

What to do when somebody dies

Please accept our sincere condolences for your loss.

This leaflet is a guide to some of the things you will need to do over the coming days. It does not cover everything, as each person's situation is different, but should help you to start taking care of arrangements.

Verification

The person who has died will usually need to be seen by a clinician (usually a doctor, nurse or paramedic) who will carry out some simple physical checks to confirm that the death has occurred. This should be done within four hours of the death.

The clinician will give you a letter to give to your funeral director (undertaker).

Funeral director

You will need to call a funeral director to arrange for them to take the person who has died into their care.

If there is a Will, it may contain the person's wishes about their preferred funeral director.

There may be a funeral plan in place, which would cover the cost of the funeral. If you aren't sure about this, the Funeral Planning Authority are able to check with some providers. <https://funeralplanningauthority.co.uk/trace-a-plan/>

It is up to you to decide when you would like the undertaker to collect the body. There are no legal restrictions about this, but you should discuss it with your funeral director who will guide you.

You will usually be able to spend time with the person who has died at the funeral director's premises. There may be a charge for this.

You may wish to speak to several firms to find the right one for you. Don't be afraid to ask about costs – there are usually several options available, and you can choose whatever meets your needs.

Sharing the news

There will be people who need to be notified of the death soon after it has occurred, and others who can wait.

You will need to make sure that district nurses, carers, therapists etc are aware of the death, so that they can cancel planned visits.

As well as family and friends, you will need to notify the person's employer and landlord.

Medical Certification

You will need to contact your GP at the earliest opportunity to let them know that the death has occurred. If you wish to arrange a cremation rather than a burial, you should tell the person you speak to at the surgery.

The person who has died will need a medical certificate issued by a doctor. It will give the cause of death and is required to register the death.

The doctor certifying the death will send the medical certificate of cause of death electronically to the register office on your behalf.

Registration

You will need to contact the register office for Herefordshire on 01432 260565 to arrange for a call back from a registrar to register the death. This needs to be done within five days of the death. You can start organising the funeral before you have registered the death.

All of the details will now be taken over the telephone rather than being recorded by a visit to the register office and you will be asked to provide the following information:

- Date of death
- Place of death
- Full name and surname of deceased and maiden surname if applicable
- Date and place of birth of deceased
- Occupation
- Address
- Full name of spouse if applicable

The registrar will then send the necessary paperwork directly to the Funeral Director and advise you of a service called Tell Us Once – a process which will enable you to notify all of the government departments at once without having to provide a death certificate.

There is no fee for registering a death. Death certificates are available to purchase at a cost of £11 each. It is a good idea to ask for a few copies, as they will be needed to notify companies and organisations of the death (photocopies are not usually accepted). It is cheaper to buy the certificates at the time of registration.

Medication and Equipment

Any unused medication, including injectable medicines, need to be returned to a pharmacy.

Equipment arranged through the district nurses needs to be returned to NRS – call them on 0345 121 8111 to arrange collection.

If you have oxygen therapy equipment which is no longer required, please call Baywater Healthcare Helpline on 0800 373 580 to arrange removal.

Bereavement Support

Grief and loss are uniquely personal experiences. You may be surprised at some of the feelings you have, or you may feel overwhelmed.

If you feel like you are struggling to cope with your feelings, you should talk to your GP.

Organisations that can help are:

- Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 www.samaritans.org
- Cruse 0808 808 1677 www.cruse.org.uk

If you have been receiving care from St Michael's Hospice, a member of their team will call you during the coming weeks to offer you support in your bereavement.

Do.....

- Talk to other people about the person who has died, about your memories and your feelings.
- Look after yourself. Eat properly and try to get enough rest (even if you can't sleep).
- Give yourself time and permission to grieve.
- Seek help and support if you feel you need it.
- Tell people what you need.

Don't....

- Isolate yourself (unless you have to, eg due to illness).
- Keep your emotions bottled up.
- Think you are weak for needing help.
- Feel guilty if you are struggling to cope.
- Rely on drugs or alcohol – the relief will only be temporary.