

Next of Kin

Translating Sangha Connections for the National Health Service *NHS TRUSTS MAY GET YOUR NEXT OF KIN WRONG IF YOU ARE UNCONSCIOUS*

The issue of whether or not you would be recognised as your Order friend's 'next of kin' in the event of an emergency is something that may worry many of us. Would you be informed if your Order brother or sister was in an accident? Would you be given information about their condition? And would you even be allowed to see them in hospital? Might your family even argue about who was your next of kin?

Despite the widespread use of the phrase, 'next of kin' is not defined by the law. Therefore, there is no reason that an Order Member shouldn't be treated as your 'next of kin' despite the fact that your friendship is not legally recognised. However, in practice hospitals have generally recognised only spouses and close blood relatives as next of kin and have sometimes excluded cohabiting partners, let alone a community member or close Order friend. This has been more common with same-sex partners, but has also happened to male-female partners.

However, as attitudes have changed and families have become more diverse, most hospitals are more flexible. The policy in most NHS trusts is to ask you to nominate your next of kin formally on your admission to hospital. However if you are unable to say, because for example you are unconscious, they will try to work out who is the person closest to you. They may get this wrong, particularly if your personal circumstances are confusing or "unusual"

This next of kin card has been designed to make it absolutely clear to medical staff who you have chosen as your next of kin, and how to contact them. It has been designed it so that it fits in your wallet and can be carried with you everywhere. If there is any disagreement while you are unconscious it can be called on to prove your wishes.

What you need to think about before you complete the card

For some people, who to choose as your next of kin may be obvious, others may need to consider it carefully. Before you complete the form, you should discuss your decision with the person you have chosen. Make sure that they are willing to be treated as your next of kin for medical purposes and they understand what it involves

***THE NEXT OF KIN CARD FITS NEATLY IN
YOUR WALLET***

What does it mean?

By completing this card and carrying it with you in your wallet, you are making it clear that you wish the named person to be treated as your next of kin if you are admitted to hospital. This means that they would be informed that you are in hospital, and they are the person that hospital staff would look to for guidance about your care if you were unable to communicate your wishes clearly yourself (for example, if you were unconscious). If you were to die, your next of kin would be consulted about issues such as making funeral arrangements or a hospital post-mortem. Your next of kin cannot consent or refuse consent to treatment on your behalf (nobody can do that). But they can let doctors know what decisions they believe you would make if you were able to. A next of kin has no legal liabilities, rights to your medical notes, or personal possessions. Nominating a next of kin does not affect who will inherit from you if you die. You need to make a Will for that.

What else should I do?

You should let your other friends and family know who you have chosen as your next of kin and let them know where you keep this card.

You should also discuss any other wishes you have about how you would like to be treated in the event of serious illness. When you are admitted to hospital you are usually asked to complete a form stating who your next of kin is. Make sure you always choose the same person as you have put on this card (if possible).

<h2>Next of Kin</h2>
To all NHS Staff :
<u>My Name is</u> _____
<u>NHS Number</u> _____
<u>I am an ordained Buddhist in the Triratna Buddhist Order</u>
<u>to whom I am known as</u> _____
.....
<u>My Next of Kin is</u> _____
<u>Who is known within the Order as</u> _____
<u>Please inform them if I am in an accident or am admitted to hospital.</u>
<u>Landline</u> _____
<u>Mobile Number</u> _____
<u>Address</u> _____
.....
<u>The person named above is the person that I am closest to. Please</u>
<u>discuss my condition with them.</u>
<u>Signature</u> _____
<u>Date</u> _____