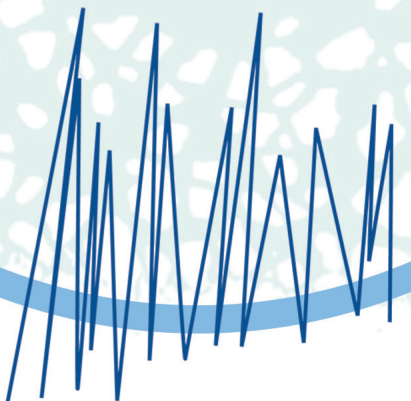
NHS
Royal Papworth Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Bereavement at our hospital



Compassion
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This booklet aims to provide you and your family some useful help and advice during the early days of your bereavement. When a loved one dies at Royal Papworth Hospital Foundation NHS Trust, we want you to feel supported and informed on what happens next, and who you can talk to for support. As well as the practical and legal process that follow after someone has died.

The staff at Royal Papworth Hospital wish to express their sincere condolences to you and your family at this sad time.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

A key contact point for you will be our PALS service who support and guide you through the process. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you are unclear about any matter, our staff will always be pleased to help.

Telephone: 01223 638896
Email: Papworth.pals@nhs.net

The PALS staff are available for walk-ins to the PALS office on the ground floor from 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). From 1pm to 4pm, the staff will be dealing with email and telephone enquiries. Staff will continue to be on-site daily and available by appointment.

Outside of these hours an answerphone is available, please do leave a message and a member of the team will get back to you within working hours, as detailed above. We aim to return all calls within 3 working days.

Support and comfort at this difficult time

Another key contact you may wish to use is our hospital chaplains, who are available to provide spiritual, religious and pastoral care to everyone in the hospital, including bereaved relatives and friends. This service is available to anyone, whether they follow a faith or not.

The multifaith area is located on the ground floor of the hospital. Please speak to a member of staff on reception in the main atrium for directions.

The chaplains can provide a listening ear, without prejudice and in confidence. They can also put you in touch with other faith representatives.

The chaplaincy service can be contacted by telephone on 01223 639 121 and you can leave a message on the answering machine. For urgent matters please contact the hospital switchboard on 01223 638 000 and they will do their best to contact the chaplain for you.

What you will need to do first

This leaflet will have been provided to you by one of our ward staff members. Please spend as much time as you would like to with your loved one before you go home and speak to your wider family. A member of the PALS team, or a medical examiner officer (MEO), will telephone the next of kin (we have listed on our records) between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday on the next working day. At this time, they will explain the paperwork process and, to avoid any delays later on they will ask for funeral director details.

However, if you are undecided on funeral arrangements, please do not worry as you can let us know later.

Personal belongings

If you are in the hospital when your relative or friend dies, the nursing staff will try to return all personal belongings to the next-of-kin. If this is not possible, a member of the PALS team will undertake collection from the ward and discuss the best way to return the belongings.

Mortuary and 'Woodland Suite'

If you are present when your relative or friend dies, or you attend the hospital shorlty after the event has occurred, the ward staff will allow you as much time as possible to say your goodbyes.

Then once in position to do so we will move the recently deceased to the mortuary provision at Addenbrooke's Hospital (hospital next to ours), as we have a shared provision of this service. Please be assured that while your loved one is in the care of the mortuary services, they will be cared for by qualified staff, ensuring their dignity and respect at all times and with all religious and cultural rites taken into consideration.
All viewings in the 'woodland suite' are by appointment only. Should you wish to arrange a viewing, please contact the mortuary team directly on 01223 217 106 Monday to

Friday 8am to 4pm. Outside of these hours, please contact Addenbrooke's Hospital switchboard on 01223 245 151 or 01223 805 000 and ask to speak with the on-call mortuary technician.

Medical examiners (Independent service from our hospital)

The medical examiner team includes Medical Examiners (MEs) and Medical Examiner Officers (MEOs).

An ME is a senior NHS doctor who has received specialist training in scrutinising the notes of a patient to establish the proposed cause(s) of death and identify cases that need to be referred to the coroner.

The ME will discuss their scrutiny findings with the attending doctor and together they will agree the cause(s) of death or make a referral to the coroner.

MEOs work alongside MEs to support with various tasks, including communicating with next of kin. The service offers the next of kin an opportunity to raise questions or concerns about the cause(s) of death, or about the care a person received before they passed away. This will usually be through a telephone call. The medical examiner team can also explain the format of the death certificate and explain any medical language that you may not understand.

You can be confident that the MEs and their staff will provide an independent view, as they will only scrutinise deaths where they have not been involved in the care of the patient. Sometimes the ME and attending doctor from our hospital may decide a case needs to be referred to the coroner, in which case the doctor will complete a referral to the coroner through their online portal system.

Coroner

If a case gets referred to the coroner and they decide to start an investigation into a death, the coroner (not the medical examiner) will investigate the death independently, though the ME may still provide medical advice to the coroner. They will ask the hospital for information and, if necessary, consult other independent clinicians to help decide whether a formal inquest is needed. They may also advise you that they will be asking for a postmortem to be performed.

