



Humber Teaching
NHS Foundation Trust



Advice and Support for you in Bereavement



Caring, Learning
& Growing Together





Caring
Learning
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Advice and support for you in bereavement

You may be reading this after someone close to you has died.
Please accept our sincere condolences; we are very sorry for your loss.

This booklet can help guide you through the arrangements that need to be made.
It includes advice and support in the initial stages of bereavement.

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When someone dies: first steps

If the **person died at home** and it was expected, then their GP and community nursing team should be contacted. If none of these services are available, call 111 NHS helpline. A healthcare professional will support you and verify the death. Often this person is a community nurse. Once this is done, the appointed funeral director can then be contacted for help with further arrangements (see page 6).

If the **person died in hospital**, the ward team will support you and explain the next steps. You will need to let the ward team know the details of the appointed funeral director.

If the **person's death was sudden and unexpected** then you will need to call 999 immediately for paramedics and the police to attend. They will support you and explain the next steps.

Medical Certification and the Medical Examiner Service

If the likely cause of death is known, then a doctor, who has known the person in their lifetime, can start completing the **Medical Certificate of Cause of Death**. They do this with involvement of a **Medical Examiner**. They may also contact a family member for information. The Medical Examiner is an independent Doctor who will ensure that the certificate is completed accurately. The Medical Examiner will contact a family member or friend of the person who has died, to explain the cause of death and understand any concerns about the care received at end of life.

If the cause of death is unknown or something untoward may have happened a doctor will refer to The Coroner to investigate the cause of death. Sometimes a post-mortem may be arranged. You will be supported to understand if this happens.

Registering the death

The Medical Examiner will send the completed Medical Certification of Cause of Death to the registrar. The Medical Examiner Service will then say when a relative of the deceased can make an appointment to register the death. The death must then be registered in person at a Local Authority Registry Office within 5 days. It is recommended to register the death with the local authority that the person died within - elsewhere there may be a delay in receiving the certificate as this may be delivered by post. Details of Registration Offices are found on page 13 of this booklet.

Who can register the death?

A relative should register the death. If a relative cannot register the death, you can do it if you:

- were there at the time of death
- oversee the funeral arrangements

Information for the Registrar

You'll need to tell the registrar:

- the person's full name at the time of death
- any names used previously: for example, a maiden name
- the person's date and place of birth
- their last address
- their occupation
- the full name, date of birth and occupation of a surviving or late spouse or civil partner
- whether they were getting a State Pension or any other benefits

If relevant, the register office may also want to see the person's:

- birth certificate
- Council Tax bill
- driving licence
- marriage or civil partnership certificate
- NHS medical card or NHS number
- Passport
- proof of address (such as a utility bill)

Documents you will get from the registrar:

When you register a death, you'll get a certificate for burial or cremation. This gives you permission for a burial or to apply for a cremation. You'll also be able to buy death certificates - these prove the death has been registered. These certificates will be needed for sorting out the person's affairs.

Arranging the funeral

It is important to choose and contact a funeral director as soon as possible after the person's death so they can support you and make the necessary onward arrangements. Some people may have expressed a preferred funeral director before their death or there may be a family preference.

Funeral directors offer services at different costs. You can contact several before deciding what to do. It's okay to ask for simpler or less expensive options. A less expensive service does not reflect on how much a person means to you.

The person who died may have expressed wishes - cultural, religious, or personal - about their funeral and related care. It is important to highlight these as soon as possible with the funeral director and any place of worship to ensure these wishes are met.

You can get independent advice about choosing a funeral director and arranging a funeral. Details of independent funeral advice organisations are on page 13.

Government Financial Support in Bereavement

- **Funeral Expenses Payment**
If you receive benefits or tax credits, you may be eligible for a Funeral Expenses Payment. This is from the government to help you pay for the funeral.
- **Bereavement Support Payments**
This is for bereaved spouses, civil partners, or surviving cohabiting partners with dependent children. This includes if you were pregnant when your cohabiting partner died.

Please use the contact details on page 14 to find out more about these payments.

