



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Bereavement Support



Bereavement Support

Information and guidance following your bereavement

We wish to offer our sincere sympathy to you,
your family and friends in your bereavement.

Useful contact details

Switchboard 0118 322 5111

Bereavement Team 0118 322 7059 / 8066

Email: rbft.bereavementoffice@nhs.net

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm (excluding
public holidays)

Patient Relations 0118 322 8338

Email: talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm (excluding
public holidays)

Ward name: _____

Ward number: _____


Named nurse: _____

A personal message from our Chief Executive, Steve McManus

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SMcManus', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Foreword

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

We hope that its contents will help you.

It has been divided into five parts:

1. Part one gives you immediate things that you need to know and how the Bereavement Team will assist you.
2. Part two will tell you about the role of the Coroner's office and how they may assist you.
3. Part three will give you information regarding the Reading Register Office and the registration process.
4. Part four will be regarding body and tissue donation.
5. Part five is a list of practical and useful advice numbers.

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The Bereavement Team and how we can help

Bereavement is a time of grief and sorrow – this is a natural and normal part of your loss. It is also unfortunately a period during which a number of matters must be dealt with. All of this can prove bewildering and stressful and we hope that this booklet along with the Bereavement Team's support will assist you during this difficult time.

Please contact the Bereavement Team 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 to enable the Bereavement Team to contact the doctors who cared for your relative/friend so updated information is available when you call.

Please leave a message outside of these hours so if the Bereavement Team is unable to answer your call, someone will get back to you at the next available opportunity.

The Bereavement Team will:

- Ensure the completion of the cause of death certificate and cremation papers (if cremation papers are required).
- Advise you on how and when to register the death.
- Advise you what to do next.
- Arrange a viewing of the deceased (by appointment only).
- Be happy to answer any questions you may have.
- Advise when and where you can collect the cause of death certificate and any belongings or valuables.

Note

If you are in the hospital when your relative or friend dies, the nursing staff will return all belongings to you before you leave the hospital. In the event that you are not in hospital when your relative or friend dies, the ward can arrange for the belongings to be sent to the Bereavement office for you to collect within 28 days. After that time, the Trust will dispose of any uncollected belongings.

Any valuables that have been kept by the ward for safekeeping will remain on the ward for you to collect at a time you are ready to collect it.

In most cases, the hospital will give you a medical certificate stating the

cause of death. We will endeavor to get this done within 48 working hours, although this may take longer during busy periods, after weekends and bank holidays and following long public holidays.

If the death has to be referred to the Coroner for further investigation there may be a delay in completing the certificate. However, we do understand the importance of these certificates and the Bereavement Team will do all we can to ensure these are completed in a timely manner.

Your relative/friend will remain in the care of the Mortuary until they have had their death registered at the Register Office (see page 12).

What you need to do

You will be unable to make an appointment to register the death until the medical cause of death certificate has been completed and you have been given a unique six digit reference number by the Bereavement office. This number lets the Register Office know that the death certificate has been completed.

You can contact your chosen funeral directors while you are waiting for completion of the certificate but we advise that you do not set a date for the funeral until you know the certificate has been completed.

Please do not come to the hospital until you have been told by the Bereavement Team that the certificate is ready for collection.

The Bereavement Team will need to know the following:

- If the deceased is to be buried or cremated so the relevant paperwork can be organized.
- Whether the deceased underwent any surgery or sustained any fractures or injuries following a fall in the last six months.
- Which funeral director you will be instructing to care for your relative/friend.
- If you intend to arrange and conduct your own funeral arrangements. (The Bereavement Team can advise if you have any questions about this.)
- If the deceased is to be taken out of the country.

Involvement of the medical examiner's system

Medical examiners are being introduced to all NHS hospitals in England and Wales. The medical examiner is an independent doctor working at the hospital. They are there to ensure that the information that is written on the medical certificate of cause of death is correct and that any referrals that need to go to the Coroner are done so in a timely fashion to avoid any delays. 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 that has been written on the medical certificate of cause of death. You will then have a chance to ask the medical examiner any questions you may have regarding the care of the deceased or their last illness.

The medical examiner may not be able to answer all questions but will give you all the information needed to be able to do so.

