



Humber Teaching
NHS Foundation Trust



**Help for you
following a
bereavement**

Caring
Learning
Growing





Please accept our
sympathy at this sad time;
we are sorry for your loss.

This booklet is provided to help you deal with the practical arrangements you will need to make at this difficult time. We hope you will find the following information helpful.

The following issues are covered:

- What to do first
- Registering the death
- Information for the registrar
- Certificates
- Funeral arrangements
- People to inform
- Things that may need returning
- Advice and support - coping with bereavement and grief



What practical things need to be done if there is a death?

When someone dies at home

The death has to be verified by a healthcare professional, such as a doctor, paramedic or community nurse. A doctor who knows the person has to sign a medical certificate. If the death has been sudden, the doctor will have to talk to the police who will report it to the coroner. A post-mortem examination may be arranged.

When someone dies in hospital

You can pay your last respects to the person who has died at the hospital if this is shortly after the person has died. The ward staff will arrange this for you. Otherwise, we recommend that you contact your funeral director, who will be pleased to offer you this service.

Collecting the Notification of Death

In most cases the medical certificate of the cause of death will be issued by the hospital doctor. You will need this in order to obtain a death certificate from the Registrar's Office. The hospital doctors cannot issue a medical certificate of the cause of death if the coroner wishes to investigate the death. It is best to check with the ward that one has been issued before going to collect it. The hospital will give you a medical certificate.

Registering the death

The death should be registered within five days of its occurrence unless the death has been or needs to be reported to the coroner.

Information for the Registrar

The registrar will ask for the following information about the person who has died:

- Date and place of death and usual address of the person.
- Full name and surname (and maiden name if the person who has died has been married).
- Date and place of birth.
- Occupation (and name and occupation of spouse if the person is married or widowed).
- Whether the person was receiving a state pension/ allowance.
- If the person who has died was married or in a civil partnership, the date of birth of the surviving spouse or partner.
- Person's medical card or NHS number.

Who can register the death?

- A relative of the person who has died.
- Any adult who was present at the death.
- The person instructing the funeral director.

You must register the death within 5 days. You will receive a 'Certificate for a Burial' or an 'Application for Cremation' to give to the funeral director. You must complete one of these before the funeral can take place.

The registrar will give you:

- A green form to give to the funeral director unless the coroner has already sent this.
- A white form to send to the social security office. You may be able to claim certain benefits.

Arranging the funeral

It is important to choose and contact a funeral director as soon as possible after the person's death so that they may support you and make the necessary arrangements. You can do this as soon as the person has died. Some people will have expressed who they wish their funeral director to be or have a family preference. The choice of funeral director is very important as they are able to assist you with all of the relevant information and help you with any decisions that may be needed.

Many funeral directors offer a seven-day, 24-hour service and are usually happy to visit you at home to help, advise and support you. Funeral directors' charges may vary and you may wish to contact several before making your decision. When making arrangements for a funeral it may be that the person who has died had an association with a particular place of worship. It is advisable to make contact with this place of worship as soon as possible when beginning to make the funeral arrangements.

A funeral director can be chosen before or after you have registered the death. Most people obtain a name from the telephone directory or by word of mouth. He or she will advise on the procedures for the funeral.

Contact your Social Security Office (local Benefits Agency) to arrange pension and other entitlements. You may be eligible for a funeral payment or Bereavement Allowance. To see if you are eligible, please visit:

Funeral payment:

gov.uk/funeral-payments

Bereavement Allowance:

gov.uk/bereavement-allowance

Inform the Tax Office about your change in circumstances.

You may want to put a death notice in the local or national papers.

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. In complex situations, or where you may have financial difficulties while money is tied up in the estate, it may be helpful to contact a solicitor for advice. There are fees for these services so make it clear precisely what they are required to do. The executor can charge any fees incurred to the estate of the person who has died.



People you may wish to notify

There are various people who need to be informed of the death. The following checklist may help you but there may be others:

- Employer
- Bank
- Building Society
- Credit card company
- Social Security Office
- Utility companies
- Life Insurance company
- Car insurance company
- Inland Revenue
- Royal Mail deliveries
- Council Offices
- TV Licencing Authority
- Rental companies
- Newsagent
- Milkman
- Trade union
- Other member organisations
- Housing department
- Landlord
- Pension and Benefit books

Things that may need returning

The following checklist may help you but there may be others:

- Passport
- Driving Licence
- Car registration documents
- NHS or other equipment on loan
- National Insurance card
- Library books
- Membership cards
- Season tickets

Collecting clothes and valuables

Personal property and valuables at the hospital can be collected by the next of kin or representative at the same time as the notification of death. Some people find it distressing coming back onto the ward so soon after the person has died. If so, we completely understand. Please arrange with the ward staff to collect these items from the main reception.

