



## **Site visit inspection report on compliance with HTA licensing standards**

### **Queens Hospital**

**HTA licensing number 12154**

**Licensed under the Human Tissue Act 2004 for the**

- **making of a post mortem examination;**
- **removal from the body of a deceased person (otherwise than in the course of an anatomical examination or post-mortem examination) of relevant material of which the body consists or which it contains, for use for a scheduled purpose other than transplantation; and**
- **storage of the body of a deceased person or relevant material which has come from a human body for use for a scheduled purpose**

**17 January 2018**

### **Summary of inspection findings**

The HTA found the Designated Individual (DI) and the Licence Holder (LH) to be suitable in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

Although the HTA found that Queens Hospital had met the majority of the HTA's standards, one major shortfall against premises, facilities and equipment and seven minor shortfalls were found against standards governance and quality and premises, facilities and equipment.

Particular examples of strengths and good practice are included in the concluding comments section of the report.

## **The HTA's regulatory requirements**

Prior to the grant of a licence, the HTA must assure itself that the Designated Individual is a suitable person to supervise the activity authorised by the licence and that the premises are suitable for the activity.

The statutory duties of the Designated Individual are set down in Section 18 of the Human Tissue Act 2004. They are to secure that:

- the other persons to whom the licence applies are suitable persons to participate in the carrying-on of the licensed activity;
- suitable practices are used in the course of carrying on that activity; and
- the conditions of the licence are complied with.

Its programme of site visit inspections to assess compliance with HTA licensing standards is one of the assurance mechanisms used by the HTA.

The HTA developed its licensing standards with input from its stakeholders. They are designed to ensure the safe and ethical use of human tissue and the dignified and respectful treatment of the deceased. They are grouped under four headings:

- consent
- governance and quality systems
- traceability
- premises facilities and equipment.

This is an exception-based report: only those standards that have been assessed as not met are included. Where the HTA determines that there has been a shortfall against a standard, the level of the shortfall is classified as 'Critical', 'Major' or 'Minor' (see Appendix 2: Classification of the level of shortfall). Where HTA standards are fully met, but the HTA has identified an area of practice that could be further improved, advice is provided.

HTA inspection reports are published on the HTA's website.

## **Background to the establishment**

This report refers to the activities carried out at Queens Hospital (the establishment) which has been licensed by the HTA since July 2007. It is licensed for the making of a post mortem (PM) examination, removal of relevant material from the deceased and storage of bodies of the deceased and relevant material for use for scheduled purposes.

The Designated Individual (DI) is a consultant histopathologist and the Corporate Licence Holder is Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust. The mortuary is staffed by a Mortuary Manager, two Anatomical Pathology Technologists (APTs), one mortuary assistant and one trainee APT.

The establishment undertakes approximately 600 adult PM examinations per year under coronial authority, including high-risk PM examinations. The establishment does not undertake perinatal PMs; these are transferred to another HTA-licensed establishment for PM examination. Consent for perinatal PM examination is sought by clinical staff using a consent form and information leaflet based on those provided by the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death (Sands) charity (see *Advice*, item 1). Adult hospital (consented) PM examinations have not been undertaken since the last HTA inspection.

The establishment consists of a body store, a PM room, a high risk PM room and viewing room. There is CCTV outside the mortuary which monitors the external entrance to the hospital (see *Advice*, item 5). The mortuary is secured by swipe card access with access by portering staff (see shortfall against standard GQ3(a)). There is a panic alarm system that staff can activate when working alone in the mortuary or conducting out of hours viewings. However, the alarm sounds only locally and is not linked to security or the switchboard (see shortfall against standard PFE1(e)).

The mortuary has storage capacity for 72 bodies, including eight refrigerated spaces for bariatric bodies and twelve spaces which are used for freezer storage. Perinatal/paediatric bodies are stored separately from adult bodies in a designated fridge. There is monitoring of the storage facility's temperatures and paper records are kept. Establishment staff record the storage temperatures of fridges and freezers daily and review these records regularly so that trends in performance can be identified (see shortfall against standard PFE2(a)). Identifying such trends may help to identify a potential failure of the establishment's storage equipment prior to a failure occurring. The establishment has a temperature alarm system. If the storage temperatures deviate from the expected ranges within normal working hours, the alarm system automatically alerts the Trust's switchboard team who in turn notify mortuary staff. During any deviations of temperatures from the expected ranges during out of hours periods, the alarm automatically contacts the Trust's switchboard team who, in turn, calls an engineer. This system is challenge-tested monthly although not through to the call-out stage (see *Advice*, item 4).

The establishment has a contingency escalation plan covering instances where additional storage capacity is required, for example, during busy periods. At the time of the inspection, this plan had been activated and two temporary storage units had been deployed. Advice has been given to the establishment regarding monitoring the temperatures of these temporary storage units so that the DI is assured that they are operating as expected (see *Advice*, item 6).