Once the cause of death certificate is completed

- Once the cause of death certificate has been completed a member of the Bereavement Team will contact the nominated 'next of kin' supplied to us by the ward.
- You will then be given your unique six digit reference number that you need to make an appointment with the Register Office.
- You will also be told of any property to be collected.
- Collection of certificates/property is by **appointment only**. **Please do not attend the office until a date and time has been arranged for collection.**
- Collection times will be Monday-Friday, excluding public holidays. Morning appointments are between 9am-1pm and afternoon appointments between 2pm-3pm. **Please note we are closed between 1pm-2pm.** Each appointment is only 15 minutes long so please leave enough time for travelling and to arrive for your appointment on time.
- The next of kin can nominate someone else to collect the certificate if they are unable to attend, but this must be pre-arranged when the appointment is made with the Bereavement Team.

- Please bring some identification eg passport, driving licence or utility bill.

Viewing your relative/friend at the viewing suite

You can view your relative/friend only once the cause of death certificate has been issued. This is to make sure that there will be no Coronial involvement (see Coroner section for Coroner viewings).

Access to our Viewing Suite is by **prior appointment only** with the Bereavement office who can be contacted on 0118 322 8066 / 7059 appointment times are between 9am and 3pm Monday-Friday, excluding public holidays, for 30 minutes. Please leave enough time to arrive on time for your appointment.

Parking at the hospital

Parking at the hospital is often difficult with limited spaces.

There are some pay and display parking bays (parking restrictions apply) surrounding the Trust if you are unable to find one in the hospital car park.

Due to parking restrictions please allow plenty of time to arrive at your appointment for your viewing of your relative/friend or for certificate collection.

A car parking permit if needed can be obtained from the Bereavement office once you have viewed your relative/friend or collected the medical death certificate.

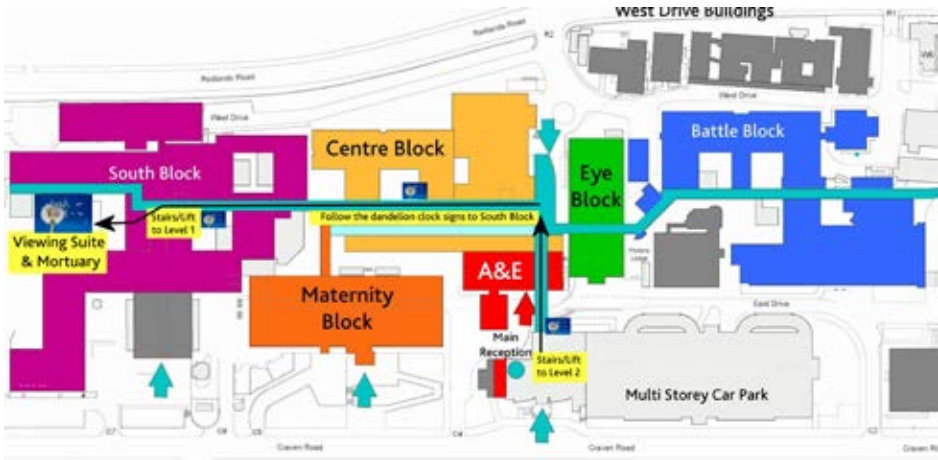
Location of the Bereavement office and Viewing Suite

The Bereavement office and Viewing Suite are located in South Block, on level one.

Signs can be found from Craven Road main entrance by following the dandelion clock picture. If you are uncertain, the main reception staff will be more than happy to show the signs to look for.



Location map



Hospital post mortem examination

Sometimes, the hospital team caring for your relative/friend may ask for your permission to carry out a post mortem examination. This can help doctors to understand more clearly the reason why the person died and it may help in the treatment of other patients in the future. You will be under no pressure to agree to a hospital post mortem. If you do agree to a hospital post mortem a meeting will be arranged for you to give signed consent. The meeting will include a doctor from the team caring for your relative/friend, a consent taker and a member of the Mortuary or Bereavement Team. A hospital post mortem should not delay funeral arrangements by more than a few days. The hospital will issue a cause of death certificate prior to the post mortem so you can register the death in the usual manner and you can continue with funeral arrangements.

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. Please speak to the treating doctor when you come in to sign the consent for the hospital post mortem.

A hospital post mortem will not change the original cause of death given but will further investigate the cause of death, or treatment.

Please ask for further information or advice from the Bereavement Team if you would like more information.

The Spiritual Healthcare (Chaplaincy) Team

Trust chaplains are available to offer you support and guidance in your grief. You can contact the chaplains directly on: 0118 322 7105 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, or out of working hours you can ask a member of ward staff, the ward receptionist or the switchboard to page them.

