Help for you following bereavement

Information Booklet
Introduction

Please accept the sympathy of the hospital staff at this difficult time.

We want to help you as much as we can and we hope that this booklet will provide you with helpful information about the procedures following a death in hospital.

The NHS cares for many people at the end of their lives and that care does not end when they die. Bereavement services are a vital part of the service the NHS gives to those in its care and to their bereaved families and friends.

Within the booklet you will see a Quick Response code (QR code) on certain pages. These have been included for those who use a smart phone. Once scanned, the QR code will take you straight to the support organisation’s website. For those who do not use a smart phone, the website’s details have also been provided.

This leaflet can be made available in alternative languages/formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式

此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona w innych językach/formatach.
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The first steps

Contacting a Funeral Director

You can contact a Funeral Director as soon as you like. You do not have to wait until the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (also referred to as the MCCD) has been issued or until after the weekend if the death occurs then. The Funeral Director will give you the help and advice that you need.

The funeral director will help you to make all the arrangements for the funeral and the burial or cremation. You should find out if there is a Will as it may contain the deceased person’s own requests.

You may know a reputable funeral director or your family and friends may suggest one to you. Local firms are usually listed in the Yellow Pages or Thompson Local Directory. Costs vary so you may wish to contact or visit more than one. The Bereavement Officer can give you a booklet produced by the Benefits Agency, which will give you more information such as advice about paying for a funeral.
Obtaining a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

If the death occurred in the Accident & Emergency Department, please contact Whiston Coroner’s Office on 0151 430 1238. It is a legal requirement that all sudden, unexpected deaths and deaths within 24 hours of admission to hospital be reported to the Coroner’s Office.

If the death occurred on the ward, you must telephone the Bereavement Office before coming to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.

Please do not attend until you have been advised by a bereavement officer to collect your paperwork.

You can contact the bereavement office on:
  0151-430-1336 or 0151-430-1412
between 9.15am – 4.45pm, Monday – Friday.
The Bereavement Centre

This is located on lower ground floor two (LG2) of Nightingale House at Whiston Hospital. It has its own car park which is accessible from Stoney Lane. There is no charge to park in this car park. (Post code L35 5DR). The Hospital Trust also has a large multi-storey car park on Warrington Road (parking charges will be incurred in the multi-storey car park).

On entering Nightingale House from the Bereavement Centre car park, the office is the first door on the left. Please use the telephone on the wall if the door is locked to let the bereavement centre staff know that you have arrived.

The centre has two private rooms where you can receive your paperwork and ask any questions. The bereavement centre staff can advise you about the death registration and the procedures that will follow.

The Bereavement Office arranges for a hospital doctor to complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. This will usually be the following day unless the death occurred over the weekend or bank holiday when, if possible, it will be issued on the next normal working day.
You will be advised about the availability of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, where you will be able to collect it and given help with any questions that you may have. You may also be informed of any known delays, for instance, if the relevant doctor who cared for the deceased is not available or delays due to the involvement of the coroner.

Sometimes the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death cannot be issued at the hospital (e.g. if the death is sudden, or if the doctor was not certain of the cause of death). This is when the Coroner will be involved and, in these circumstances, the hospital doctor will report the death to the Coroner in order that the cause of death can be established. In some cases the Coroner may authorise a post-mortem to be carried out.

Under these circumstances the Coroner's Officer will contact the next of kin and it will be advisable to notify your funeral director and follow his advice.

The Coroner's Offices are based in the Bereavement Centre on the Whiston Hospital site, and can be contacted on 0151 430 1238 between the hours of 8am - 4pm, Monday - Friday.
Registering the death

How to register a death

Once you have received the Cause of Death Certificate you must take it to the Register Office for the area in which the death occurred to register the death. If you are unable to attend the correct register office, you can go to a registrar in a more convenient place in England or Wales to do a declaration of death, but they will not be able to register the death at that office. The details will be passed on to the Registrar in the area in which your relative died and the certificates will be sent to you by post a few days later. This may cause delays in organising the funeral.

The death must be registered within **five** working days. Details of the local Registration District Offices are as follows, and visits are by appointment only.
Whiston Hospital deaths

Registering a death in Prescot

The Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages
High Street
Prescot
L34 3LD

Telephone: 0151 443 2900
St Helens Hospital deaths only

Registering a death in St Helens

The Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages
Central Street
St Helens
WA10 1UJ

Telephone: 01744 456789
Who can register the death

- The next of kin or family member
- A person present at the death
- The deceased’s lawyer or executor of the estate
- The occupier/owner of premises where the death took place
- Hospital administrator or the person responsible for funeral arrangements (not a funeral director)

Death certificate(s) – a standard charge is made for these. (You may require more than one copy).