Telling family and friends

You may need to tell other people that the person has died. We know that the way you tell someone bad news can make a difference to them, as well as to your own grief. It's natural to worry about what to say, and how and when to tell others.

You may find that it helps to think about these things:

- It can help if you can prepare by thinking through what you're going to say first.
- It's best to talk slowly and gently using plain, simple language.
- You may want to warn them that you have bad (or sad) news to try to make it less of a shock.
- It is usually clearer to say that someone has died than to say things such as 'gone to sleep', 'gone away' or that you have 'lost' the person. This is very important if you are talking to children, someone who has a learning disability or dementia, or someone who has a different first language.
- Often people who hear bad news can only take in a small amount. You may need to gently ask if they understand what you're telling them, and what has happened.



Telling organisations of the person's death

Before telling organisations it is best to wait until you have registered the death; they may ask to see a copy of the Death Certificate.

The 'Tell Us Once' Service:

This service allows you to tell government departments that the person has died - through one single contact. To use this service, the death must have been registered, or you must have an interim death certificate. The registrar will explain the service and they may be able to complete this with you or give you a reference and contact details so you can use the service yourself.

The 'Tell Us Once' Service will notify:

- **HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)** - to deal with personal tax and to cancel benefits and credits, for example Child Benefit and tax credits.
- **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** - to cancel benefits and entitlements, for example Universal Credit or State Pension
- **Passport Office** - to cancel a British passport.
- **Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA)** - to cancel a license, remove the person as the keeper of up to 5 vehicles and end the vehicle tax.
- **Local Council** - to cancel Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction (sometimes called Council Tax Support), a Blue Badge, inform council housing services and remove the person from the electoral register.
- **Veterans UK** - to cancel or update Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.

HMRC and DWP will then contact you about the tax, benefits and entitlements of the person who died.

'Tell Us Once' will also contact some public sector pension schemes so that they cancel future pension payments.

Other organisations you may need to notify separately:

- employer
- banks, building society & credit card company
- mortgage providers
- insurance providers
- companies that the person had contracts with, like utility companies, landlords or housing associations
- personal or workplace pension schemes
- Subscriptions, memberships, trade unions





After the funeral

Settling someone's estate can be confusing, distressing, and time-consuming. If you are executor of the person's Will, it is your responsibility to see that the person's wishes, as you understand them, are carried out. This will include paying funeral expenses, debts and taxes as well as dealing with their possessions and other assets. You will need to contact the Probate Office to obtain the relevant forms and guidance, these forms and guidance are available online: www.gov.uk/government/collections/probate-forms

If you face financial difficulties while money is tied up in the estate, it may be helpful to discuss this with the person's bank. Funds can be made available from the estate to pay for funeral costs and other bills. In complex situations you might consider contacting a solicitor for advice. There are fees for solicitor's services so make it clear what they must do and any fees. The executor can charge any fees incurred to the estate of the person who has died.

Coping with grief

Each person's experience of grief is unique to them. But there are some shared emotions that people experience.

Initial grief reactions

In the first minutes and hours, you may have many different feelings, and this is normal. There's no right or wrong way to feel at a time like this. You may go into shock or feel numb. You may feel disbelief and think that what's happened is not real. You may feel relief at first if the person had been in pain or if caring for them had become difficult. You might even try to carry on as though nothing has happened. Or you may feel angry or in despair.

Often the initial feelings are very intense and can involve a longing to be reunited with the person who has died. You may also have physical reactions, like heart palpitations, tiredness, or dizziness.

It can seem like things are not "real", and it might be difficult to think about anything apart from the person who has died. And it is normal to become forgetful and lose focus.

After the funeral

The time after a funeral can also be difficult. It may seem that people's lives have gone back to normal, and you might be wondering how you will cope without the person who has died.

Moving through grief

In time, many people begin to accept what has happened. You might feel like you can get back to taking part in activities again and enjoying them. While you haven't forgotten your loved one, their death has become a more "accepted" part of your memory. Thinking about them isn't as distracting as it was in the beginning, and feelings of grief are not the only emotions you feel. However, the time it takes to process these emotions is unique to everyone – it can take weeks, months, or years.