The mortuary uses a paper mortuary register to record details of bodies, including their admission and release to and from the mortuary. Bodies from the community are transferred to the mortuary by the Coroner's contracted funeral director (FD). Out of hours, the contracted FD admits the bodies into the mortuary after being given access by security staff. The contracted FD completes the relevant paperwork and enters the name of the deceased on the fridge door, using a specific colour of ink, which alerts the mortuary staff to the admission of a body on the next working day. Bodies are transferred from hospital wards by portering staff who enter the deceased's name on the fridge door as above (see shortfall against standard PFE1(d)). All paperwork is checked the following day by the mortuary manager or APT and the deceased person's details are entered into the mortuary register. The establishment has a system to identify deceased people with the same or similar names to help minimise the risk of misidentification. Only trained mortuary staff release the deceased to funeral directors.

Products of conception are transferred to the mortuary from the Histopathology Laboratory and are stored in a dedicated area prior to either sensitive disposal or return to the Ante-natal clinic for collection by the family. Perinatal and paediatric cases are transferred directly to the mortuary for transport to another HTA-licensed establishment for PM examination or are stored elsewhere in the hospital in a temperature monitored, dedicated fridge. This is monitored on the same system as the mortuary fridges.

The establishment's main PM suite has four downdraft tables and a dedicated bench for examination of organs and preparation of tissue samples. Pathologists complete the PM examination of each body before commencing the examination of the next body (see *Advice*, item 2). The establishment also has a high risk PM room for examination of bodies with known infections (see *Advice*, item 7). Tissue taken during PM examination is transferred to the establishment's Pathology Laboratory for histological analysis or to other establishments for toxicology or other specialist analysis. Tissue samples may be stored, if appropriate consent has been given, for use for scheduled purposes. Retained tissue samples, such as blocks and slides, are stored in the Pathology Laboratory, which is secured by swipe card access. The establishment uses paper records and electronic databases to record sample details, disposal records and wishes of the family obtained by the Coroner regarding the fate of the samples once coronial authority has ended. Paper records are scanned and stored electronically.

Sampling of tissues from deceased children, in cases of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI), is performed under coronial authority in designated areas of the hospital; specifically the Accident and Emergency department (A&E); (see shortfall against standard GQ1(g)).

Under s39 of the Human Tissue Act 2004, relevant material held for criminal justice purposes is outside the scope of HTA regulation and is not subject to the licensing requirements for storage. However, in response to a recommendation resulting from the 2012 report of the Association of Chief Police Officers' audit of tissue held under police authority, that police exhibits held on HTA licensed premises should be included within the regular HTA inspection process, police holdings stored at the establishment were reviewed by the HTA during the inspection. Any findings in relation to police holdings have been shared with the Home Office, but do not appear in this report as they are outside the scope of the HT Act. At the time of inspection, no material held under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) was stored.

### **Description of inspection activities undertaken**

This report describes the fourth, routine HTA site visit inspection of Queens Hospital. The inspection team conducted visual inspections of the mortuary, the contingency body stores and the Pathology Laboratory and interviewed staff involved with licensed activities and reviewed documentation.

A traceability audit was conducted on four adult bodies: one admitted from the community, one admitted from the hospital, one with a similar name as another in storage and one in frozen storage. These audits included cross-checking records of storage locations and identifiers recorded in the paper mortuary register, against the details on the bodies and their actual fridge and freezer storage locations. No discrepancies were identified. A traceability audit was also performed on blocks and slides taken during PM examinations and which were being stored. This included a review of records held electronically and relevant consent documentation (coronial family wishes forms). One minor anomaly was found regarding consent documentation from a coronial post mortem.

### **Inspection findings**

The HTA found the Licence Holder and the Designated Individual to be suitable in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

## Compliance with HTA standards

Standard	Inspection findings	Level of shortfall
<b>GQ1 All aspects of the establishment's work are governed by documented policies and procedures</b>		
<p>a) Documented policies and SOPs cover all mortuary/laboratory procedures relevant to the licensed activity, take account of relevant Health and Safety legislation and guidance and, where applicable, reflect guidance from RCPATH.</p>	<p>Several of the SOPs covering key mortuary procedures do not reflect current practice. Examples include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the SOP for the viewing of bodies states that out of hours is between 10am - 8pm at weekends. This does not reflect current practice;</li> <li>• the SOP for the mortuary refers to the transfer of bariatric bodies on beds; there is no reference to the X-cube which is currently used;</li> <li>• the SOP for Histology Specimen disposal refers to the previous HTA code of practice (CoP 5).</li> </ul> <p>The DI needs to ensure all SOPs relating to licensed activities are reviewed to ensure that they are accurate and reflect current practice.</p>	<b>Minor</b>
<p>g) All areas where activities are carried out under an HTA licence are incorporated within the establishment's governance framework</p>	<p>The DI has not appointed Persons Designated in areas outside of the mortuary where licensed activities take place, namely the Accident and Emergency department (where removal of relevant material from the deceased takes place as part of the Trust's SUDI protocol) and storage in the Ante-natal clinic.</p>	<b>Minor</b>
<p>h) Matters relating to HTA-licensed activities are discussed at regular governance meetings involving establishment staff</p>	<p>Although some governance meetings are held, these meetings do not cover all matters relating to the HTA licence.</p> <p>HTA licence related governance meetings will help to assure the DI that they have appropriate oversight of licensed.</p>	<b>Minor</b>

