



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice following a death in the Emergency Department

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

You have our deepest sympathy for your bereavement.

Although it may be difficult to make decisions at a time like this, some practical things need to be done. This booklet guides you through some arrangements that you need to make and the options you have.

Bereavement brings a mixture of feelings, emotions and physical symptoms. You may feel shocked and find it difficult to believe the death has happened. You may find it difficult to concentrate; you may feel fatigued or physically unwell. But looking after your health is important, so try to eat and drink normally even if you do not feel like it and try to rest even if you are having difficulty sleeping. You will experience a mixture of feelings such as grief, sadness, guilt, anger, panic or relief. Crying can be exhausting, but it can bring some relief. Putting on a brave face can be equally exhausting, but everyone manages their emotions in different ways. You may find comfort in sharing your feelings with a sympathetic listener and if you later feel you need more help, do consider contacting one of the support groups listed in this booklet.

Please take some time and read this booklet. If you still have any issues or questions, please contact the Emergency Department (ED) on **0118 322 5387** and speak to one of the ED Bereavement Team – (Patient Experience Lead: Laura Seymour). Alternatively, you can email **ED.BereavementTeam@royalberkshire.nhs.uk**.

You will receive a letter in a few weeks' time offering a follow-up appointment, so that if you have any new or unanswered questions about your loved one's illness and death, you can discuss them with one of the consultants and the Bereavement Care Team. It is also helpful for us to have feedback about your experience in ED. However, everyone has different needs in bereavement, and you may feel you do not need this service.

The Emergency Department Team

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Property

We will try to return the property of your relative or friend straight away. If you think there may be property in other parts of the hospital, please tell us and we can arrange for it all to be gathered together. Please also remind us if you think there are valuables in our safe. If you were not present when your friend or relative died our Bereavement Team will try to arrange the safe return of items.

Registering the death

What do I do now?

Please contact the Bereavement Office on 0118 322 7059 / 8066 after 9am the first working day following the death of your relative or friend. We ask you to call after 9am so the Bereavement Team can contact the doctors who cared for your relative / friend and up to date information is available when you call.

Outside of these hours, please leave a message and someone from the Bereavement Team will get back to you as soon as they can.

The Bereavement Team will:

- Ensure the completion of the cause of death certificate (this is a different document to the 'Death Certificate', which will be provided by the Registrar when you register the death).
- If required, they will ensure that cremation papers are completed for the funeral director.
- Advise you on how and when to register the death and give you a six-digit reference number.
- Advise you what to do next.
- Answer any questions you may have.

In some circumstances the death needs to be reported to the Coroner; see page 9.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/after-a-death – What to do after someone dies.

Involvement of the medical examiner's system

Medical examiners are being introduced to all NHS hospitals in England and Wales. They are independent doctors who ensure that the information on the cause of death certificate is correct and that any referrals that need to go to the Coroner are done quickly. They will scrutinise the clinical notes and meet with the treating doctor to discuss the deceased's care and the cause of death. You should expect a call from the medical examiner in the coming days; they will help you understand the cause of death shown on the certificate. You can ask them any questions you may have about the care of the deceased or their last illness.

Registering the death

Formal registration of the death is done over the phone. You will need to make an appointment for a phone call from the Registrar by telephoning 0118 937 3533 or online by visiting www.reading.gov.uk/deaths. It is not open at the weekend. Registrations by prior appointment only and you will need the six digit reference number given to you by the Bereavement Team.

Opening Hours:

Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri: 09:00am to 4:30pm

Wed: 9:30am to 4:30pm

Tel: 0118 937 3533

The Registration Appointment

What information do I need to provide to the Registrar?

- The date and place of death.
- The usual address of the deceased.
- The NHS number of the deceased.
- The full names, including middle names of the deceased and the maiden name if applicable, and any other name that the deceased has been known by.
- The date and place of birth of the deceased (town and county or country if abroad).
- The occupation of the deceased and the full name and occupation of their spouse, if widowed, married or in a civil partnership. If under 16 years of age, the full names and occupations of mother and father.
- Whether the deceased was receiving a pension from public services or the government
- The date of birth of the surviving widow or widower or civil partner if the deceased was married or in a civil partnership.
- There are questions related to the deceased's type of employment / industry that the Registrar may ask you. This is information collected for statistical purposes and is submitted anonymously to the Office for National Statistics.
- The name of your chosen funeral arranger – the registrar will send the necessary forms by email so that they can come and collect the deceased from the hospital mortuary.

