

For the family of the deceased

The doctors and staff of your GP practice would like to offer our sincere condolences to you and your family on your loss. Unfortunately, at this very distressing time, there are many decisions and arrangements which need to be made for which you might need information.

We hope that the information on the following pages will be helpful to you in dealing with some of the practicalities following a death. Your Doctor is available to speak to, or see you, if you need to talk about any aspect of your recent bereavement. Please do not hesitate to contact the surgery.

You may find the following contacts particularly useful:

- Cruse Bereavement Care: <http://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- Local Registrar for England & Wales: <http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>
- Citizens Advice: <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm#searchbox>
- Age UK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/?gclid=CPPQnpaHr7oCFVMbtAodZjoAEw>

Medical Certificate

If someone dies at home the doctor will sign a medical certificate confirming the cause of death, unless they decide to refer the matter to the Coroner. If the death happens in hospital the doctor there will issue the certificate. A death is reported to the Coroner if it is sudden or unusual and in some cases a post mortem may be requested followed by an Inquest. Don't be alarmed - this is a normal legal requirement and the coroner's office should be able to answer any questions you have.

The medical certificate contains confidential information and should be handed unopened to the Registrar within five days of the death unless it has been referred to the Coroner.

It is often helpful to take the deceased's birth certificate or passport with you, if they are available, as they can provide useful information for the Registrar. The NHS card is also useful. However, these documents are not essential and you should not delay if they cannot be found.

The following information will be required :

- Date and place of death
- Full name and surname, including maiden name if applicable, and any other names by which the deceased was known
- Date and place of birth
- Occupation
- Usual address
- Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

It is a good idea to phone to make an appointment so that you are seen promptly. The registrar will give you two documents (free of charge) : a Certificate for Burial or Cremation and a Certificate of Registration of Death.

1. **Certificate for Burial or Cremation (green form)**

This Certificate should be given to the funeral director to enable the funeral to take place.

2. **Certificate of Registration of Death (BD8-white form)**

This Certificate is for Social Security purposes. Please complete the form and return it to your local Benefits Agency office.

You may also need to purchase death certificates. A death certificate is a certified copy of the entry in the register of deaths. It is subject to crown copyright and so cannot be photocopied. As death certificates may be required by solicitors and financial organisations or for pensions and insurance claims, you may wish to purchase several copies at the time of registration, as copies obtained at a later date may cost more.

Who to Tell about the Death

If the person who died was receiving any welfare benefits, such as a State Retirement Pension, inform the social security office of their death and return any order books. The registrar will give you a certificate to fill in and return with the books. Keep a note of any reference numbers as you may need them later on.

If the person who died had a driver's licence, return it to the DVLA; if they had a passport return it to the UK Passport Agency. You should also let the tax office know.

Depending on the circumstances, you may need to contact some other organisations as well. These could include:

- personal or occupational pension schemes
- insurance company
- bank and building society
- employer or trade union
- mortgage provider, housing association or council housing office
- social services (if the person was getting any community care services or equipment)
- energy or telephone suppliers

For more detailed information see the leaflet 'What to do after a death' which is available from your local social security office.

The practice undertakes to inform members of the Practice team including attached members such as District Nurses if they were visiting the deceased at home. We will also let any relevant Hospital consultants/departments know if they were receiving ongoing treatment or may have existing appointments so that you will not be troubled with unwanted correspondence.

Practical help and support

Sometimes a bereavement can make it difficult for you to manage in the way you used to. For example, if the person who died used to give you a lot of help and support around the house then you may feel that it will be impossible for you to manage without them. However, there may be other ways of getting the help you need.

Local authorities have a duty to assess the care needs of older and disabled people, and arrange services which help them to live in their own homes. Services could include:

- home help to assist with general household tasks
- home care to help with things like bathing and dressing meals on wheels
- lunch clubs, social clubs or day centres

Contact your local social services department for information on getting an assessment.

You may also find the Gov.uk website helpful

Gov.uk is the new place to go to find out what to do when someone dies, how to apply for benefits and a whole host of other information. The new website will replace Directgov and Business Link as the main source for finding government services and information.

Death and bereavement

Register a death: Find out how to register the death of someone who lived in England or Wales.

Find bereavement services from your council: Contact your council to find resources and support to help when you have to cope with a death.

