



**Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust**

Bereavement Support

Information and guidance to help
you following a bereavement

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

Useful contact details:

Bereavement Office and Medical Examiner Office

Tel: 0118 322 8066 / 7059

Email: rbft.bereavementoffice@nhs.net

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am-4pm (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

The Mortuary Team

Tel: 0118 322 7743

Email: rbft.mortuaryrbh@nhs.net

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8am-4pm (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

Switchboard

Tel: 0118 322 5111

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Tel: 0118 322 8338

Email: PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9am-4pm (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

Introduction – This booklet will provide you with the information and guidance you will need following your bereavement.

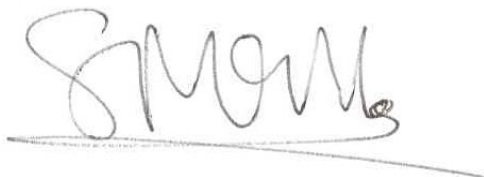
Our condolences

Firstly, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to you and your family at this difficult time.

This booklet aims to help and guide you with the formalities of dealing with your loss.

If there is anything you would like to discuss please contact the Bereavement Team who will be happy to offer you support and assistance.

Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S McManus', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Steve McManus

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1. The Bereavement Team and how we can help

We provide advice, support, and assistance to bereaved relatives, friends and careers following the death of a patient at the hospital. In order for you to legally register the death a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) must be complete by a Qualified Attending Practitioner (QAP). This is a doctor who attended during the last illness/admission and is qualified to complete the MCCD.

The Bereavement Team will ensure that the practical arrangements are complete in a timely, professional, and caring manner. We can also provide advice on the following:

- The next steps of the process
- Any additional paperwork required such as cremation papers
- Viewings
- Collection of property and valuables
- How to register the death
- Making funeral arrangements
- The Medical Examiner Service
- Tissue donation
- The Coroners' Service

2. What to do next

Please contact the Bereavement Team the first working day following the death of your relative or friend.

The Bereavement Team

Telephone 0118 322 7059 / 8066

Opening hours Monday to Friday 9am-4pm (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

When you call, we will talk you through the next steps of the process. We will ask if you are planning to have a burial or cremation funeral

service and which funeral director you may be appointing. This is so we can arrange completion of the relevant forms.

If you are planning on taking your deceased relative or friend out of the country, please let us know and we can advise you off any additional paperwork required.

You can if you wish make preliminary arrangements with a funeral director but we recommend that you do not book a date until the death has been registered. The funeral directors can advise you further on this. If you intend to arrange and conduct your own funeral arrangements, please contact the Mortuary Team, who can advise you further on how to do this.

3. The Medical Examiner Service

The Medical Examiner (ME) is an independent senior Doctor. Their role is to scrutinise the medical records, speak to the treating Doctor, and together agree on the wording for the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD). They will also ask if you have any concerns about care.

Within a few days of the death, you will be contacted by telephone by a ME or a Medical Examiner Officer (MEO).

During the telephone conversation, the ME or MEO will explain to you what the cause of death will be recorded as, or if a Coroner referral is required. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the cause of death or about any aspect of the care received during their admission.

If you have concerns about care, the ME or MEO will be able to advise on the best way to raise those and may request the Trust to undertake a case review. If a case review is requested, the mortality team will contact you and give you more information about this process and how you will receive feedback. Sometimes a case review is undertaken where the ME feels there might be important learning. Should this be the case the mortality team may wish to

share the outcome with you as next of kin; this might be a number of months after the death of your relative or friend. You may not wish to be contacted and please let us know if this is the case. Following the call, the ME or MEO will release the completed MCCD and any other legal documents to the Bereavement Team.

4. Registering the death

After the call with the Medical Examiner's Office the Bereavement Team will send the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) to the Reading Register Office. It is possible to register outside the county by declaration, but this could cause a delay. The Bereavement Team can explain the process if required.

The Bereavement Team will then call the documented next of kin (NoK) as provided to them by the ward and issue a six digit reference code. Please quote this reference code when making your appointment with the Registrar, as this confirms to them that the Medical Examiner has issued the MCCD. This can be done over the telephone or via the website.

Registering a death is a legal requirement and should normally be done within five days, unless there has been involvement of the Coroner.