There may be periods when intense grief re-emerges. This is common and can happen around significant events like birthdays, anniversaries, or at a stressful time.

Bereavement support available that you can access at any point, see page 14-15 for contact details of national and local bereavement support.

Long-term grief

For some people, the intensity of their grief doesn't decrease, even after a long period of time has passed. If you are experiencing very strong feelings of grief you might find it helpful to get bereavement support.

You can ask your GP Surgery to refer you to a therapist or counsellor. Also see page 14 for details of other national and local bereavement support.

Sometimes people don't begin to grieve until months or even years later. Everyone's circumstances are different. If at any point you cannot cope with what you are feeling, don't be afraid to get support. see pages 14-15 for contact details of national and local bereavement support.

(adapted from Hospice UK website: www.hospiceuk.org/information-and-support/i-need-support-bereavement/coping-grief)



Details of useful organisations and resources

Funeral advice

Independent advice about choosing a funeral director and arranging a funeral:

- **The Good Funeral Guide.** www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk
- **National Association of Funeral Directors.** www.nafd.org.uk
Phone: 0121 711 1343
- **The National Association of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors.**
www.saif.org.uk
Phone: 0345 230 6777 or 01279 726777

Government advice about what to do when someone dies, including how to register the death, inform government departments and deal with the estate, including any property and money.
www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies

Registering a death

It is recommended if possible, to register the death in the local authority that the person died within.

North Yorkshire Council

www.northyorks.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages/death/register-death
or call 01609 780 780

East Riding of Yorkshire Council

www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/deaths/registration or call 01482 393939

Hull City Council

www.hull.gov.uk/deaths/register-death or call 01482 300300

Government Financial Support

Please use these details to find out more about **Funeral Support Payments** and **Bereavement Support Payments**: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/bereavement

Or contact the Bereavement Service helpline:

- Telephone: 0800 151 2012,
- Textphone: 0800 731 0464,
- Relay UK 18001 then 0800 151 2012.

Bereavement Support

Local and national organisations can provide emotional and practical support in coping with bereavement. Here are just a few

Cruse Bereavement Support

0800 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk

At a Loss

This is an online information service. It includes links to sources of support for your individual circumstances www.ataloss.org

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk Search: 'Dealing with grief and loss' or 'Coping with bereavement'.

Hospices

Saint Catherine's Hospice

Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale

Call 01723 351421

www.saintcatherines.org.uk

Dove House Hospice

Hull and East Riding

Call 01482 784343

www.dovehouse.org.uk

St Leonards Hospice

York, including Pocklington.

Call 01904 708553

www.stleonardshospice.org.uk

Other organisations who offer support

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk

Call 0800 055 6112

(available 8am – 7pm every day)

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk

Call 0333 150 3456

(various times 7 days a week)

Citizen's Advice

www.citizensadvice.org

North Yorkshire areas:

Call 0808 278 7900

Hull and East Riding areas:

Call 0800 144 8848

Marie Curie

www.mariecurie.org.uk

Call 0800 090 2309

(various times 7 days a week)

The Samaritans

Call 116 123

(available 24 hours)



Tell us about your experience - Survey of the Bereaved

We would be very grateful if you could give feedback about our care for your loved one. Your feedback will help us continue to learn and improve our care. Thank you

Please use the following link or QR code to the feedback form

forms.office.com/e/P3WnJRTDrz



Complaints

If you have any concerns about our care, you can contact our Complaints and Feedback Team to discuss your concerns and for information on our complaints process:

www.humber.nhs.uk/patients-carers/complaints

Call or email

Tel: 01482 303930

Email: HNF-TR.complaints@nhs.net

Write to us

You can write to the Complaints team at:

Trust Headquarters,
Willerby Hill,
Beverley Road,
Willerby,
HU10 6ED

Health Stars is proud to have supported the production of this important booklet.



Health Stars is the charity supporting teams across the Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust. Together we make wishes come true to enhance the care our patients and their loved ones receive. As a local NHS charity, we rely on the support of businesses, community groups and the generosity of our friends and neighbours.

To find out more, check out our website or follow us on social media:



healthstars.org



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