If you cannot find or do not have any of the above information, please do not worry but you should still register the death as soon as possible.

There are regulations as to who can register the death – if you are not a relation by blood or marriage, you will need to register as being present at the death, or the person in charge of making funeral arrangements.

The Registrar will provide you with:

Certified copies of the Register Entry of Death for things like insurance, premium bonds, bank or building society accounts, private pensions and the solicitor. The copies are known as the “Death Certificate”. They cost £11 each and can be ordered from the registrar at registration or at any time after that from the Reading Borough Council website. It is a legal requirement for certificates to be returned to you by any of the companies or organisations that you send it to, so you may not need as many copies as you first think and you can always order more copies later if your requirements change.

‘Tell us Once’ service offered by the Register Office

When someone has died there are lots of things that need to be done at a time when you probably least feel like doing them. One of the things is contacting the government departments and local council services that need to be told.

Once the death has been registered, the Registrar will add the details of your relative or friend to the ‘Tell us Once’ database and give you the ‘Tell us Once’ capture number, which you can use to inform a range of government departments all in one go, by visiting www.gov.uk/tell-us-once or calling 0800 085 7308.

What if family or friends wish to see the deceased?

At this current time we are unable to offer you an opportunity to view the deceased in the Viewing Suite of the hospital mortuary.

However, once the funeral arranger of your choice have collected the deceased from the hospital mortuary, you should be able to make arrangements for viewing directly with them.

The Coroner

In some circumstances, the doctor has to refer the death to the Coroner before they are able to issue a cause of death certificate. The Coroner may have to arrange a post mortem examination if a cause of death has not been established by the doctors treating your relative or friend. The Coroner's Office will contact you directly to discuss the process if this is needed.

If the post mortem shows the death is due to natural causes, the Coroner will issue a notification to the Registrar which gives the cause of death so the death can be registered. If there has to be an inquest, an interim certificate of fact of death can be issued by the Coroner.

The Coroner's Office can be contacted on 0118 987 2300 Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays, 7.30am–3.30pm. Out of hours there is an answer phone for you to leave a message

Hospital post mortem examination

Sometimes, the hospital team caring for your relative or friend may ask you to permit to a post mortem examination. This can help the doctors to understand more clearly why the person died and it may provide information which helps in treating other patients in the future. If you do agree to this a meeting will be arranged to explain everything to you and for you to give signed consent. This should not delay the funeral by more than a few days and the cause of

death certificate will be issued so that you can register the death and continue with funeral arrangements.

The results of the hospital post mortem usually takes 6-8 weeks and then you can arrange to meet with the doctors to discuss the results.

A word about funerals

What should I do first?

Most families choose to use the services of a funeral director. If you have no experience in this it might be a good idea to ask relatives or friends for recommendations. The funeral director you choose should be a member of either the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) or the Society of Allied Independent Funeral Directors (SAIFD).

There are of course alternatives and the Natural Death Centre can offer advice as to your choices and help friends and relatives to arrange funerals with or without funeral directors. The Centre can also provide advice on “green” burials using sustainable coffins and natural burial grounds. They can be contacted at:

The Natural Death Centre, In The Hill House, Watley Lane, Twyford, Winchester S021 1QX Tel: 01962 712 690 www.naturaldeath.org.uk

What should I ask?

It is important to discuss how much it will cost with your funeral arranger. Cost will be affected by things like flowers, the type of service, materials for the coffin and transportation.

In the current circumstances, different funeral directors have different arrangements for viewings and not all are able to collect the deceased's property from the hospital. This may influence your choice. No matter what type of funeral you choose or what you spend, funeral directors have the responsibility to provide a high standard of care and consideration to you and to the deceased.

Financial assistance may be available to you and we would advise that you research this prior to contacting the funeral directors.

