

Bereavement services: planning as lockdown eases

Bereavement services across the country responded very quickly to the lockdown by adapting and converting the support they offer, often very hurriedly and with little time to reflect and prepare.

The easing of lockdown brings a whole new set of questions for organisations to consider. While there is pressure to resume services quickly, it is important to take time to consider and learn from what has worked well and what has worked less well during this extraordinary time. That includes thinking about which suspended services to resume, and which new services to retain.

These prompts, developed by Fiona Pope at St Barnabas House Hospice, may be a useful starting point for discussions. Involving managers, staff, volunteers, bereaved people and trustees will give you a range of perspectives.

Suspended services

- What services have you put on hold during the pandemic?
- What was the impact on bereaved people using your services? Were any groups particularly affected, either positively or negatively?
- What was the impact on staff and volunteers?
- What risks were incurred and what costs were saved by doing this?
- What evidence do you have of demand to restart this service?
- If you do restart this service, how will you comply with current and future measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus?

New services

- What new services have you introduced? Why?
- Where did you get the idea to do this?
- How well has your new service been received by bereaved people, staff and volunteers?
- What costs and risks have you incurred as a result?
- What evidence do you have of ongoing need for / demand for the service?
- What evidence do you have the new service's effectiveness in meeting bereaved people's needs? What outcomes have you been able to measure?
- Can you compare these outcomes to those achieved by your old service?

As lockdown eases

- What do you want to re-start? Why?
- Are there changes you can introduce to improve what you used to do?
- Will you continue to operate your new services?
- Is there an opportunity to develop a new wave of services that meet bereaved people's needs? Who will you involve in this re-design?
- What will your own service's resources be in terms of people, money, time and energy? How will you allocate these?
- What new partnerships could you develop to best meet bereaved people's needs in your area?