**GQ3 Staff are appropriately qualified and trained in techniques relevant to their work and demonstrate competence in key tasks.**

<p>a) All staff who are involved in mortuary duties are appropriately trained/qualified or supervised.</p>	<p>All porters have access to the mortuary, including those who have not been trained in mortuary techniques.</p> <p>Access to the mortuary by porters is by swipe card access. Access to the mortuary and the undertaking of mortuary procedures should be restricted to those staff who have been trained and competency assessed by mortuary staff.</p> <p>(see <i>Advice</i>, item 3).</p>	<p><b>Minor</b></p>
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**GQ6 Risk assessments of the establishment's practices and processes are completed regularly, recorded and monitored**

<p>a) All procedures related to the licensed activities (as outlined in standard GQ1) are risk assessed on a regular basis</p>	<p>The establishment's documented risk assessments cover some mortuary activities and the risks of incidents associated with these activities. The following risks should also be assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accidental damage to a body,</li> <li>• security breach,</li> <li>• major equipment failure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Minor</b></p>
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**PFE1 The premises are secure and well maintained and safeguard the dignity of the deceased and the integrity of human tissue.**

<p>b) There is demarcation of clean, dirty and transitional areas of the mortuary, which is observed by staff and visitors</p>	<p>There is no demarcation of clean, dirty and transitional areas of the mortuary.</p>	<p><b>Minor</b></p>
<p>e) Security arrangements protect against unauthorized access and ensure oversight of visitors and contractors who have a legitimate right of access</p>	<p>An audible panic alarm is located within the viewing suite. However, this alarm is not connected to switchboard or to security. Staff perform lone working at weekends. There is a significant risk that the audible alarm will not be heard during out of hours viewings and this poses a significant risk to staff security.</p>	<p><b>Minor</b></p>

<b>PFE2 There are appropriate facilities for the storage of bodies and human tissue.</b>		
<p>a) Fridge and freezer units are alarmed and the alarms are tested regularly to ensure that they trigger when temperatures go out of upper or lower set range</p>	<p>During the week prior to the inspection, the establishment had identified a fault with the storage fridge's temperature monitoring system. The temperature readout from the system was displaying 8°C but the actual temperature in the fridges was 4°C.</p> <p>The establishment also found that the fault was affecting the functioning of the alarm system.</p> <p>Inaccurate temperature readings which affect the functioning of the alarm system poses a risk to the integrity of the stored bodies. In addition, if the fault is affecting the establishment's alarm system there is a risk that the alarm may not alert establishment staff to a deviation in the storage temperature from the expected range.</p>	<p><b>Major</b></p>

### Advice

The HTA advises the DI to consider the following to further improve practice:

No.	Standard	Advice
1.	C2(c)	The DI is advised to implement a procedure so that new staff being trained in the seeking of consent for perinatal PMs and tissue retention are accompanied by a trained individual. This will help to assure the DI that all requirements of the HT Act and the HTA's codes of practice are being adhered to; it may also provide an opportunity for the competency of those being trained to be assessed.
2.	GQ1(b)	Currently, the pathologist who will perform the PM examination undertakes identification checks on the bodies during the day before the examination. Evisceration is performed on the morning of the PM examination by an APT. The DI is advised to implement a procedure to ensure that the body identification check by the pathologist is recorded and available to establishment staff. This may help to mitigate the risk of inadvertent evisceration of the wrong body by the APT.
3.	GQ3(a)	The DI is advised to perform an audit of all portering staff who have access to the mortuary to assure themselves that these staff have been trained and their competency has been assessed. This may help to assure the DI that only trained staff who are aware of the establishment's procedures are undertaking activities within the mortuary.
4.	PFE1(a)	The DI is advised to test the temperature monitoring call out system to ensure staff respond according to documented procedures.
5.	PFE1(d)	There is no intercom system or spyhole in place to identify staff at one entrance to the mortuary from the hospital. This entrance opens directly into

		the body store. The DI is advised to put in place protocols or restrict the view of body store activities from the corridor to ensure the dignity of the deceased is maintained.
6.	PFE2(f)	At times of peak demand, the contingency storage units are in use. The DI is advised that the temperatures of these units are formally monitored and documented daily in the same way as for the main body store fridges.
7.	PFE3(a)	At the time of inspection, the appearance of rust was observed on a trolley in the high risk PM room. The DI is advised to undertake preventative maintenance on this piece of equipment immediately to help prevent any further deterioration.