Reading Register Office

Civic Offices, Bridge Street,

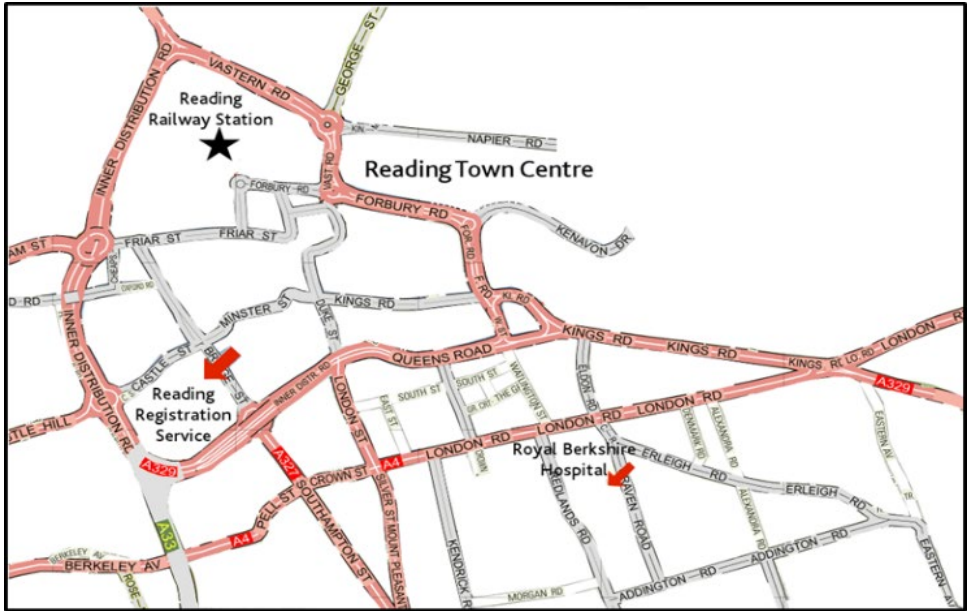
Reading RG1 2LU

Telephone 0118 937 3533

Website <https://www.reading.gov.uk/life-events/deaths/>

9am-5pm Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

Location of the Reading Register Office



Please note that there is no parking at the Civic Offices. The nearest car parks are at the Oracle, Holy Brook or Broad Street Mall.

Who can register?

A death can be registered by a relative, by someone who was present at the death, occupier or manager of the premises where they died, or by the person responsible for making the funeral arrangements.

During the appointment

The appointment with the registrar takes approximately 30 minutes.

During the appointment the registrar will ask you:

- The deceased's full name and any previous names
- Last occupation
- Last address
- Date and place of birth

- Date and place of death
- Full name, occupation and date of birth of their spouse or partner, if they were married or in a Civil Partnership
- Whether they received a pension or any type of allowance from public funds
- Your (the 'informant's') name and address.

The Registrar can help with the official '**Tell us Once**' service that alerts other government agencies of the death at the same time. The Registrar can provide you with the unique reference number and details of the service.

The Registrar will produce a certificate of burial or cremation ('**green form**'). This is for your appointed funeral director. It confirms that the registration has taken place and the funeral arrangements can proceed.

The registrar will also provide you with a notification of registration of death form (BD8) for use in connection with Department of Work and Pension benefits.

You will need to get copies of the death certificate for several official purposes. For example, private pensions, insurances, premium bonds and bank accounts.

There is a fee for providing copies of the death certificate, the Registrar can advise you of the current charges.

Note

There is a charge for any amendments / corrections to registration entries. Please check very carefully before signing to say that you agree with the death certificate details before it goes to print.

5. The Coroner

Under certain circumstances it is a legal requirement to inform the Coroner of a person's death. If this is thought to be necessary, the Medical Examiner's Office will talk you through the process.

If there is a need to contact the Coroner, the Coroner will decide if the treating doctor can issue the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) or whether further investigations are needed such as a post-mortem and or inquest. If the Coroner requests a post-mortem, your permission is not required.

If a post-mortem shows that the death was due to natural causes, the Coroner will issue a notification to the Registrar, known as the Pink Form (Form 100B), which gives the cause of death so that the death can be registered. If the deceased is to be cremated, the Coroner will give your chosen funeral director a certificate for cremation. If there is to be an inquest, an interim certificate of fact of death can be issued by the Coroner.

If the Coroner decides that the Doctor can issue the MCCD the Bereavement Team will contact you and the registration process will resume as detailed on page 6.

The Coroner's Office can be contacted for further advice and information if needed.

Berkshire Coroners' Office

Telephone 0118 937 2300

Email coroner@reading.gov.uk

Website <https://www.reading.gov.uk/life-events/>

8am-4pm Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays)

6. Hospital consent post-mortem

The hospital doctor issuing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) may ask you to consider a hospital post-mortem. They will discuss this with you and explain the reasons why. These are sometimes important for further learning about the cause of death and improving treatments. You will be under no pressure to consent. It will not delay the registration process. The doctor can issue the MCCD and you can register in the usual way as detailed on page 6.

If you do agree to a hospital post-mortem, you would be invited to a meeting which involves the completion of a consent form. A doctor from the treating team, a trained consent taker and a member of the mortuary or Bereavement Team will be present to guide you through the process. You have 24-hours after signing the consent form to change your decision. Please call the Bereavement Office as soon as possible during this time if you wish to withdraw consent.