The hospital must notify the coroner about certain deaths, you will be advised if we have carried out this process and why. More information can be found on the internet about this regulation: **gov.uk/government/publications/notification-of-deaths-regulations-2019-guidance**

You can also get the guidance in other formats by emailing the ministry of justice at coroners@justice.gov.uk.

Hospital post-mortem

In certain circumstances, the doctor who certified the death may ask you for permission to carry out a hospital requested post-mortem examination to help advance medical knowledge and teaching and will use this knowledge to plan future care of other patients with similar conditions. Unlike a coroner's post-mortem, you are under no obligation to agree to a hospital post-mortem, and this cannot be done without the agreement of the next-of-kin and after completion of a signed and witnessed consent form.

The staff members who will carry out the post-mortem are the same trained pathologists that the coroner uses, and they are very experienced. They are very aware of people's needs at this time and treat each deceased person with dignity and respect, as they would expect for a member of their own family.

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)

In order to register the death a medical certificate of cause of death is required, and if the death was not unexpected, this will be issued by a hospital doctor as soon as possible. You will be contacted once this has been completed and you will be informed that you are able to make the appointment to register the death (further information about this can be found later).

Registering a death

Once an MCCD has been completed a death must be registered with the registrar of births and deaths in Cambridgeshire. If possible, this should be done within five days from when the MCCD is sent to the registrars.

An appointment for registration can be made once the medical certificate of cause of death has been completed by the doctor or issued by the coroner's office. To register, you will need to book an appointment online at: cambridgeshire.gov.uk

The following people can register a death:

- A relative of the deceased.
- The person who is arranging the funeral.
- A person present at the death.

The death certificate is a certified copy of the entry in the death register and has to be paid for.

Purchasing additional copies can be useful as they are often required for sorting out financial affairs such as insurance policies, pension claims or bank accounts. You may qualify for the free 'Tell Us Once' service which could reduce the number of copies you will need to purchase: **gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once**

The registration office will advise you about this service during your appointment. When you register a death, the registrar will ask you for some information and this is listed below. It would be helpful if you could ensure that you have

as much of this information as possible before your appointment. The registration takes approximately twenty to forty minutes.

Information required to register a death

1. Correct date and place of death.
2. Full name of the deceased, and any other names used by the deceased.
3. Date and place of birth.
4. Home address including postcode.
5. Marital state at time of death.
6. Occupation – think about how the deceased person would like to be remembered. The last job they had may not reflect what occupation they had for the majority of their working life.
7. Full name of spouse. This is still required even if their spouse has already passed away. This information is not required however if they were legally divorced.
8. Date of birth of spouse.
9. Occupation of spouse.
10. Name, address and phone number of chosen funeral director.
11. Burial or cremation, and where it is going to take place.
12. NHS number.
13. Was the deceased in charge of staff when employed. If yes how many?
14. If relevant: how long was the deceased in hospital? Was it over or under six months?

What the registrar will give 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.

The payment to the registry office can be made at the time of booking or during the appointment by debit/ credit card. We recommend you buy 4 or 5. You can always buy more afterwards for the same price.

Funeral arrangements

We recommend that a family member or close friend contact a funeral director as soon as possible. It is a personal decision as to which funeral director service they use. Most people use a local company as you will need to arrange an appointment to discuss the type of funeral you want.

You may contact a funeral director before the death has been registered to put all arrangements in place, but it is not advisable to set the date for the funeral, as there could be delays in receiving the medical certificate of cause of death especially if there is coroner involvement.

Funeral directors are very experienced in dealing with bereavement issues and they will do their best to guide you through this very difficult process. They will advise, assist and support you through the early stages of your bereavement and will deal with matters such as liaising with the mortuary, cemetery/ crematorium, minister of religion or celebrant and all other funeral arrangements. They will also inform you about funeral costs.

One of the first and most important decisions you will need to make is whether to choose a burial or cremation. You should check whether a will exists and whether any requests are in the will regarding burial or cremation.

When you have chosen a funeral director, please inform a member of the PALS team at Royal Papworth Hospital.

Financial and legal assistance

The death and bereavement section on the government website provides information on reporting a death, wills, probate and inheritance tax.

This can be accessed at: **gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/death** or by scanning the QR code.

Worried about money or the will process, when someone dies?

We fully recognise that relatives or loved ones may be left with money worries or legal problems and an endless list of unanswered questions. In these circumstances you will need to contact a solicitor for advice who specialises in Wills and probate matters.

You may be eligible to apply for assistance for the cost of the funeral with a funeral expenses payment, depending on your circumstances. For further details, please refer to **gov.uk/funeral-payments**, or to claim please contact the bereavement service helpline:

Telephone: 0800 151 2012
Textphone: 0800 731 0464

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): dial 18001 followed by 0800 151 2012. Or visit **relayuk.bt.com** for more information.

British Sign Language (BSL) video relay service if you're on a computer **connect.interpreterslive.co.uk/vrs?ilc=DWP** or if you're on a phone or tablet you'll need to download the interpreters live app from your app store.