### Concluding comments

The mortuary team are committed and conscientious. They take great pride in their work and have the interests of the bereaved and care of the deceased. As evidence of this, the mortuary team were recently the winners of *The Trust Pride Way* award, which recognises outstanding healthcare practices.

Many areas of strength and good practice were observed throughout the inspection, some examples of which are given below.

- Mortuary staff are involved in the Trust *End of life care* training. All staff involved in this care pathway are therefore aware of the work of the mortuary and the care of the deceased and their families;
- The mortuary staff ensure the dignity of the deceased; as part of this, opaque shrouds are used;
- There are strong, documented body identification practices;
- APTs always perform out of hours viewings;
- Forensic cases are always stored in locked freezers to ensure security;
- On the release of babies from the mortuary, only the mother's identifiers are used which ensures full traceability;
- A member of staff from a separate department carries out internal audits.

There are a number of areas of practice that require improvement, including one major shortfall against premises, facilities and equipment and seven minor shortfalls against governance and quality; and premises, facilities and equipment standards. In addition, advice and guidance was also given in relation to consent, governance and quality systems, traceability and premises, facilities and equipment.

The HTA requires the Designated Individual to submit a completed corrective and preventative action (CAPA) plan setting out how the shortfalls will be addressed, within 14 days of receipt of the final report (refer to Appendix 2 for recommended timeframes within which to complete actions). The HTA will then inform the establishment of the evidence required to demonstrate that the actions agreed in the plan have been completed.

The HTA has assessed the establishment as suitable to be licensed for the activities specified subject to corrective and preventative actions being implemented to meet the shortfalls identified during the inspection

**Report sent to DI for factual accuracy 14 February 2018**

**Report returned from DI: 26 March 2018**

**Final report issued: 26 March 2018**

### **Completion of corrective and preventative actions (CAPA) plan**

Based on information provided, the HTA is satisfied that the establishment has completed the agreed actions in the CAPA plan and in doing so has taken sufficient action to correct all shortfalls addressed in the Inspection Report.

**Date: 26 February 2020**

## Appendix 1: HTA licensing standards

The HTA standards applicable to this establishment are shown below; those not assessed during the inspection are shown in grey text. Standards that are not applicable have been excluded.

<b>Consent</b>
<b>C1 Consent is obtained in accordance with the requirements of the Human Tissue Act 2004 (HT Act) and as set out in the HTA's codes of practice</b>
<p>a) There is a documented policy which governs consent for post-mortem examination and the retention of tissue and which reflects the requirements of the HT Act and the HTA's Codes of Practice.</p> <p>b) There is a documented standard operating procedure (SOP) detailing the consent process.</p> <p><i>Guidance</i></p> <p><i>This should include who is able to seek consent, what training they should receive, and what information should be provided to those giving consent for post-mortem examination. It should make reference to the use of scanning as an alternative or adjunct to post-mortem examination.</i></p> <p>c) There is written information for those giving consent, which reflects the requirements of the HT Act and the HTA's codes of practice.</p> <p><i>Guidance</i></p> <p><i>Information on consent should be available in different languages and formats, or there is access to interpreters/translators. Family members should be given the opportunity to ask questions.</i></p> <p>d) Information contains clear guidance on options for how tissue may be handled after the post-mortem examination (for example, repatriated with the body, returned to the family for burial/cremation, disposed of or stored for future use), and what steps will be taken if no decision is made by the relatives.</p> <p>e) Where consent is sought for tissue to be retained for future use, information is provided about the potential uses to ensure that informed consent is obtained.</p> <p>f) The deceased's family are given an opportunity to change their minds and it is made clear who should be contacted in this event and the timeframe in which they are able to change their minds.</p> <p>g) The establishment uses an agreed and ratified consent form to document that consent was given and the information provided.</p> <p><i>Guidance</i></p> <p><i>This may be based on the HTA's model consent form for adult post-mortem examinations</i></p>

available on the HTA website, or in relation to infants, the resources pack developed by the Stillbirth and neonatal death charity, Sands. The consent forms should record the consent given for the post-mortem examination and for the retention and future use of tissue samples.

## **C2 Staff involved in seeking consent receive training and support in the essential requirements of taking consent**

- a) There is training for those responsible for seeking consent for post-mortem examination and tissue retention, which addresses the requirements of the HT Act and the HTA's codes of practice.

### *Guidance*

*Refresher training should be available (for example annually).*

- b) Records demonstrate up-to-date staff training.
- c) If untrained staff are involved in seeking consent, they are always accompanied by a trained individual.
- d) Competency is assessed and maintained.