The registrar will require

- The medical certificate of the cause of death (obtained from the hospital)
- The deceased’s National Health Service medical card (if possible)
- The deceased’s birth certificate (if available)
- Any details of NHS pension, war pension or civil servant pension (if available)
- The deceased’s marriage certificate (if married and if available)

Other information the registrar will need

- Name and address of the person registering the death
- The first names and family name of the deceased
- Any other names by which the deceased has been known
- The date and place of death
- The date and place of birth
- The usual address of the deceased
- If the deceased was male, his occupation
• If the deceased was a married woman, the full name and occupation of her husband
• If married, the date of birth of the surviving widow or widower
• Whether or not the deceased received a pension or other allowances from state funds

**The registrar will give you**

• A certificate for the funeral director (green certificate)
• Certificate of Registration/notification of death for the Jobcentre Plus, including a claim form (where appropriate) for funeral expenses from the Social Fund. If the burial is to take place in another country you will not qualify for help from the social fund.

**Tell us once service**

If you wish to use this service further information will be offered at the time of registration. Tell Us Once is a service available online that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go.

You can also visit www.gov.uk/tell-us-once
Visiting the deceased

Such visits normally take place between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm from Monday to Friday. However, if visiting during these hours is not possible please contact the Operational Site Managers through the main hospital switchboard: 0151 426 1600 available seven days a week. Depending on staff availability they will do their best to accommodate your request.

Normally the Funeral Director will take the person who has died to their Chapel of Rest within a few of days of the death where further, extended, visits can be arranged at your convenience.

Although you will normally be able to see your relative/friend, in very rare circumstances there may be restrictions for health and safety or evidential reasons when police enquiries are continuing into a death, or for other reasons which will be explained to you. In such cases there is a requirement for the person who has died to be placed in an enclosed protective covering. This is usually for one of the following reasons:

- The doctor has reason to believe the person who has died had, or could have had, an infectious disease, which may remain infectious after death
- It is felt that the remains of the person who has died are in such a condition that to view them entirely would be too distressing for the bereaved. The implications of this would be discussed with you at the appropriate time and it would be your decision whether you wished to see them. In such cases, when you go to see your relative/friend they will remain in the protective covering, which will be opened, and you will be advised about close physical contact, such as kissing, and any other special precautions at that time. You should also be aware that, in such cases, funeral directors have their own protocols and guidelines to follow.
Therefore, embalming may not take place and viewing may be restricted. You should discuss this with your individual funeral director

- A Home Office post-mortem examination is required and it is important that potential evidence is not contaminated. In these circumstances, your relative/friend will be transferred to a specialist forensic mortuary. Once an examination has taken place you will be able to see your relative/friend

**Human Tissue Authority**

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) regulates the making of post-mortem examinations and, when required, the removal of tissues from the person who has died and the further storage of such tissues.

St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust acts under licence issued by the authority for all of these activities, and abides by the HTA codes of practice in all matters pertaining to consent, post mortem examination, removal, storage and disposal of tissue. Further information can be found at www.hta.gov.uk
Who needs to be told about the death

Tissue donation

St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust participates in the National Blood Service Tissue Donation programme. Details of the death of the deceased will be forwarded to the National Referral Centre, and you may or may not receive a call from them. For further information please refer to the leaflet included at the back of this booklet.

Tissue donation is the gift of tissue such as corneas, skin, bone, tendons, cartilage and heart valves to help others. Most people can donate tissue. Unlike organs it may be possible to donate tissue up to 48 hours after a person has died. If this is possible the family will be offered this as an option.
Who needs to be told about the death

You will probably want to let the family, friends and neighbours know of your loved one’s death right away. There are several people who may also need to know.

These include –

• Minister of religion
• Family doctor
• Executors of the Estate (Will)
• Solicitor
• Insurance Companies
• Jobcentre Plus (benefits)
• Department of Work & Pensions (pensions)
• Social Services (home helps, home care)
• Place of work (occupational pension)
• Residential or Nursing Home
• Inland Revenue (tax office)
• Landlord, Housing Department, mortgage provider
• Bank, credit card or loan companies
• Any other financial contractual commitments
• Council Tax offices
• Electricity, Gas, Telephone, Water Companies
• The Post Office (redirect mail)
• DVLA Swansea
• Careline
• Cancel any appointments

The deceased may have been living alone so you will need to make sure that their home is secure and remove all signs that indicate that no-one is there. You may wish to collect spare keys from neighbours.
After the funeral

Items that may need returning

• Passport
• Driving Licence
• Membership cards
• National insurance papers
• NHS equipment - Home Loans Department - 0151 244 4380
  (for the deceased who lived in Knowsley or was registered
  with a GP in Knowsley)

It can be difficult enough dealing with bereavement without having to deal with the deceased’s property, possessions and personal matters. For this reason it could be advisable to contact a solicitor to help with such matters.

