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**www.cuh.nhs.uk/bereavement**

**If you require this leaflet in other languages, large print or audio format please contact 01223 216032**



**We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.**

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

#### Document History

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**Royal Papworth Hospital**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# After bereavement

Source of information,  
advice and support

Royal Papworth Hospital

## The Bereavement Care Service

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The hospital staff would like to offer you and your family our deepest sympathy at this time.

You may find the next few days very difficult, and we understand that it is not easy to turn your thoughts to the practical arrangements that are needed.

This booklet is intended to:

- One** offer you practical advice on what needs to be done first
- Two** help to explain some of the emotions and feelings that you may be experiencing with an offer of help after the death
- Three** provide information about other organisations or groups that may be able to help you through the next few days and in the future.

**The Bereavement Care Service is here to help and support you, so please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything you would like to talk through.**

**You can contact us via your ward, or through the Bereavement Care Service Office on 01223 217537. The Chaplaincy team can be contacted on 01223 217769.**

**The Bereavement Care Service Office is situated in Addenbrooke's Hospital.**

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# One

## Practical advice on what needs to be done

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### What needs to be done first?

On the first working day after the person has died, the first thing you need to do is to make an initial contact with the Bereavement Care Service Office on **01223 217537**. Once all the relevant documents are ready they will call you back to make an appointment, this process normally takes 48 hours to complete and a further 48 hours if the coroner is involved.

The Bereavement Care Service Office is situated in Addenbrooke's Hospital. At your appointment the Bereavement Care staff will hand over the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and any belongings. They will be pleased to answer any questions you may have about the registration process and direct you to other sources of help and information.

Appointments are usually arranged between 09:45hrs and 15:30hrs, and we will try to give you an appointment as soon as we can.

In order to make this process as easy as possible, please do not come to the Bereavement Care Service Office without arranging an appointment first.

It is our usual practice for hospital staff to meet relatives at the main reception for their appointment. You will receive more information when your appointment is arranged.

### Chapel of Rest

Staff can make arrangements for you or other members of your family to visit the Chapel of Rest. If you wish someone to accompany you, please mention that when you make the appointment with the Bereavement Care Service Office so that you can have the support you feel you need.

## How to register the death

### Where is the death registered?

The death can be registered at **Addenbrooke's Hospital**, registrars are on site three days a week. Or, if convenient, at the local offices of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages at Castle Lodge, Shire Hall, Cambridge. The death should be registered within the district where it has happened.

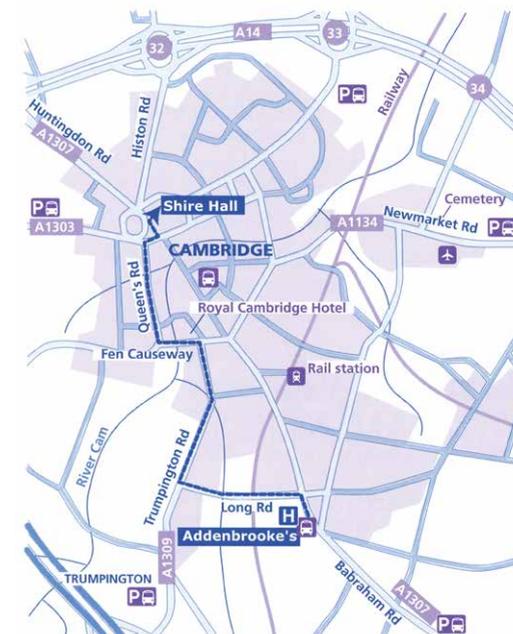
### Appointments available:

Monday to Friday  
09:00–15:30hrs  
(by appointment only)

### The Registrar Office

Register Office  
Castle Lodge, Shire Hall  
Cambridge CB3 0AP  
**Tel: 0345 045 1363**

You need to register the death within five working days (ie. not counting weekends) after you receive the 'medical certificate of cause of death' unless the registrar extends this period, for example if a post-mortem is necessary. (For information about post-mortem and the coroner's role, please see those sections on page 6.)



## Who can register the death?

- a relative (this does not include common law partners or domestic partners) of the deceased
- a person who was present at the time of death (the person who was present at the time of death does not need to be a relative)
- a person who is arranging the funeral

## Tell Us Once service

*Tell Us Once* is a government initiative which enables bereaved relatives to inform a range of government departments that a death has occurred, either with a single phone call or by using a dedicated, secure website.

The system covers both local and national government departments, including pensions and benefits, tax, council tax, passports, driving licences, blue badges and others.

During the registration process, the registrar will log some details on the *Tell Us Once* system, and give you a sheet with a unique reference number on it, together with contact details for the *Tell Us Once* team.

You will then have 28 days to either telephone or use their website, to complete the process and send notifications to the relevant organisations.