## **Governance and quality systems**

### **GQ1 All aspects of the establishment's work are governed by documented policies and procedures**

- a) Documented policies and SOPs cover all mortuary/laboratory procedures relevant to the licensed activity, take account of relevant Health and Safety legislation and guidance and, where applicable, reflect guidance from RCPATH. These include:
- i. post-mortem examination, including the responsibilities of Anatomical Pathology Technologists (APTs) and Pathologists and the management of cases where there is increased risk;
  - ii. practices relating to the storage of bodies, including long term storage and when bodies should be moved into frozen storage;
  - iii. practices relating to evisceration and reconstruction of bodies;
  - iv. systems of traceability of bodies and tissue samples;
  - v. record keeping;
  - vi. receipt and release of bodies, which reflect out of hours arrangements;
  - vii. lone working in the mortuary;

- viii. viewing of bodies, including those in long-term storage, by family members and others such as the police;
- ix. transfer of bodies internally, for example, for MRI scanning;
- x. transfer of bodies and tissue (including blocks and slides) off site or to other establishments;
- xi. movement of multiple bodies from the mortuary to other premises, for example, in the event that capacity is reached;
- xii. disposal of tissue (including blocks and slides), which ensures disposal in line with the wishes of the deceased person's family;
- xiii. access to the mortuary by non-mortuary staff, contractors and visitors;
- xiv. contingency storage arrangements.

*Guidance*

*SOPs should reflect guidance contained in the HSE's document: Managing the risks of infection in the mortuary, post mortem room, funeral premises and exhumation.*

*Individual SOPs for each activity are not required. Some SOPs will cover more than one activity.*

- b) Procedures on evisceration ensure that this is not undertaken by an APT unless the body has first been examined by the pathologist who has instructed the APT to proceed.
- c) Procedures on body storage prevent practices that disregard the dignity of the deceased.

*Guidance*

*For example, placing more than one body on a tray, placing bodies unshrouded on trays, or storing bodies in unrefrigerated storage should not take place.*

*The family's permission should be obtained for any 'cosmetic' adjustments or other invasive procedures prior to release of bodies, for example, sewing the deceased's mouth to close it or the removal of a pacemaker. It is also good practice to discuss with the family any condition that may cause them distress, for example when viewing or preparing the body for burial, such as oedema, skin slippage or signs of decomposition.*

*If identification of the body is to take place before a post-mortem examination, if available, a Police Family Liaison or Coroner's Officer should have a discussion with the family about the injuries and let them know that reconstruction may be required.*

*However, the Pathologist should see the body without any changes being made, so if there is a need to reconstruct or clean a body before the post-mortem examination, it should be with the agreement of both the Pathologist and the Coroner. In Home Office cases, a viewing cannot normally take place until after the post-mortem examination.*

- d) Policies and SOPs are reviewed regularly by someone other than the author, ratified and version controlled. Only the latest versions are available for use.

- e) There is a system for recording that staff have read and understood the latest versions of these documents.
- f) Deviations from documented SOPs are recorded and monitored via scheduled audit activity.
- g) All areas where activities are carried out under an HTA licence are incorporated within the establishment's governance framework.

*Guidance*

*These areas include maternity wards where storage of fetuses and still born babies takes place, areas where material is stored for research, the Accident and Emergency Department where removal of samples may take place in cases of sudden unexpected death in infancy. There should be an identified Person Designated in areas of the establishment remote from the main premises.*

- h) Matters relating to HTA-licensed activities are discussed at regular governance meetings involving establishment staff.

*Guidance*

*Meeting minutes should be recorded and made available to staff.*

**GQ2 There is a documented system of audit**

- a) There is a documented schedule of audits.

*Guidance*

*As a minimum, the schedule should include a range of vertical and horizontal audits checking compliance with documented procedures, the completion of records and traceability.*

- b) Audit findings document who is responsible for follow-up actions and the timeframe for completing these.

*Guidance*

*Staff should be made aware of the outcomes of audits and where improvements have been identified.*

- c) Regular audits are carried out of tissue being stored so that staff are fully aware of what is held and why and to enable timely disposal of tissue where consent has not been given for continued retention.

*Guidance*

*Audits of stored tissue should include samples held under the authority of the police, where applicable.*

**GQ3 Staff are appropriately qualified and trained in techniques relevant to their work and demonstrate competence in key tasks**

- a) All staff who are involved in mortuary duties are appropriately trained/qualified or supervised.

*Guidance*

*This includes portering staff, who have responsibility for bringing bodies to the mortuary out of hours and who may not be aware of the potential risks to the deceased during transfer into refrigerated storage, and unqualified mortuary 'assistant' staff.*

*APTs should be trained in reconstruction techniques to ensure that the appearance of the deceased is as natural as possible. APTs should be encouraged to work towards the achievement of the RSPH Level 3 Diploma in Anatomical Pathology Technology.*

- b) There are clear reporting lines and accountability.  
c) Staff are assessed as competent for the tasks they perform.

