

Useful Telephone Numbers

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| Bereavement Benefit | 0845 6088601 |
| Citizens Advice Bureau | 08448 552122 |
| Benefits Enquiry Line | 0800 882200 |
| MacMillan Welfare Rights Service (Alternatively contact your local Welfare Rights Office) | 01604 678025 |
| Cruse Bereavement Care | 08444 779400 |
| Northampton Counselling Service (Covers Northamptonshire) | 01604 401010 |
| Samaritans | 08457 909090 |
| Advice and Information Service (To raise questions or seek advice regarding NHS Services) | 0800 5870879 |
| Winston's Wish (Offers help for bereaved families and children) | 08452 030405 |
| Child and Adolescent Bereavement Service (CABS) (Based at Northampton General Hospital) | 01604 545131 |
| Low Down (Youth Information and Counselling Service) (Covers Northamptonshire) | 01604 622223 |

Websites for young people to visit include:

www.riprap.org.uk

www.rd4u.org.uk



Northamptonshire

When someone dies

Initial practical advice
and support

This leaflet aims to provide help and advice during the early days of bereavement

Advice and Information Service

If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services in Northamptonshire, you can speak in confidence to the Advice and Information Service on 0800 587 0879.

If you require the document in any other format, for example large print, audio or in another language please contact the Communications Team on 01536 480377.

Northamptonshire Provider Services is responsible for providing NHS services in Northamptonshire and is hosted by Northamptonshire Teaching Primary Care Trust.

- Teachers, Youth organisation leaders
- Insurance including motor insurance
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Utilities
- Bank or Building Society
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Office
- Landlord
- Passport Office. Return the passport
- Library, subscriptions, clubs

Where to seek advice

- Your General Practitioner (GP)
- Your practice nurse or health visitor
- District or Specialist nurse
- Minister / Spiritual Leader of your faith
- School nurse
- University / College student counsellors

Organ donation

It is very difficult to think about a subject like organ donation when your relative or friend has just died. However, if your relative or friend joined the organ donor register or requested that their organs be used after their death, it is important to respect their wishes. The next of kin's permission is needed for organs to be donated and you will be fully supported throughout the process. Visit UK Transplant's website for more details: www.uktransplant.org.uk or discuss with the health care professional.

Equipment and medicines

Unused medicines should be returned to your local Chemist. For collection of equipment contact your District Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Medical Loans Department or Wheelchair Services.

People you may need to inform

There may be various people or organisations that need to be informed of the death. Here is a checklist that you may wish to consider:

- District Nurse and GP, Marie Curie, Hospice at Home
- Care Agencies, Meals on Wheels, etc
- Employer and Trade Union
- Tax office
- Social Security

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Grieving

Bereavement is something which most of us experience at some time in our lives. It can be hard to accept this loss and we may feel confused and overwhelmed by the sadness and different emotions that overtake us; this is grieving.

This leaflet describes some of the feelings that people may have when they grieve. Not everyone will experience all of these feelings, some will be felt more strongly than others and they may come in any order.

Grieving is a normal process and people will react differently in their own way. There is no time limit as to how long you may experience the feelings associated with grief, but you must allow yourself time.

Because we are individuals, we all have our own individual way of grieving, this may include some of the following: -

- Numbness and difficulty accepting that the person has died
- Thinking you have seen or heard the person, or searching for them
- Difficulty sleeping or eating
- Feeling physically low and worrying about your health
- Sadness
- Your faith may be challenged
- Anxiety and restlessness
- Guilt

- The Registrar will require the medical certificate of the cause of death, or Form B – notification to the Registrar by the Coroner

The registrar will give you:

- **A green form** – this is a certificate for burial or cremation, which gives permission for the body to be buried or an application made for cremation. It should be given to the Funeral Director.
- **A white form** – this is a certificate of registration of death. It is for Social Security purposes only.

Copies of the death certificate

You may require certified copies of the death entry (Death Certificate). The Registrar will issue the copies, but a charge is made.

A copy of the Death Certificate may be required for:

- Obtaining probate
- Any pensions claims
- Insurance policies
- Bank, Building Society and Post Office accounts

The Registrar is there to help you, do not hesitate to consult them if you have any queries. You will also be able to obtain help from your Funeral Director.

Choosing a funeral director

The choice of a Funeral Director is something you should consider carefully, as it is important that you should feel comfortable and confident with them.

Registering the death

You will need to register the death within five working days at your local Registrars Office. You will need to telephone to make an appointment.

The registrar will need to know:

- Date and place of death
- The deceased's full names and surname (if married woman also her maiden name)
- The deceased's usual address
- Date and place of birth (town and county and country if abroad)
- Occupation (name and occupation of spouse if the deceased was married or widowed)
- If the deceased received a pension or allowance from public funds
- If the deceased was married, the date of birth of surviving widow or widower
- The deceased's medical card or their NHS number, but this is not essential

- Anger
- Loneliness
- Feeling lost
- Loss of self confidence
- Depression or feeling like you are going mad
- Finding every day situations and relationships difficult to cope with
- Disappointment about the plans and dreams that may not be fulfilled
- Feelings of relief

You may not have any of these feelings and that is all right as everyone is different. It is important that you allow yourself to experience what ever feelings arise and speak to someone if need be.

Making changes

It may seem that life will be more bearable if you make drastic changes to avoid painful memories. Try to avoid doing this at an early stage in your loss. There will come a time when you feel able to make these important decisions.

In time

You will find memories are perhaps less painful. You will find yourself being able to remember without becoming so distressed.

Things to consider

- Allow yourself time to grieve, in the way that feels right for you. Remember there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Try to accept help from others.
- Take care of yourself, eat sensibly and talk with your doctor about any health worries.
- When the time feels right, try to consider setting new routines.
- Sharing your feelings can be helpful. It is not always easy to do this with family and friends. If this is so, the support organisations overleaf will be happy to help.

Grief in children and young people

Children will react and cope in various ways according to their age and level of understanding. They are likely to grieve at different times and go through periods of time seeming unaffected.

You may be concerned about talking with the children and young people in your family because you think you may upset or worry them. But they often know and understand far more than we give them credit for.

Knowing how painful bereavement can be, adults attempt to shield children and young people from the pain by telling them little or nothing about what has happened.

Try to let them share your grief and encourage them to express their feelings. Talking, reading, drawing and playing games can be helpful.

Practical necessities

Following the death of a relative or friend there are certain formalities that need attending to. The following information is offered as a guide –

Expected death

If your relative or friend's death was expected the nurse or doctor will initially verify the death before the person can be moved. The doctor who looked after him or her during their final illness will give you a Medical Certificate that shows the cause of death. You will also be given a Formal Notice stating that the doctor has signed the Medical Certificate and telling you how to get the death registered.

Unexpected death

If your relative or friend's death was sudden or unexpected, you should contact the doctor and the police. You will probably also want to contact close family immediately. If the cause of an unexpected death is quite clear, the doctor will give you a Medical Certificate and a Formal Notice (as above) so you can make arrangements for the funeral. However, if the doctor wants to know more about the cause of death they may carry out a post-mortem (medical) examination.

In certain circumstances – for example, if the cause of death is unknown, or if it was due to an accident or injury – the doctor may report it to the Coroner. The Coroner is a doctor or lawyer who looks into the cause of a death when more information is required before the death can be registered. If the examination shows that the death was due to natural causes, the Coroner will release the body for burial or cremation.