The results of a hospital post-mortem usually take around 6-8 weeks and you can arrange to meet with the treating doctors to discuss the results.

7. Tissue donation

Every year, hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated organs. However, what you may not realise is that donated tissue such as skin, bone, tendon, corneas, and heart valves, also dramatically improves the quality of life for recipients and can even save lives.

Most people can be considered for tissue donation after death but there is only a short period of time for this to happen. All adults in England will be considered to have agreed to be a donor when they die unless they have opted out of the system. Donation will not delay the funeral arrangements.

The ward can arrange for a specialist nurse from the national referral centre at NHS Blood and Transplant to contact you by phone to discuss tissue donation and answer any questions you may have.

NHS Blood and Transplant
Telephone 0800 432 0559

8. Donation to medical science

Some people have previously decided during life for their body to be donated to medical science for anatomical examination, education, training, and research. This must be a written consent form direct from the organisation, signed during life or specific wording in a living will. If this is the case you should contact the relevant organisation and also inform the Bereavement Team.

The closest centre to the Royal Berkshire Hospital is John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. There are restrictions to body donation, so please speak to the centre directly for further information.

John Radcliffe Hospital
Telephone 01865 272181
Bequest Office
Department of Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics
University of Oxford
Sherrington Building, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PT
Opening hours 8.30am-2.00pm Monday-Friday
Please note there is a 5-day period between the day of a death and being able to accept.
They would be unable to accept during Christmas and Easter periods as the department is closed.

9. Arranging to see your friend or relative

The funeral director will arrange to collect your deceased relative or friend from the hospital once the death has been registered. You can make arrangements with your appointed funeral director to see your relative or friend at the funeral home.

If you wish to see your relative or friend while they are still at the hospital the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death must be issued to ensure there is no Coroner involvement. Authorisation must also be given from the primary documented next of kin as documented by the ward. When booking a viewing appointment, the Bereavement Officer will ask you to confirm your deceased relatives' details such as full name, date of birth, date of death, name of hospital ward, address, and NHS number (if known). We need this information to pass on to the mortuary staff. You will be asked to confirm three of these identifiers on arrival at your appointment and to sign paperwork to this effect. **Please bring a form of ID with you, such as a driving licence or passport.**

The Bereavement Team can advise you further on this.

The Bereavement Team

Telephone 0118 322 7059 / 8066

By appointment only 9am-3pm Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays) 30-minute appointments

10. Collecting property and valuables

If you are with your relative or friend in the hospital when they die please ask the nursing staff to return all property and valuables to you before you leave.

If you are not present the ward staff will send any property to the Bereavement Office. Any valuable items may remain on the ward in a secure safe.

The Bereavement Team can advise you on what items have been

sent to the Bereavement Office and if any items remain on the ward. Any valuables that have been kept on the ward for safekeeping will remain on the ward for you to collect.

Most funeral directors will collect property and valuables when they collect your relative or friend from the hospital and return them to you. Alternatively, the Bereavement Team will advise you on how items can be returned to you, this will be by appointment only

Please note after 28 days, the Trust will dispose of any uncollected property and valuables in line with departmental policy.

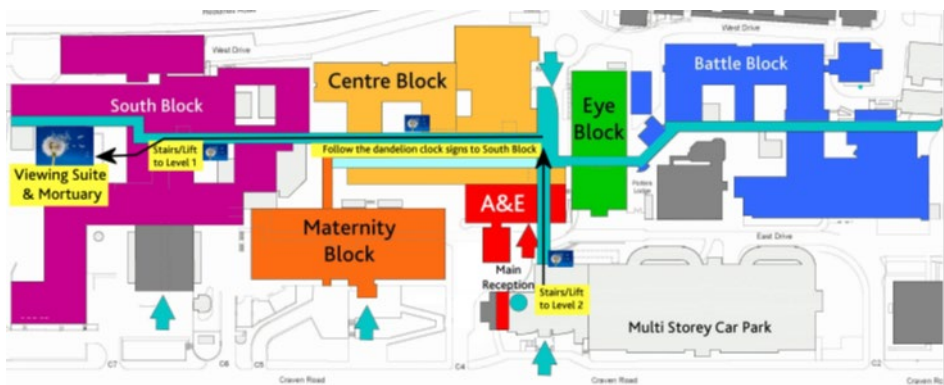
11. How to find us

The Bereavement Office and Medical Examiner's Office are located on Level 1 in South Block. Follow the dandelion signs from the Craven Road main entrance to the office. The offices are located next to the Viewing Suite and Mortuary, as indicated.



Main reception staff will be more than happy to show you the signs to look for if you need further assistance.

