is a legal requirement and the consent of the next of kin is not required. It is possible for the family to have medical representative at the postmortem, but most families do not feel that this is necessary. You should tell the Coroner's Officer as soon as possible if you think you need to arrange this – and explain your reasons.

You should also tell the Coroner or Coroner's Officer if you have strong objections to a post-mortem on grounds of religion or culture. Do also speak with your own religious or

cultural authorities as they will be familiar with the law and be able to guide you.

If the post-mortem shows that death was due to natural causes the Coroner may issue a notification as a Pink Form B (form 100) which give the cause of death so that the death can be registered. The Coroner will send the form direct to the Registrar.

If the body is to be cremated the Coroner will issue a Certificate for Cremation Form 6 which will then allow the cremation to take place.

INQUEST

An inquest is a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding a death. The Coroner is tasked with finding answers to four statutory questions:

- Who was the deceased?
- When did they die?
- Where did they die?
- How, meaning by what means, did they come by their death?

Some inquests take place with a jury, although most do not. The Coroner will organise the inquiry in a way to best serve the public interest but will pay a particular focus on the interests of the relatives. The Coroner will be required to open an investigation and conduct an inquest under a number of circumstances however these are commonly where:

- A death is violent or unnatural
- The cause of a death is not known

• A death occurred in prison, police custody or some other form of state authorised detention

If an inquest is held, the Coroner must identify and notify properly interested persons. These are generally:

- The next of kin (such as a partner or a spouse)
- The nearest living relative
- The Personal Representative(s)

• The hospital, if the death occurred at hospital or the deceased was cared for at hospital before they died.

Relatives are able to attend at an inquest. The Coroner will involve the relatives as much as possible and will permit them to ask questions of witnesses insofar as those questions relate to the function of the inquest. Some relatives find that the process can be quite upsetting and instruct a solicitor or barrister to attend to represent their interests and ask questions on their behalf. Even if a solicitor or barrister has been instructed, the relatives will still be given the opportunity to ask questions to witnesses in addition to their legal representative. Instructing a lawyer can be quite expensive and legal aid is not available. Generally, inquests are concluded within a day or two but deaths which are complicated or involve elements of criminal or civil actions can lead to longer inquests. If the inquiry takes a long time, you can ask the Coroner to give you a letter confirming the death. This letter will generally be accepted for social security and National Insurance (NI) purposes.

The Coroner will usually open an investigation in order to issue an Order for Burial (Form 101) or a Certificate for Cremation (Form 6) so that the funeral can take place. This may be done before the inquest is completed unless the body is required for further investigation such as postmortem. The Coroner will also send a Certificate After Inquest (Form 99) stating the cause of death to the Registrar. The relatives will also receive the Coroner's Record of Inquest which will detail the Coroner's conclusion and the medical cause of death. These documents will allow the death to be registered.

Will the funeral and probate have to be delayed?

If a Coroner decides an inquest is necessary, it does not mean that all the practical issues have to be delayed until the inquest is complete. The investigation for inquest can sometimes takes weeks or even months depending on the complexity of the case.

As well as issuing permission for the funeral to go ahead, the Coroner can issue an interim death certificate which can be used to notify asset holders and other organisations of the death and to make application for probate. A grant of probate or letters of administration can be obtained, and the estate distributed, however, some insurance companies will not pay out from any polices held in case the circumstance of the death makes the policy invalid.

What happens at a post-mortem?

The actual post-mortem examination is carried out by a doctor (pathologist) who is usually a Consultant with assistance from specially skilled and qualified technicians. It is carried out in a room rather like an operating theatre under similar conditions.

The staff are very experienced and are aware of people's needs at this time and treat each person who has died with the utmost dignity and respect.

From time-to-time professionals in training with a legitimate interest such as medical students, police and student nurses view the examination as part of their training. If you have any strong objections to this, please inform the Coroner.

The Doctor may take small samples (approximately the size of a postage stamp) of the major organs so that they can be processed to be viewed under a microscope.