The deceased's bank will also be happy to talk to you about reimbursement for funeral expenses from your loved one's estate and may pay the undertakers directly.

What kind of funeral?

- **Cremation.** Did the deceased leave any instructions or wishes in this area? Are there religious considerations?
- **Direct cremation.** The deceased is cremated without a service or family present.
- **Burial.** If you feel the deceased would prefer a churchyard to a cemetery, you may find that many churchyards no longer have space available for burial. This may be discussed with your funeral director or minister / religious leader.
- **Religious service.** The funeral director will contact your religious leader if you have a particular place of worship, or if not will advise you and contact the appropriate religious leader, who will assist you with planning the actual funeral service.
- **Non-religious ceremony.** While those committed to a religious faith may want a minister or religious leader to officiate, many people do not. There are many independent funeral celebrants who will be happy to discuss your requirements with you. Your funeral arrangers or the local crematoria would be happy to put you in touch. Options available and your funeral director will be able to advise you.

The Spiritual Healthcare (Chaplaincy) Team

The Hospital Chaplains can offer you support and guidance. You can contact them on 0118 322 7105 Monday to Friday 9.00am–5.00pm.

Organ and tissue donation

Some people wish to help others after their death by becoming organ and/or tissue donors.

As well as donating heart, lungs, liver and kidneys for transplantation, donation of tissues can also dramatically improve the quality of life for recipients and even save lives. Tissues that can be donated include corneas, heart valves, skin, bone, tendons and cartilage. Tissue donation is almost always an option even if the circumstances of the death prevent organ donation. Tissues should be retrieved as soon as possible after death, ideally within 24 hours.

If you know or believe that your relative would have wanted to be a donor, or if you would like to make a decision on their behalf, the Emergency Department can contact the Tissue Donor Co-ordinator. These are specially trained nurses who will telephone you to ensure you have all the information to make an informed decision about donation. If you decide to proceed with donation, this call will then be recorded and will take about half an hour, covering:

- Your relative's medical, social and behavioural history
- Their lifestyle
- Donation options and process

You will have the opportunity to ask as many questions as you feel are necessary, and if you wish to proceed, they will take consent for donation over the phone.

They will also contact the patient's GP for similar information, to ensure that donated tissues are safe and to minimise the risk of disease transmission.

If the Coroner is involved, the Tissue Donor Co-ordinator will liaise with him and obtain his permission for donation.

Once everything is agreed, the Tissue Donor Co-ordinator will arrange for a specially trained team to come and retrieve the agreed tissues, either in the mortuary or at the funeral directors. Donation will not delay

the funeral. The donor is always treated with respect and dignity and the body is restored to normal appearance after donation.

Up to 40 people may benefit from such a tissue donation. After the transplant operations you can receive acknowledgement and a letter with some information about recipients.

Checklist of departments you can notify through Tell Us Once (no death certificate needed):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HMRC - Inland Revenue | <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Work & Pensions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle licensing (DVLA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electoral Roll | <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Pass and Blue Badge | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving Licence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Housing Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> Government/Public Service |

Organisations you may need to notify personally:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Probate Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsagent/Milkman etc |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank/Building Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit card companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitor | <input type="checkbox"/> TV Licensing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rental companies | <input type="checkbox"/> Household utilities (water, gas etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pension providers | <input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage providers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Mail deliveries | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union/Clubs/Associations |

What help and support is available?

You are always welcome to contact the Emergency Department Bereavement Team (Tel: 0118 322 5387) for help and advice. Support and guidance can come from family, friends, your GP, health/social worker, school and faith organisations. There is a list below of various specialist organisations that offer help, advice and support during this distressing and emotional time. Their support can include individual or family counselling, face-to-face counselling, telephone support, support groups meetings and information and advice.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This is an impartial, confidential and friendly service that can guide you through the different services provided by the Trust. They can be contacted on 0118 322 8338 Monday – Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) from 9.00am–4.30pm or email: PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Bereavement support groups

Cruse Bereavement Care

West Berkshire Branch Tel: 01635 523 573

Thames Valley Berkshire Area Tel: 01344 411 919

National helpline Tel: 0808 808 1677

Young People's helpline Tel: 0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk

www.hopeagain.org.uk (Cruse website for young people). Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Cruse offers face to face, telephone, email and website support.