Visits to the office are by appointment only. Please contact the Bereavement Office to arrange a visit if required. You will be asked to show a form of identification e.g., passport or driving licence on arrival.



12. Royal Berks Charity

The Royal Berks Charity supports the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust across all sites. The charity's mission is to provide vital funds that enhance the care and experience of patients and staff. You may wish to make a donation in memory of your loved one. Giving in memory of someone special is a meaningful way to pay tribute to a loved one – honouring their life and helping others at the same time and the Royal Berks Charity is always incredibly touched and grateful to receive these donations.

For more information about the different ways to remember your loved ones, including creating a Timeless Tribute or leaving a dedication on our Memory Wall, please get in touch with us or visit our website.

Royal Berks Charity

Registered Charity No. 1052720

Telephone 0118 322 8860

Email: charity@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Website: <https://www/royalberkscharity.co.uk>

13. Parking at Royal Berkshire Hospital

Parking at the hospital is often difficult with limited spaces. There are some pay and display parking bays (parking restrictions apply) in streets adjacent to the hospital if you are unable to find one in the hospital car park.

Due to parking restrictions, please allow plenty of time to arrive if you have a pre-arranged appointment.

If required, the Bereavement Team can provide you with a car parking permit, which can be obtained during your appointment.

14. The Spiritual Healthcare Team (Chaplaincy)

The Trust has a team of experienced chaplains drawn from a range of religious and belief traditions. They are available to offer support and guidance during this time.

The chaplains hold an annual memorial service at the Royal Berkshire Hospital chapel. If you would like more information please contact the chaplains directly.

Hospital Spiritual Healthcare Team (Chaplaincy)

Telephone 0118 322 7105

8am-4pm Monday to Friday

Out of hours – please ask ward staff or ward receptionist to page the on call chaplain or call switchboard on 0118 322 5111

15. Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS is a service who can liaise with wards and departments to provide an answer to your enquiry.

PALS aim to provide a reply to your enquiry within five working days. Sometimes it may take longer than this, because they simply need more time to find the answer or because the enquiry is more complex. You can contact PALS using the details below:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Telephone 0118 322 8338

Email: PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Main Entrance, Level 2

Royal Berkshire Hospital, Craven Road, Reading RG1 5AN

Opening Hours: 9am-4pm Monday to Friday

16. Making a formal complaint

You may decide that PALS is unable to help you on this occasion and that you would like to raise a formal complaint. Or PALS may suggest that your enquiry would be better addressed as a formal complaint. PALS is happy to discuss this further with you as detailed on page 15.

To raise a formal complaint, you will need to put the concerns in writing (if you haven't already done so via PALS).

Complaints Team

Telephone 0118 322 8338

Email: complaints@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Main Entrance, Level 2, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Craven Road, Reading, RG1 5AN

The Complaints Team will be in contact with you directly to acknowledge your complaint and explain what happens next. The Complaints Team aim to investigate formal complaints within 25 working days and you will receive a response to your complaint, either by letter or in a meeting.

17. Ongoing help and support

Alongside the Bereavement Team, your family, friends or general practitioner (GP), you may feel that you need some extra support. You may wish to contact other services and organisations such as those listed below for ongoing help and support following your bereavement.

Child Bereavement UK

Tel: 0800 02 888 40

Website: <https://childbereavementuk.org/>

Information for bereaved children and families.

Compassionate Friends

Tel: 0345 123 2304

Email: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Website: <https://www.tcf.org.uk/>

Helpline run by bereaved parents and their families.

Cruse Bereavement Support

Tel: 0808 808 1677 (National)

Tel: 0134 441 1919 (Berkshire & Borders)

Website: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Bereavement support, information and campaigning for all.

Daisy's Dream

Tel: 0118 934 2604

Website: www.daisysdream.org.uk

The charity supporting children through bereavement.

SOBS

Tel: 0300 111 5065

Website: <https://uksobs.org/>

Helpline for survivors of bereavement by suicide.

Sudden Death Association

Tel: 0118 988 9797

Website: www.suddendeath.org

Organisation for relatives and friends of people who have died suddenly.

Winston's wish

Tel: 0808 020 021

Website: <https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Supports bereaved children, young people, their families and the professionals who support them.

WAY Widowed and young

Website: www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

For people aged 50 or under when their partner died.

The Loss Foundation

Website: <https://thelossfoundation.org/>

Free bereavement support for loss to cancer or Covid-19.

Sue Ryder – Palliative, neurological and bereavement support

Website: <https://www.sueryder.org/online-bereavement-counselling>

Online bereavement counselling support.

4Louis – Miscarriage, stillbirth and child loss support

Website: [https://4louis.co.uk /](https://4louis.co.uk/)

Tel: 01915 144473

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

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

Lisa Jane Richardson, Lead Medical Examiner Office

Reviewed: January 2023

Next review due: January 2025