*Guidance*

*Assessment of competence should include the standard of APTs' reconstruction work.*

- d) Staff have annual appraisals and personal development plans.  
e) Staff are given opportunities to attend training courses, either internally or externally.

*Guidance: attendance by staff at training events should be recorded.*

- f) There is a documented induction and training programme for new mortuary staff.  
g) Visiting / external staff are appropriately trained and receive an induction which includes the establishment's policies and procedures.

*Guidance*

*The qualifications of locum staff should be checked prior to them commencing work in the mortuary and their competency to undertake each task should be assessed.*

*Contractors, visiting and temporary staff and funeral service staff bringing bodies out of hours should be required to read relevant standard operating procedures and sign to confirm their understanding.*

**GQ4 There is a systematic and planned approach to the management of records**

- a) There is a system for managing records which includes which records must be maintained, how they are backed up, where records are kept, how long each type of record is retained and who has access to each type of record.

*Guidance*

*Records include mortuary registers, PM examination records, tissue retention forms and*

*records of transfer and return of organs/tissue sent elsewhere for examination.*

- b) There are documented SOPs for record management which include how errors in written records should be corrected.
- c) Systems ensure data protection, confidentiality and public disclosure (whistle-blowing).

#### **GQ5 There are systems to ensure that all untoward incidents are investigated promptly**

- a) Staff know how to identify and report incidents, including those that must be reported to the HTA.

##### *Guidance*

*HTA-reportable incidents must be reported within five days of the date of the incident or date of discovery.*

*Incidents that relate to a failure of hospital staff to carry out end of life care adequately should be reported internally and the incidence of these monitored.*

- b) The incident reporting system clearly outlines responsibilities for reporting, investigating and follow up for incidents.
- c) The incident reporting system ensures that follow up actions are identified (i.e. corrective and preventative actions) and completed.
- d) Information about incidents is shared with all staff to avoid repeat errors.
- e) The establishment adopts a policy of candour when dealing with serious incidents.

#### **GQ6 Risk assessments of the establishment's practices and processes are completed regularly, recorded and monitored**

- a) All procedures related to the licensed activities (as outlined in standard GQ1) are risk assessed on a regular basis.

##### *Guidance*

*Risks to the dignity and integrity of bodies and stored tissue should be covered. The HTA's reportable incident categories provide a good basis for risk assessments. Risk assessments should be reviewed at regular intervals, for example every 1-3 years or when circumstances change. Staff should be involved in the risk assessment process.*

- b) Risk assessments include how to mitigate the identified risks. This includes actions that need to be taken, who is responsible for each action, deadlines for completing actions and confirmation that actions have been completed.

##### *Guidance*

*Relevant staff should have knowledge of risks and the control measures that have been taken*

*to mitigate them.*

- c) Significant risks, for example to the establishment's ability to deliver post-mortem services, are incorporated into the Trust's organisational risk register.

## **Traceability**

### **T1 A coding and records system facilitates traceability of bodies and human tissue, ensuring a robust audit trail**

- a) Bodies are tagged/labelled upon arrival at the mortuary.

#### *Guidance*

*The condition and labelling of bodies received in body bags should always be checked and their identity confirmed. They should be labelled on the wrist and/or toe. Body bags should not be labelled in place of the body.*

- b) There is a system to track each body from admission to the mortuary to release for burial or cremation (for example mortuary register, patient file, transport records).

#### *Guidance*

*Body receipt and release details should be logged in the mortuary register, including the date and name of the person who received/released the body and, in the case of release, to whom it was released. This includes bodies sent to another establishment for PM examination or bodies which are sent off site for short-term storage which are subsequently returned before release to funeral service staff.*

- c) Three identifiers are used to identify bodies and tissue, (for example post mortem number, name, date of birth/death), including at least one unique identifier.

#### *Guidance*

*Identification details should not be written on bodies. Where bodies are moved off site for contingency storage the DI should ensure that suitable systems are in place to identify same or similar names.*

- d) There is system for flagging up same or similar names of the deceased.

- e) Identity checks take place each time a body is moved whether inside the mortuary or from the mortuary to other premises.

#### *Guidance*

*Mortuary white boards containing the names of the deceased give potential for error if wiped clean (such as when visitors attend for reasons of confidentiality), and should not be relied upon as the sole source of information about the locations of bodies.*

*Fridge/freezer failures that require bodies to be moved temporarily whilst repairs take place*

*present a risk to traceability. Full identification checks should be made when they are placed back into normal storage.*

- f) There are procedures for releasing a body that has been in long term storage and is therefore not in the current register.
- g) Organs or tissue taken during post-mortem examination are fully traceable, including blocks and slides (including police holdings). The traceability system ensures that the following details are recorded:
  - i. material sent for analysis on or off-site, including confirmation of arrival
  - ii. receipt upon return to the laboratory or mortuary
  - iii. the number of blocks and slides made
  - iv. repatriation with the body
  - v. return for burial or cremation
  - vi. disposal or retention for future use.