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

Checklist of people you will need to notify:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <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"/> Department of Work & Pensions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inland Revenue | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitor | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle licensing (DVLA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Tax Office | <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"/> Social Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Council Housing Office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Mail deliveries | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union Clubs/Associations |

Checklist of items that may need to be returned/cancelled:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pension/benefits book | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving license |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport | <input type="checkbox"/> Library books/tickets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Season tickets | <input type="checkbox"/> National Insurance card |

The Coroner

There are certain circumstances when the doctor has to refer the death to the Coroner before they are able to write the certificate. This may cause a delay in issuing the certificate. The Coroner may have to arrange a Coroner's post mortem examination if a cause of death has not been established by the treating doctor. The Bereavement Team will arrange for a Coroner's officer to telephone you to discuss this process in more detail. You will be told that this is happening; any questions regarding post mortems please contact the Coroner's office directly.

If the post mortem shows that 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. The Coroner will give you further information if this decision is made.

The Coroner's office can be contacted on 0118 937 2300, Monday-Friday 7.30am-3.30pm, excluding public holidays. Out of working hours or if the Coroner's office is unable to take your call, please leave a short message regarding who you are calling about and a contact number and someone will get back to you.

For Coroner post mortem results please contact the Coroner's office.

[Viewing your relative/friend when there is Coronial involvement](#)

If the Coroner has been involved and the death is being investigated or a post mortem is due to take place, you will be unable to arrange a viewing through the Bereavement office. Please call the Coroner's office who will arrange this for you.

Viewings will take place **by appointment only** between 9am-1pm and 2pm-3pm Monday-Friday, excluding public holidays. Each appointment is 30 minutes long so please leave enough time to arrive on time for your appointment.

[Registering the death](#)

Once you have the medical certificate of cause of death you will have to register the death at the Register Office. The death must be registered within five working days (not including weekends and public holidays) at the Register Office for the area in which the death occurred. You will need to make a prior **appointment** (by phone or online) quoting your six digit reference number which the Bereavement office will have given you.

Please do not try and make an appointment until the Bereavement Team has informed you that the certificate is ready for collection.

If you are unable to get to the Register Office in this area, you can go to a Registrar in your home town in England or Wales but they will not register the death. The details will be sent on to the Registrar for the area in which your relative/friend passed away and the certificate will be sent to you by post a few days later. This will cause some delays in arranging the funeral.

[Who can register a death?](#)

A death can be registered by a relative of the deceased, by someone who was present at the death, or by the person responsible for making the funeral arrangements (not the funeral director).

What information the Register Office will need regarding your relative/friend

The person who goes to the Register Office with the medical cause of death certificate or at the direction of the Coroner's officer must, whenever possible, be able to give the following particulars:

- The date and place (ward name and hospital name) of death and the deceased's usual address.
- The full names and surname (spelt correctly) of the deceased. You will also need to provide the maiden name if the deceased was a woman who had married.
- The date and place of birth (town or county, or, if from abroad, the country) of the deceased.
- The occupation of the deceased and the full names and occupation of her husband or his wife if the deceased was widowed or married.
- Whether the deceased was receiving a pension or any type of allowance from public funds.
- The date of birth of the surviving widow or widower if the deceased was married.
- The date of admission to hospital.
- Medical card / NHS number.

If you cannot find any of the above information or it is not available, you should still go to the appointment at the Register Office.

Note

There is a charge for any amendments/corrections to registration entries (birth, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships). Please check **very** carefully before signing to say that you agree with the death certificate details before it goes to print.

What the Registrar will give you

- A green certificate (form 9) which you should give to your nominated funeral director as soon as possible (there is no charge for this). Your relative/friend cannot be released from the hospital into the funeral director's care until they have this form. (If there has been Coroner involvement then a green certificate may not be necessary.)
- A notification or registration of death form (BD8) for use in connection with Department of Work and Pension benefits (this is also free).
- Certified copies of the entry of death. These are also known as death certificates and are most often needed for insurance, premium bonds, bank account and private pension purposes. They will only usually accept originals and not photocopies so please check how many you may need before arriving at your appointment.
- There is a fee to be paid for each certificate; please contact the Register Office for up-to-date pricing. You can pay by debit or credit card. If you wish to pay by cash, please visit the cash till in reception before your appointment.

'Tell us once' services 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 these things is contacting the government departments and local council services that need to be told.

How 'Tell us once' works

Once the death has been registered, the Registrar will add the details of your relative/friend on the 'Tell us once' database. The Registrar will then give you the 'Tell us once' service number which you can use to inform a range of government departments of the death, all in one go.

Once you have your 'Tell us once' service number please either visit www.gov.uk/tell-us-once or call 0800 085 7308.