If you choose not to use *Tell Us Once*, the information the registrar has entered will be automatically wiped from the system after 28 days.

The system is completely secure, and information is only shared with your consent.

## What to take to the registrar's office

You should take:

- the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death
- any forms given to you if the death has been referred to the coroner.

## Other documents and information you will need to give regarding the deceased

You will need to find out the following information about the person who has died. It will help if you bring the supporting documents with you to ensure the information recorded is accurate (see below). If you forget or cannot find the relevant documents it is not a problem and the registration can still go ahead.

### For the deceased person:

- Passport
- Utility bill
- NHS Medical Card
- All marriage/civil partnership certificates
- Birth Certificate
- Change of name deed

### For the person attending:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Utility bill

## If it is helpful, use the spaces below:

- date and place of birth **DD / MM / YYYY** .....
- date and place of death **DD / MM / YYYY** .....
- first names and surname (maiden name if applicable):  
.....
- last address:  
.....
- if the deceased was married, the date of birth of the surviving widow/widower  
.....
- occupation and the occupation of their widow/widower, if applicable  
.....
- whether a pension or allowance was being received  
.....

## What the Registrar will give to you:

- **a green Certificate for Notification of Burial or Cremation**  
You will need to give this certificate to the funeral director so that the funeral can take place.
- **a Death Certificate**  
You may need extra copies of this certificate for pension and insurance purposes. There is a charge for each certificate.

## Contacting a funeral director

You can contact a funeral director at any time so that you can begin to organise the funeral. Give the funeral director the green form given to you by the Registrar. This form is needed to finalise all the arrangements especially if the person who has died is to be cremated.

You will find that there are a number of funeral directors to choose from in your area. They are listed on the internet, or in the Yellow Pages, if you do not already know of one to use. Funeral directors have their own costs for conducting funerals. These costs may vary according to whether the person who has died is to be buried or cremated.

## Deciding the details of the funeral

The funeral director and/or local minister/faith leader can help you to decide when and where the funeral will take place, what you wish to be included, and whether the person who has died is going to be buried or cremated.

You may already be aware of the deceased's wishes in this respect, and you can discuss these wishes with whoever is helping you plan the funeral so that the service reflects what the deceased wanted.

The funeral director will usually make the arrangements for the person who has died to be taken to their own chapel of rest where you and your family and friends will be able to visit.

## Additional information

### The coroner

In some circumstances a hospital doctor may not be able to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. There are many reasons for this, but in general it happens when the death is sudden, unexpected or due to an accident. In these circumstances, the hospital will inform the Coroner's Office about the death and you will be able to talk things through with a coroner's officer. Occasionally the coroner may decide that a post-mortem examination is necessary to establish the cause of death. The coroner does not need permission to order a post-mortem. The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will then be issued by the coroner.

### Hospital post-mortem examination

Sometimes, the staff who issue you with the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death may ask your permission to carry out a voluntary hospital post-mortem examination. This is to give the doctors a chance to learn more about diseases and use this knowledge to help other patients.

The Bereavement Care Service Office staff will explain all the details to you about what will happen and why, and answer any questions you have before you decide whether you wish to let the post-mortem go ahead.

The hospital also produces a booklet about post-mortem examination that will be given to you when you are asked for consent.

Please be re-assured that a hospital voluntary post-mortem cannot take place without your explicit written consent.

## **The Bereavement Care follow-up service**

As a hospital we realise that the death of a loved one can raise many questions for the bereaved. If not addressed this can add to the distress that you experience.

The Bereavement Care follow-up service was developed by Addenbrooke's with the aim of providing some support and help to those grieving, by offering an opportunity to meet with the consultant in charge of their loved one's care.

This service is provided for the families of all adults who die in Addenbrooke's hospital. For the families of those who die in the hospital aged 16 or under, similar help and support is offered by the child and family support counsellors.

### **What happens**

Five weeks after the death of a patient a letter is sent to the next of kin or the named contact inviting them and any other family members to a follow up meeting. This is an opportunity to speak to a member of the medical team involved in your loved one's care.

This team member is usually the consultant who was in charge of your loved one's care or occasionally the ward manager depending on the nature of your questions.

The letter you will receive has a reply slip attached to it, and you can respond either by using the slip or by phoning the number on the letter. You will then be contacted to see how we might best be able to help in answering any questions you might have.

These meetings are held in a meeting room near the hospital main reception, because relatives sometimes find it emotionally difficult to come back to the hospital. One of the service team will also be at the meeting to make sure all your questions are answered.

We are here to help you at this difficult time, so please do not hesitate to reply to the letter. Even if you are unsure about how we might help, if we possibly can, we will.

## **People and organisations to inform about the death**

Beyond the immediate family and friends, the following checklist will give you a starting point for the people and organisations you will need to inform about the death – there may be others.