Grief and symptoms of grieving

We fully recognise that bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms and can affect people affected in many

different ways. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Some of the common symptoms include:

- Shock, numbness or confusion – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about 'being in a daze' or being on 'automatic pilot'. You might not remember what people are saying to you and the reality of death might not have fully sunk in.
- Overwhelming sadness, or despair with lots of crying.
- Tiredness or exhaustion.
- Anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss.
- Guilt -for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying.
- Loneliness or isolation.

Following up service from our PALS bereavement service

After your initial contact from our PALS service, (straight after your bereavement, as mentioned at the start of this leaflet), the next time ours PALS service will contact you will be about six to eight weeks after the death of your loved one. The PALS team will send the next of kin or named contact a letter providing information for accessing the Royal Papworth Hospital bereavment follow-up service. If you decide that you would like to access the follow-up service, you can call the number on the letter or complete the reply slip at the bottom of the letter. The PALS team will then make contact with you, to arrange any requested follow up.

We offer this service, as sometimes relatives and close friends have outstanding questions several weeks after the event of death occurred, about the final care their loved one received at the end of life, especially if the death happened quickly, was unexpected or when a family member was not present at the time of death.

We can arrange for you to speak to a member of the medical team, nursing team or ward manager, at a time when you feel able to discuss events. It could be as simple as helping you to understand more about the treatment and cause(s) of death, or to understand the medical language used, or there may be something about the care which did not feel right or ideal. We offer this service through a phone call, in a meeting in person on the hospital site and can also offer a virtual meeting though Microsoft Teams.

At the same time of the offer of the follow up service, you will also receive information about the National Audit of Care at the End of Life (NACEL). The NACEL survey is online and completed by relatives, carers and those important to the person who died in hospital, the aim of the survey is to give the close to the person who died and opportunity to share their views on the care and support provided in hospital.

Your contribution can truly make a difference to care at the end of life. Further information can be found at **nacel.nhs.uk/** or scan the QR code.

Organisations that may be able to provide further information or support

The death and bereavement section on the government website: This provides information on what to do when someone dies, coroners and inquests, benefits payable after a death and also on jury service at inquests. This can be accessed at: **gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/death**

Bereavement advice service: A free helpline and web based information service provided by Co-op Legal Services. Providing practical advice and information on the issues and procedures after a death: **bereavementadvice.org**

Ashley Jolly SAD Trust UK:

Provides support and information for those who have lost a loved one suddenly and unexpectedly as a result of a cardiac condition. This may appear on the MCCD as sudden arrhythmia death syndrome.

Helpline: 01277 811215

Email: sadsoffice@saduk.org

Website: sadsuk.org.uk

Samaritans

Helpline: 116123

Website: samaritans.org

The Good Grief Trust

Email: hello@thegoodgrief-trust.org

Website: thegoodgrieftrust.org

Cruse Bereavement Care

National contact:
0808 808 1677

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Tel:
0300 011 0128

Norfolk and Suffolk Tel:
0333 230 0189

Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex Tel: 0300 200 4108

Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Telephone: 0300 666 9860

Email: infoandadvice@ageuk-cap.org.uk

Website: ageuk.org.uk/cambridgeshireand peterborough

Age UK Norfolk

Telephone: 0300 5001217

Website: ageuk.org.uk/norfolk

Bereavement Advice Centre

Telephone: 0800 6349494

Wesbite: bereavementadvice.org

National Bereavement Service

Telephone: 0800 0246121

Email: info@thenbs.org

Website: thenbs.org

Grief Encounter Supporting bereaved children and young people

Telephone: 0808 8020111

Website: griefencounter.org.uk

Sue Ryder

Website: sueryder.org

Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service Access

Website: jbcs.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8951 3881

Muslim Bereavement Support Service Access

Website: mbss.org.uk

Telephone: 020 3468 7333

Younger people

Winston's Wish

Supports bereaved children and provides specialist child bereavement support services across the UK, including in-depth therapeutic help in individual, group and residential settings:
Website: winstonswish.org
Helpline: 08088 020 021

The Compassionate Friends

A charitable organisation of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents dedicated to the support and care of other similarly bereaved family members who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age and from any cause:
Website: tcf.org.uk
Helpline: 0345 123 2304

Citizens' Advice Bureau

Provides free and confidential advice and information whoever you are and whatever your problem:
Website: citizensadvice.org.uk
Telephone: 0800 144 8848

Tell Us Once

A free Government service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go: **gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once**

For more advice and support on bereavement visit: Royalpapworth.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/pals/bereavement or scan the QR code:

Tissue donation

There is a possibility that your loved one may be able to help others through tissue donation. This can include giving the gift of sight or helping people with burns or other serious injuries. If this is something you would like to know more about, please speak to the healthcare professional who has given you this leaflet, or contact the National Referral Centre (Tissue Services) on 0800 432 0559 (Option 1). If your call is not answered, you can leave your name and contact details, and a specialist nurse in tissue donation will return your call.

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
A member of Cambridge University Health Partners

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01223 638000

Alternative versions of this leaflet

Large print copies and alternative language versions of this leaflet can be made available on request.

View a digital version of this leaflet by scanning the QR code.

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