In touch with your feelings

By its very nature a death is distressing to everyone. The emotional and physical reactions that follow are usually intense; they usually confuse, frighten and shock. You may also be surprised by reactions that are unfamiliar and seemingly out of character.

As individuals, grieving occurs in different ways. Coping with this grief varies, and listed below are some helpful hints which may help you to cope.
Things to avoid

Try not to:

• Rush into having the funeral right away unless it is the practice of your culture
• Be persuaded to have an expensive funeral unless you really want it
• Enter into any financial or legal arrangements unless you fully understand them
• Make any major changes to your life too soon. Give yourself lots of time to think about changes you may wish to make, and discuss these plans with others
• Let others rush you into anything before you are ready, but remember you may not know that you are ready for something unless you give it a try
• Turn to drugs, smoking or alcohol to stop yourself feeling the pain of grief

Things to do

• Express your feelings as much as possible. Try to bring out into the open whatever you are feeling, as this is important in working through your grief
• Give yourself time to overcome your grief. There is no fixed time to get over bereavement
• Talk through what has happened with someone you trust
• Take good care of yourself, get lots of rest, eat well and give yourself lots of time to grieve
• Contact your doctor if you feel unwell
• Keep in touch with friends and family. Remember, sometimes people feel awkward and embarrassed about offering their help, so it may be up to you to ask should you require any help, even though this may be difficult for you
Contact the hospital Chaplaincy Services (Spiritual Care Department) for help and support (including those with no faith) on –

0151 430 1657

There are times when an answer phone may be in use (if so please leave a clear message and number and you will be contacted as soon as possible)

• Bereavement Counselling :- 01744 646173/4
  The Cancer Counselling and Day Care Unit St Helens Hospital

• Liverpool Bereavement Service 0151 236 3932

• St Helens Bereavement Service 01744 451793

• Compassionate Friends (for bereaved parents) 0345 123 2304

• The Alder Centre (for bereaved parents) 0151 252 5117

• Samaritans Liverpool 0151 708 8888

• CRUSE Bereavement Care 0844 477 9400

• Age UK Mid-Mersey (St. Helens, Halton, Warrington, Widnes & Runcorn) 01744 752644

• Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS) 0151 430 1144

Other support may be available from your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) office.
National organisations available to help you

The Bereavement Register

The Bereavement Register is a free service that helps put a stop to direct mail sent to people who have died. We all receive direct mail from companies offering us their products and services. In life this can be an irritation but when we die it can be extremely upsetting for the family we leave behind – a daily reminder of their loss.

If this direct mail falls into the hands of fraudsters, upset could so easily turn to anguish. Impersonation of the deceased is a growing problem in the UK and personal details contained within direct mail items can be used to make purchases or even open accounts. www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk

Cruse
National charity set up to offer free, confidential help to bereaved people.
0844 477 9400
http://www.cruse.org.uk

SANDS (Stillbirth and neonatal death charity)
28 Portland Place, London, W1B 1LY
020 7436 5881
www.uk-sands.org

Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

Provides benefits and services for a wide range of people.
0345 6060265
www.dwp.gov.uk
Directgov
A wide range of advice and services from the Government including:

• Claim Bereavement Payment, Bereavement Allowance or Widowed Parent’s Allowance (form BB1). You may be able to get a one-off payment or regular payments if you have been bereaved

• Funeral payments – get help covering funeral costs. If you are on a low income and need help to pay for a funeral you are arranging, you may be able to get a Funeral Payment from the Social Fund. You might have to repay some or all of it from the estate of the person who died

https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/bereavement

The Way Foundation (Widowed and Young) The Way Foundation provides a self-help social and support network for men and women widowed under the age of 50, and their children.

www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM) Help, through befriending, for people who have suffered the loss of a child, relative, or friend of any age, as a result of murder or manslaughter.

0151 207 6767 (answer phone when office is closed)

www.samm.org.uk
Roadpeace offers a practical and emotional support service to the bereaved and injured through road traffic accidents.

0845 4500 355
www.roadpeace.org
PO Box 2579
London
NW10 3PW