- employer
- trade union
- building society
- credit card companies
- Royal Mail
- Department of Work & Pensions
- utility companies
- life insurance company
- car insurance company
- bank
- housing department
- school/university
- landlord
- newsagent
- milkman
- Inland Revenue
- council offices
- TV licence authority
- meals on wheels, etc
- rental companies
- social services
- care agencies

## Two

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### Bereavement and grief

Bereavement describes a range of emotions and feelings which accompany anyone when a loved one has died. Grief describes some of the reactions you may experience when you are bereaved.

### What usually happens first?

The death of someone close is one of the most painful, traumatic and distressing times of our lives. There is no right or wrong way to feel at such a time, every experience is unique and individual. In the first hours and days you may feel shocked, numb and confused. You may not remember what people are saying to you and you may feel as if you are on 'automatic pilot.' This is a time of unreality in which you may feel dazed and think and act as if your loss had not happened. There is a sense in which we want to deny the reality of the death; all these feelings are normal.

### Some ways of coping with loss

- talk about how you're feeling with other people
- allow yourself to grieve – to cry, to feel numb, to be angry – just to feel, however you are feeling
- try to keep up with your daily tasks so you don't feel overwhelmed
- get enough sleep, eat a well-balanced diet and exercise regularly
- avoid alcohol as it can make you feel more depressed
- get back into a normal routine as soon as you can
- avoid making major decisions right away
- ask for help if you need it

As your shock wears off, reality will slowly break through. You'll begin to realise that your loss has happened. It's normal to feel abandoned and angry. You may direct your anger towards God, religion, doctors and nurses, the one who has died or other loved ones... or even yourself.

### Some of the symptoms we may experience when we grieve

It is helpful to remember that grief is a normal, healthy response to loss. After all, one of the greatest losses that you can experience is the death of one closest to you. Healing from this experience involves coming to terms with the loss and its meaning in your life. As individuals we all grieve in different ways, many of us experience grief through physical and emotional symptoms, such as headaches, a hollow feeling in your heart or stomach, breathlessness, a dry mouth and physical pain.

It is also natural to feel some of the following:

- guilt
- anger
- numbness
- the need to blame yourself or the one who has died
- despair
- disbelief
- shock
- intense sadness
- weeping
- loneliness and isolation.

It is helpful to remind yourself that these and other symptoms are all part of the normal grieving process.

You may experience all these symptoms, some, or none at all. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to feel, or set time limit for grief. Different emotions may come and go during the course of each moment, day, week or month. Significant dates may be hard and your grief may never completely go away, but the pain you are experiencing will lessen with time as you work through these feelings. Remember to do things when you are ready to do them and when it feels right.

## Three

### Information about support groups and organisations

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#### Who can help?

##### In Royal Papworth Hospital

**Ward staff** are available to help and support you. They can also put you in touch with other support agencies in the hospital.

**Bereavement Care Service Office** staff are there to help you sort out the registration of death and related issues. **Tel: 01223 217537**

**The Chaplaincy Team** is always available to give support and practical advice.

**Tel: 01223 217769**

**E-mail:** chaplaincy@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

You can also get help from your own GP or perhaps your local minister or faith group leader.

**The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** office is located on the ground floor of Royal Papworth Hospital.

**Tel: 01223 638896** or **01223 638963**

##### Bereavement support groups

On page 13 is a brief guide to local and national support groups.

You will find a more comprehensive list on the hospital website if you follow this link:

**[www.cuh.org.uk/bereavement](http://www.cuh.org.uk/bereavement)**

#### Local helplines

##### Age UK

Cambridgeshire: 0300 666 9860

Norfolk: 01603 787111

Suffolk: 01473 351234

##### Cruse Bereavement Care

Cambridge: 01223 633536

Norwich: 01603 219977

West Suffolk: 01284 767674

Ipswich: 01473 230888

**Samaritans** 08457 909090

##### STARS

##### Children's Bereavement Service

c/o CPDC

Foster Road

Trumpington

Cambridge CB2 9NL

**Tel:** 01223 863511

**E-mail:** info@talktostars.org.uk

**[www.talktostars.org.uk](http://www.talktostars.org.uk)**

#### National helplines

##### Child Bereavement Charity

**Tel:** 0800 02 888 40

##### SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)

**Tel:** 020 7436 5881

##### The Compassionate Friends

**Tel:** 0845 123 2304

##### Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service

**Tel:** 0208 951 3881

##### Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project

**Tel:** 0208 200 0511

##### National Association of Widows

**Tel:** 0845 838 2261

##### RoadPeace

**Tel:** 0845 4500 355

##### The Sudden Deaths Support Association

**Tel:** 0118 988 9797

##### Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

**Tel:** 0844 561 6855