You will be given choices by the Coroner's Office about the arrangements that can be made for the tissue and slides once diagnosis is complete. You will be asked to sign a consent form detailing your wishes.

The choices that are currently available for both whole organs and tissue samples are:

- You may choose to delay the funeral until the organ/tissue samples can be reunited with the body.
- You may choose to have the organ and/or tissue samples returned to your funeral director for separate burial or cremation once the examination is complete (please note that slides may not be able to be cremated)
- The hospital can dispose of the organ and/or tissue samples on your behalf.

If you wish to know more details of the post-mortem examination, please contact the Mortuary Lead on (01704) 704014).

Hospital post-mortem examination (consented postmortem)

The techniques used are identical to a Coroner's postmortem, but the circumstances are different – namely a doctor knows the cause of death and is able to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death but feels that it would also be helpful to learn more about the condition from which the patient died and the effects of any treatments given

The doctor must ask the next of kin for signed permission to carry out this type of post-mortem. Whilst this consent Is legally binding, in practice doctors will discuss the process with the family or executor before going ahead, to avoid any additional distress. You are vey much within your rights to object to this type of post-mortem examination. You will be given a cooling of period of 24 hours after consent is signed.

A Digital Autopsy is a non-invasive post-mortem in which imaging technology, such as with Computerised

Tomography (CT) images, are used to develop threedimensional images for a virtual exploration of a human body.

Digital Autopsy simply means conducting a post-mortem in a computerised environment by digital tools.

Digital Autopsy use proprietary software, not a scalpel, to establish cause of death. Through Digital Autopsy we can reduce the need for invasive procedures and help minimise the requirement for a traditional autopsy. By using Digital Autopsy, statistically cause of death can be established in over 75% of all post-mortems ordered by the Coroner.

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) regulates the making of post-mortem examinations and when required the removal of tissues from a person who has died and the storage of such tissues.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust acts under licence issued by the authority for all these activities and abides by the HTA codes of practice in all matters pertaining to consent, post-mortem examination, removal, storage and disposal of tissue. Further information can be found at <u>www.hta.gov.uk</u>

HELPING OTHERS THROUGH TISSUE DONATION OR BODY BEQUEATHAL

Wishes to donate tissues after death can still be made to the Coroner and in the majority of circumstances the wishes of a person who has died can take place.

Tissue donation

Every year hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated organs such as hearts and kidneys. But you may not realise that donated tissue such as skin, bone and heart valves can dramatically improve the quality of life for recipients and even save lives. One tissue donor can save the lives of up to 50 people.

What Tissue can be donated?

Eyes can help restore sight to people with cornea problems.

Skin can be used as a natural dressing helping treat people with serious burns

Heart Valves can be transplanted to save the lives of people born with heart defects

Bone is important for people receiving artificial joint replacements or replacing bone lost through injury or illness.

Tendons can be donated to help rebuild damaged joints

Many people can be considered for tissue donation after death and most donors are people who expressed a wish during their lifetime to help others in this way. Often, they will have carried a donor car and/or discussed their wishes with family. If tissue donation is something you would like to consider, please inform the Bereavement Office who will contact a Tissue Co-ordinator to speak to you.

Body donation/bequeathal

This is the giving of a body for use in teaching anatomy to medical students. It may not always be possible to accept this donation. If you need advice, information is available from the University of Liverpool bequeathal office on **0151 794 5442**

Expenses connected with the removal of the body and its cremation or burial are normally borne but the University. Provision is made for a simple funeral by next of kin will be expected to meet extra costs arising from special funeral arrangements.

This has to be arranged when the patient is living to fill out consent and relevant paperwork. You will need to check if your relative/friend has organised this.



During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

Please call 01704 704714 if you need this leaflet in an alternative format

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

Ormskirk & District General Hospital Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN Tel: (01704) 547471

FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680 Email <u>soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net</u>

We would welcome your feedback about your experience at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust. Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following link:

https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-andvisitors/fft/

Thank you

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