*Guidance*

*Consent information which covers retention/disposal of tissues should be made available to the other site, as appropriate.*

- h) There are documented procedures for transportation of bodies and tissue anywhere outside the mortuary, (such as to the lab or another establishment), including record-keeping requirements.

*Guidance*

*Formal written agreements with funeral services are recommended. Coroners usually have their own agreements for transportation of bodies and tissue; however, documentation for traceability purposes must still be maintained by the establishment for these cases.*

**T2 Disposal of tissue is carried out in an appropriate manner and in line with the HTA's codes of practice.**

- a) Tissue is disposed of as soon as reasonably possible once it is no longer needed, such as when the coroner's or police authority over its retention ends or the consented post-mortem examination process is complete.
- b) There are effective systems for communicating with the Coroner's Office, which ensure tissue is not kept for longer than necessary.
- c) Disposal is in line with the wishes of the deceased's family.

*Guidance*

*Organs and tissue returned to the body prior to its release should be contained in clear viscera bags, which prevent leakage, are biodegradable and pose no issues for crematoria in relation to emissions and pollution. Clinical waste bags or household bin bags should not be used for*

*this purpose.*

*Tissue blocks and glass slides should not be placed inside the body for the purpose of reuniting tissues with the deceased. Blocks and slides should be placed in a suitable container and transported with the body should the family wish to delay the funeral until the slides are returned.*

- d) The method and date of disposal are recorded.

## **Premises, facilities and equipment**

### **PFE1 The premises are secure and well maintained and safeguard the dignity of the deceased and the integrity of human tissue**

- a) The premises are clean and well maintained.

#### *Guidance*

*Floors, walls and work surfaces should be of non-porous construction and free of cracks and chips. The premises should be subject to a programme of planned preventative maintenance, which ensures that the premises, facilities and equipment remain fit for purpose.*

- b) There is demarcation of clear, dirty and transitional areas of the mortuary, which is observed by staff and visitors.
- c) There are documented cleaning and decontamination procedures and a schedule of cleaning.
- d) The premises are secure (for example there is controlled access to the body storage area(s) and PM room and the use of CCTV to monitor access).

#### *Guidance*

*Relatives who visit for a viewing should not be able to access the body store area. Security systems and lone working arrangements should take into account viewings which take place out of hours.*

- e) Security arrangements protect against unauthorized access and ensure oversight of visitors and contractors who have a legitimate right of access.

### **PFE2 There are appropriate facilities for the storage of bodies and human tissue**

- a) Storage arrangements ensure the dignity of the deceased.

#### *Guidance*

*Refrigeration of bodies should be at a temperature of approximately 4 degrees Celsius. The optimal operating temperature for freezer storage is around -20 Celsius, +/- 4 degrees.*

- b) There is sufficient capacity for storage of bodies, organs and tissue samples, which takes into account predicated peaks of activity.

*Guidance*

*Capacity should be regularly reviewed, particularly if contingency arrangements are used for an extended period.*

- c) Storage for long-term storage of bodies and bariatric bodies is sufficient to meet needs.

*Guidance*

*There should be sufficient frozen storage for the long-term storage of bodies; the HTA advises that bodies should be moved into frozen storage after 30-days in refrigerated storage if there is no indication they are soon to be released or further examined, or before, depending on the condition of the body. Where there is insufficient freezer storage to meet needs, there should be arrangements with other establishments, or other contingency steps, to ensure that bodies can be stored appropriately.*

*Bodies in long-term storage should be checked regularly; this should include confirmation of their identity and the reason for their continued storage.*

*Where new fridges are installed, these should measure 24"-26" in width and consideration should be given to the proportion that should be larger to accommodate bariatric bodies.*

- d) Fridge and freezer units are in good working condition and well maintained.
- e) Fridge and freezer units are alarmed and the alarms are tested regularly to ensure that they trigger when temperatures go out of upper or lower set range.
- f) Temperatures of fridges and freezers are monitored on a regular basis.

*Guidance*

*Temperature monitoring should enable the establishment to identify trends and may mitigate the risk of a possible fridge failure.*

- g) Bodies are shrouded or in body bags whilst in storage.
- h) There is separate storage for infants and babies. If not, special measures are taken for the bodies of infants and babies.
- i) There are documented contingency plans in place should there be a power failure or insufficient numbers of refrigerated storage spaces during peak periods.