Child Bereavement UK Tel: 0800 0288840

www.childbereavementuk.org/

Information for bereaved children and families

Child Death Helpline Tel: 0800 282 986 / 0808 800 6019

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Helpline for anyone affected by the death of a child of any age from pre-birth to adult, however recently or long ago.

Daisy's Dream Tel: 0118 934 2604 www.daisysdream.org.uk

Email: info@daisysdream.org.uk

For children up to the age of 19 years who have had a bereavement.

The Lullaby Trust Tel: 0808 802 6868 (free helpline)

www.lullabytrust.org.uk Email: support@lullabytrust.org.uk

Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths. Offers telephone, e-mail and befriending service.

Institute of Family Therapy

Tel: 020 7391 9150 www.ift.org.uk

Counselling for couples and families dealing with a variety of issues including bereavement.

Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project

Tel: 020 7833 1674 www.londonfriend.org.uk

Offers support and advice to lesbians and gay men bereaved by death of a same sex life partner.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Tel: 0118 322 8700 / 0808 8010 388 www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Meningitis Now www.meningitisnow.org

24-hour nurse led helpline for bereavement support.

National Bereavement Services

Helpline Tel: 0800 0246121 www.nationalbereavementservice.org

National directory of bereavement and loss services.

Roadpeace Tel: 0845 4500 355 www.roadpeace.org

E-mail: info@roadpeace.org

National charity for road traffic victims and bereaved families, giving practical and emotional support.

Samaritans Tel: 116 123 www.samaritans.org.uk

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org.uk

SAMM Support After Murder and Manslaughter

Tel. 0845 872 3440 www.samm.org.uk

E-mail: info@samm.org.uk

A self-help group for those bereaved by murder or manslaughter.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society

Tel: 0808 164 3332 www.uk-sands.org

E-mail: helpline@uk-sands.org

Sudden Death www.suddendeath.org

For friends and relatives of people who die suddenly.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide Tel: 0300 111 5065

www.uk-sobs.org.uk

E-mail: sobs.support@hotmail.com

Terence Higgins Trust Tel: 0808 802 1221 (advice line)

www.tht.org.uk info@tht.org.uk

Charity providing practical support, help, counselling and advice for anyone concerned about HIV or AIDS.

The Compassionate Friends Tel: 0345 123 2304

www.tcf.org.uk E-mail: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Support for parents, grandparents and siblings after the death of a child of any age and from any cause. There are some local groups.

Winston's Wish Tel: 0808 802 0021 (helpline)

www.winstonswish.org Tel. 01242 515 157 (general enquiries)

E-mail: info@winstonswish.org (general)

E-mail: ask@winstonswish.org (support)

Individual and group counselling and support as well as information and advice for bereaved children and their families.

Other useful telephone numbers

Age UK Free Helpline

Tel: 0800 6781602

www.ageuk.org.uk

Reading: 0118 950 2480

info@ageukreading.org.uk or contact@ageuk.org.uk

Have factsheets and advice regarding funerals benefits etc.

Citizens Advice Bureau (Reading)

Tel: 03444 111 306

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

www.rcab.org.uk

Reading Borough Council

www.reading.gov.uk

Reading Services Guide.

Reading Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Tel: 0118 937 3533

SSAFA Forces Help

Tel: 0800 731 4880/ 0118 957 3393

www.ssafa.org.uk/berkshire

A national charity providing practical, financial and emotional help for serving and ex-service men, women and their families.

NHS Organ Donation

Tel: 0300 123 23 23

www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Intensive Care Society

www.ics.ac.uk

Patients and relatives section.

Reading Coroner's Office

Tel: 0118 937 2300

www.reading.gov.uk/coroners

E-mail: Coroner@reading.gov.uk

Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading RG1 1QH

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 0118 322 8066/7059 (Bereavement)

E-mail: rbft.bereavementoffice@nhs.net

Hospital Bereavement Office.

Notes

Notes

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Emergency Department, September 2021

Next review due: September 2023