For more information on 'Tell us once' refer to the leaflet that you will receive on collecting the medical death certificate from us.

[Contact details and address for the Reading Register Office](#)

Reading Registration Service (Registration of births, marriages and deaths)

Civic Offices

Bridge Street

Reading RG1 2LU

Tel: 0118 937 3533 or visit www.reading.gov.uk/deaths to book appointment. Registrations by prior appointment only and once the six digit reference number has been given to you by the Bereavement Team.

Opening hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Wed: 9.30am to 4.30pm



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.

Tissue and body donation

Every year hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated organs such as hearts and kidneys. However, what you may not realise is that donated tissue such as skin, bone, tendon, eyes and heart valves, also dramatically improves the quality of life for recipients and can even save lives. As many as 50 other people can be helped by one person's gift of tissue donation.

If you know or believe that your relative would have wanted to be a donor, or would like to make a decision about donation on behalf of your relative, The ward can arrange for a specialist nurse from the national referral center at NHS Blood and Transplant to contact you by phone to discuss tissue donation and answer any questions you may have. This is done to ensure you have all the information you need to make an informed decision about tissue donation.

Donation will not delay funeral arrangements. Tissue donation is entirely voluntary and dependent on the generosity of patients and their families. If you would like to receive more information about tissue donation, please ask one of the ward nurses to contact the national referral center on 0800 432 0559 to arrange for a specialist nurse to contact you.

Tissue does need to be retrieved within a certain time frame so please contact the referral center as soon as possible. If the deceased person wished to donate their entire body to medical science please contact the John Radcliffe Hospital on 01865 272169. **(Please note there are restrictions to tissue and body donations; please speak to the tissue team or contact the John Radcliffe Hospital for further information.)**

For body donation to take place a living will should have been signed by the donor themselves for this to be able to take place, and not a next of kin of the donor after death.

Organisations and departments who can help and support you

Alongside your family and friends, your GP and health/social worker, schools and faith organisations can all offer you the support and comfort you may need at this time, but you may feel that you need either that bit extra support from another organisation. Below is a list of people you may be able to get that help and support from.

Patient Relations Team

Patient Relations is an impartial, confidential and friendly service that can guide you through the different services at the Trust. Patient Relations can help you with on-the-spot advice and support and can give you practical information at a time when you are feeling confused and anxious. They can be contacted on: 0118 322 8338 Monday-Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am-4.30pm or ask a member of the ward staff or the switchboard to contact them for you.

If you have any questions regarding the care or death of your relative/friend, a meeting can be arranged with the consultant responsible for your relative's/friend's care. In the first instance you can contact them via the clinical admin team (CAT) through our main switchboard. Alternatively, Patient Relations can help facilitate this meeting.

Useful contact numbers

Child Bereavement UK Tel: 0800 0288840

<https://childbereavementuk.org/>

Information for bereaved children and families.

Child Death Helpline Tel: 0808 800 6019 or 0800 2082

www.childhelpline.org.uk

Compassionate Friends Tel: 0345 123 2304

Email: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Helpline run by bereaved parents. Open every day 10am-10.30pm.

Cruse Bereavement Care Tel: 0808 808 1677 (National)

Tel: 01344 411919 (Berkshire & Borders)

Cruse is a support group for all bereaved people.

Daisy's Dream Tel: 0118 934 2604

www.daisysdream.org.uk

Support service for bereaved children in the Berkshire area.

The Lullaby Trust (foundation for the study of infant deaths)

Tel: 0118 934 2604 Email: supports@lullabytrust.org.uk

www.lullabytrust.org.uk

SAMM Tel: 0121 451 1618 or 0845 872 3440

A self-help group for those bereaved by homicide.

SOBS Tel: 0300 111 5065

Helpline for survivors of bereavement by suicide.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (Sands)

Tel: 0808 164 3332

Sudden Death Association Tel: 0118 988 9797

www.suddendeath.org

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

Winston's wish Tel 0808 020 021

Information for bereaved children.

Widowed and young

www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

The loss foundation Tel. 0300 200 4112

Provides cancer bereavement support

Citizens Advice

- Minster Street, Reading RG1 2JB Tel: 0344 411 1306
- 2nd floor Broadway House, 48 The Broadway, Newbury RG14 1BA
Tel: 0300 2225941
- Waterfield House, Denmark St, Wokingham RG40 2YF Tel: 0300 3311 89

The Samaritans

59a Cholmeley Road, Reading RG1 3NB Tel: 0845 7990 9090

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
London Road
Reading RG1 5AN
0118 322 5111 switchboard)
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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