Finding a person's will: Types of places to search for a deceased person's Will - including at their solicitor, bank or the Principal Registry of the Family Division.

What to do after someone dies: What-to-do checklist following a person's death - registering it, coroner's involvement, Tell Us Once, arranging the funeral and death abroad.

Wills, probate and inheritance: Sorting out a deceased person's affairs - how to apply for a grant of representation, become an executor and distribute an estate - and what happens if there's no Will.

Valuing the estate of someone who's died: When someone dies, you need to find out the value of the estate to see if Inheritance Tax is due - it's paid at 40% on anything above the threshold of £325,000.

Paying Inheritance Tax: get a reference number, payment methods, use the deceased's bank account, National Savings and Investments, government stock.

Making a Will: making sure it's valid, using a solicitor and making amendments to it when your circumstances change.

Who inherits if someone dies without a Will?: Find out who is entitled to a share of someone's property, possessions and money if they die without making a will.

Child Benefit if a child or parent dies: What happens to Child Benefit if a child you're responsible for dies - or if the child's parent or parents die.

Claim or refer an unclaimed estate: If someone dies without a will or known family, their ownerless property (bona vacantia) goes to the crown - check if you're an entitled relative, search for an estate, refer or claim on an estate.

Funeral Payments: Help to pay for a funeral if you're on a low income - what you'll get, eligibility and how to claim.

Guardian's Allowance: Guardian's Allowance is payment for a child you're responsible for whose parents are dead or in prison: how much you can get, eligibility, and how to claim.

Register a stillbirth: Where and how to register a stillbirth, who can register it, financial support you may be able to get and links to support organisations.

Telling DVLA about a bereavement: What you need to tell DVLA if someone who was a driver has died.

Widowed Parent's Allowance: If you're widowed below State Pension age and have at least one dependent child you could claim Widowed Parent's Allowance - what you'll get, eligibility, how to claim.

Support Groups

The following list is a short selection of groups that offer specific bereavement support and advice. There are many others available

Counselling Directory

<http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/bereavement.html>

This is an excellent tool to help you to find local bereavement support nationally.

Bereavement Advice Centre

Helpline: 0800 634 9494

Supports bereaved people on a range of practical issues via a single freephone number. It offers advice on all aspects of bereavement from registering the death and finding a funeral director through to probate, tax and benefit queries.

Compassionate Friends

Helpline: 0845 123 2304; email: info@tcf.org.uk

An organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering understanding, support and encouragement to others after the death of a child or children. The helpline is always answered by a bereaved parent who is there to listen when you need someone to talk to; you can also email the helpline: helpline@tcf.org.uk.

Child Bereavement

Support and Information Line: 01494 446648.

A national charity which helps grieving families and the professionals who care for them.

Cruse Bereavement Care

Helpline: 0844 477 9400 / 01242 252518 | Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. Provides counselling and support and offers information, advice, education and training services.

RD4U (Cruse Bereavement Care's young persons services)

Helpline: 0808 808 1677; email: info@rd4u.org.uk

National Association of Widows

Tel: 0845 838 2261; email: info@nawidows.org.uk

A self-help organisation, run by widows, for widows, that offers comfort, friendship and a listening ear to widows and unmarried women who have lost a partner through bereavement.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)

Helpline: 020 7436 5881, email: helpline@uk-sands.org.

A national charity, established by bereaved parents which aims to support anyone affected by the death of a baby. It works in partnership with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services offered to bereaved families and to promote research and changes in practice that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives.

Samaritans

Helpline: 08457 90 90 90, (Ireland): 1850 60 90 90; e-mail: jo@samaritans.org

National organisation offering support to those in distress who feel suicidal or despairing and need someone to talk to. The telephone number of your local branch can be found in the telephone directory. Samaritans also provides a widely used e-mail service (not a chatroom but they endeavour to answer within 24 hours).

The Way Foundation

Tel: 0870 011 3450; email: info@wayfoundation.org.uk

An organisation for people who have become widows or widowers at a young age. The Foundation has a support group, and the site has links to other relevant sites.

Winston's Wish

Helpline: 08452 03 04 05 | Website : <http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/>

Gives support for those caring for children affected by the death of a parent or a sibling and to the children themselves. Has excellent resources.

Do let us know if there is any other way in which we can help.