*Guidance*

*Where contingency arrangements involve the transfer of bodies to other premises, these should be assessed to ensure that they are suitable and that traceability systems are of the required standard. Stacking bodies on the same fridge tray is not considered suitable practice.*

*Establishments should have documented agreements with any funeral services that they may use for contingency storage. Consideration should be given to whether the funeral service provides contingency storage for other mortuaries. SOPs should address issues such as risk*

assessments and same/similar name systems.

*The hire of temporary storage units should not be the sole contingency arrangement for an establishment. Establishments should put in place other formally agreed arrangements for contingency storage. Where the hire of temporary storage facilities*

*forms part of establishments' contingency arrangements, consideration should be given well in advance and steps taken to ensure availability of funds, and of units for hire.*

*Establishments should consider entering in to Mutual Aid Agreements*

*with neighbouring organisations in order that they can provide and obtain support during periods of capacity shortages.*

### **PFE3 Equipment is appropriate for use, maintained, validated and where appropriate monitored**

a) Items of equipment in the mortuary are in a good condition and appropriate for use:

- i. fridges / freezers
- ii. hydraulic trolleys
- iii. post mortem tables
- iv. hoists
- v. saws (manual and/or oscillating)

*Guidance*

*Equipment should be made of material that is easy to clean, impervious, non-rusting, non-decaying and non-staining.*

b) Equipment is appropriate for the management of bariatric bodies.

c) The ventilation system provides the necessary ten air changes per hour and is checked and maintained at least annually.

*Guidance*

*COSHH requires a thorough examination of the ventilation system at 14-month intervals, and sets out what the examination should cover.*

d) Staff have access to necessary PPE.

*Guidance*

*Where face masks should be worn, they should be face fitted.*

e) Where chemicals are used for preservation of tissue samples, there is adequate ventilation.

f) Key items of equipment, including fridges/freezers, trolleys and post mortem tables (if downdraught) are subject to regular maintenance and records are kept.

*Guidance*

*This includes fridges in Maternity where fetuses or still born babies are stored prior to examination. Maintenance records may be held by the mortuary or centrally by the Trust, such as the Estates Department. They should be available for review during inspection by the HTA.*

## Appendix 2: Classification of the level of shortfall

Where the HTA determines that a licensing standard is not met, the improvements required will be stated and the level of the shortfall will be classified as 'Critical', 'Major' or 'Minor'. Where the HTA is not presented with evidence that an establishment meets the requirements of an expected standard, it works on the premise that a lack of evidence indicates a shortfall.

The action an establishment will be required to make following the identification of a shortfall is based on the HTA's assessment of risk of harm and/or a breach of the HT Act or associated Directions.

### 1. Critical shortfall:

A shortfall which poses a significant risk to human safety and/or dignity or is a breach of the Human Tissue Act 2004 (HT Act) or associated Directions

*or*

A combination of several major shortfalls, none of which is critical on its own, but which together could constitute a critical shortfall and should be explained and reported as such.

A critical shortfall may result in one or more of the following:

- (1) A notice of proposal being issued to revoke the licence
- (2) Some or all of the licensable activity at the establishment ceasing with immediate effect until a corrective action plan is developed, agreed by the HTA and implemented.
- (3) A notice of suspension of licensable activities
- (4) Additional conditions being proposed
- (5) Directions being issued requiring specific action to be taken straightaway

### 2. Major shortfall:

A non-critical shortfall that:

- poses a risk to human safety and/or dignity, or
- indicates a failure to carry out satisfactory procedures, or
- indicates a breach of the relevant CoPs, the HT Act and other relevant professional and statutory guidelines, or
- has the potential to become a critical shortfall unless addressed

*or*

A combination of several minor shortfalls, none of which is major on its own, but which, together, could constitute a major shortfall and should be explained and reported as such.

In response to a major shortfall, an establishment is expected to implement corrective and preventative actions within 1-2 months of the issue of the final inspection report. Major shortfalls pose a higher level of risk and therefore a shorter deadline is given, compared to minor shortfalls, to ensure the level of risk is reduced in an appropriate timeframe.

### 3. Minor shortfall:

A shortfall which cannot be classified as either critical or major, but which indicates a

departure from expected standards.

This category of shortfall requires the development of a corrective action plan, the results of which will usually be assessed by the HTA either by desk based or site visit.

In response to a minor shortfall, an establishment is expected to implement corrective and preventative actions within 3-4 months of the issue of the final inspection report.

### **Follow up actions**

A template corrective and preventative action plan will be sent as a separate Word document with both the draft and final inspection report. You must complete this template and return it to the HTA within 14 days of the issue of the final report.

Based on the level of the shortfall, the HTA will consider the most suitable type of follow-up of the completion of the corrective and preventative action plan. This may include a combination of

- a follow-up site-visit inspection
- a request for information that shows completion of actions
- monitoring of the action plan completion
- follow up at next desk-based or site-visit inspection.

After an assessment of your proposed action plan you will be notified of the follow-up approach the HTA will take.