Coping with bereavement and grief

People can have quite different experiences when they lose someone close to them. This leaflet aims to help you to understand some of the emotions which may be faced during a bereavement or loss, to make some practical suggestions which may help you to get through this difficult time, and to offer some basic details of what needs to be done when someone dies. At the back of the leaflet there are some addresses and telephone numbers of organisations which may be helpful to you.

Advice and support – understanding grief

How do people feel when they have experienced bereavement?

Serious loss is something which we will all face at some time in our lives. This may be because of the death of someone close to us or it may be because of other circumstances such as the loss of our health or our home. There are few opportunities to learn about death and about how people are affected by grief, and it can seem difficult to know what is 'normal' and to understand how we or our families may respond when we face a loss. You may think you are the only person who has felt the way you do. Whilst everyone's response to a loss is a very individual experience, there are some common experiences that many people will share.

How do people feel in the early hours and days after the death of a close relative or friend?

People often describe shock soon after the death of such a person. They may feel numb, panicky, very weepy or unable to cry at all. Some people find it difficult to sleep; others may have many physical symptoms such as heart palpitations. Some people find they calmly go through the practical tasks surrounding the death and worry that they may be seen as uncaring. This is just one of the signs of shock and it is most likely

that they will feel the impact of the death at a later point. Some people find themselves completely unable to cope and need a lot of practical and emotional support from those around them at this point.

What sorts of feelings do people have weeks and months after a bereavement?

Some people feel a sense of agitation for quite a long time after the death. People may become very active at this time, doing things like cleaning the whole house. This agitation can sometimes amount to panic and symptoms of anxiety such as breathlessness, palpitations and dizziness can be present. People may feel they are 'going mad' because they have such odd experiences. People often report that they thought they saw, heard or felt their deceased loved one near them or in the distance. These experiences are not unusual following a death. These feelings may alternate with depression, weepiness, tiredness and low mood.

People may think or wonder 'What's the point in going on?'. They may feel guilt and review the circumstances of the death and their relationship with the person who has died. They may wonder what they could have done differently that might have

helped the situation. This is also common when there has been relief at someone's death following a painful and prolonged illness. It is worth remembering that many people feel relief when suffering ends. Also, people often feel angry after a death. This can be directed at the dead person, 'Why have they left me?', or at those around them. Family members or people involved in caring for the dying person may be the target for the bereaved person's anger.

They might think or ask, 'Why didn't you do more?'. Other people's reactions may be difficult for the bereaved person. Sometimes people will be clumsy in what they say or do. Occasionally people will avoid contact with the bereaved person. These reactions are usually because people do not know what to do or say in the face of someone's grief. Sometimes other people do not realise that it can take a long time to begin to recover from the death of a loved one.

When do people begin to recover from a bereavement?

Coming to terms with a death is a very gradual process which can take a considerable time. People usually find that gradually they are able to get on with their lives and think a little

less about the person they have lost. Most people begin to feel like this within one or two years of the death of someone close to them. It may be difficult to accept the death of a loved one but possible to move on with life in spite of this. It is important not to feel guilty if you are beginning to build a life for yourself following a death. It is quite normal to begin to recover and start to rebuild your life, and is not in any way disloyal to the memory of the person who has died.

Children and grief

Children of all ages feel grief and distress at the loss of a family member or friend. Most of their experience of death will have come from: the loss of a pet; TV or news programmes; videos or other online content. Their understanding of death can be quite different from an adult's, especially as younger children find length of time difficult to express or understand. It is helpful to be open with children, to talk and cry with them and include them in arrangements if this seems appropriate. Give them love and reassurance as they may have similar feelings as adults but be less able to cope or express these feelings. Specialist support for children who have experienced loss may be available via your doctor.

Health Stars charity supports your local NHS by improving services and supporting patients and their carers right across our region. If you would like to help us continue this work there are lots of ways you can.

Giving in memory is a special way to remember a loved one whilst also making a really valuable contribution to your local NHS charity, helping us to care for patients and future generations. Whether you would like to say thank you for the care given to your loved one or simply show your appreciation for your local NHS, donations help make a big difference to patients in our community.

There are a number of ways you can give in memory.



Make a one-off donation

If you would like to donate via post, please send a cheque made payable to Health Stars along with a covering letter stating who the donation is in memory of. Please post to

**Health Stars Trust HQ
Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust
Willerby, HU10 6ED**

Funeral donations in lieu of flowers

Asking friends and family to donate in lieu of flowers is a simple and effective way to remember your loved one. If you would like to do this, please speak to your funeral director who can offer you advice and will pass the donations directly to Health Stars.

Fundraise in memory

If you would like to fundraise in memory of someone, please get in touch with us by calling 01482 389103.

Thank You

