

BEREAVEMENT NOTES

We have set out below some general notes which we hope you will find useful at this difficult time. Please do contact us if you have any questions.

When a loved one passes away

1. If the death is expected and happens at home/residential home/hospice, a doctor or medical professional is required to formally verify. If this happens during practice hours, telephone the surgery to arrange for a doctor to attend. If it is outside of practice hours, telephone 111 where you will be transferred to your local out-of-hours service. Once formal verification has taken place, please telephone us to give instructions for bringing your loved one into our care. We will then attend to collect.
2. If the death happens in hospital, the hospital bereavement team will be in contact with you to confirm your appointed funeral director. Once you have spoken to bereavement services, you can then instruct our team that you would like us to take care of your loved one. When all necessary paperwork is completed, the hospital will issue a release note to us, which will enable us to collect your loved one and bring them into our care.
3. If the death is sudden or unexpected, the coroner may become involved. This is a formality and nothing to worry about. The police will usually be in attendance to carry out the necessary procedures. They will also guide you through the next steps to take. Once the death has been confirmed, the police will arrange for your loved one to be taken to the nearest main hospital where investigations into the cause of death will be carried out. When you feel ready to do so, you can contact us. We will then liaise with the coroner and hospital and bring your loved one into our care once the coroner's clearance has been given. Provisional funeral arrangements can be made before this happens.

Registration

The registrar will require the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) before any appointment can be made to register (you can contact the registrar's office to leave your preferred contact details to enable them to make contact once they have received the MCCD). This is issued by the Medical Practitioner (GP) once a cause of death has been agreed with the bereavement office's Medical Examiner and is sent directly to the registrar's office. Please note this process can take at least five working days. Once received, the registrar's office will be in contact with you to arrange an appointment.

You should try to register the death **within five days of the registrar receiving the Medical Cause of Death Certificate**. We know this is not always possible, as the registrar may not be able to give you an appointment within this time

frame. It is advisable to register within the district where the death occurred to avoid delaying the funeral. Generally, **an appointment should be made with the registrar nearest the place of death.** The registration process will normally take about half an hour.

To make an appointment:

For deaths that have occurred within the Swindon Borough, Tel: 01793 522738, Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH

For deaths outside the Swindon Borough, but within Wiltshire, Tel: Wiltshire Council 0300 003 4569. They will offer you an appointment with a registrar at one of their available offices.

What documents does the registrar require?

1. Doctor's Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) certificate from the issuing Medical Practitioner (GP). This will be sent to the registrar electronically by the Medical Examiner.

What other documents might you need to hand?

- Birth and Marriage certificates of the deceased
- NHS Medical card
- Passport

The registrar will advise if anything else is required when they book the appointment with you.

What information do you require to register?

- Date and place of death.
- Full name of the deceased.
- Maiden or any other names used by the deceased.
- Date and place of birth of deceased.
- Deceased's last occupation, even if retired.
- Whether the deceased received a state pension.
- The National Health Service No. of the deceased (if known) – see their NHS medical card.
- Deceased's usual address.
- Full names and occupation of deceased's spouse or civil registered partner.
- Full name, address, and relationship to deceased of the person registering the death.

What documents will the registrar give you as a matter of course:

- Certificate for burial or cremation for you to give to the **Funeral Director.**

The Registrar may hand you a hard copy of the green certificate or may email directly to the Funeral Director.

What documents can you purchase from the registrar?

Certified copy of entry in the register (Death Certificate). These may be required by banks, building societies, insurance companies, solicitors, pension schemes.

Laying to rest

You may want to bring in clothes for your loved one to be dressed in. If you would like to do this, please bring a full set of clothes, including underclothes, and items such as dentures or makeup. No shoes to be worn for cremation.

Chapel of Rest

Many people find it very comforting to spend some time in our Chapel of Rest saying a final goodbye. We ask families to make an appointment beforehand and arrange, if possible, to come together.

Funeral arrangements

During your first call to us, if appropriate, we will make an appointment in our diary for you to come into our office and discuss the funeral arrangements, or a home visit can be arranged. Your relative or friend may well have left instructions regarding their funeral wishes. It might be a good idea to check this with their solicitor, other relatives or friends so that you can bring all the information with you to the appointment.

Coffins

We stock veneered oak coffins which are traditional, dignified, and eco-friendly. However, we can also supply willow coffins which are grown and handmade in Somerset. Also, seagrass, bamboo, water hyacinth and banana leaf coffins are available, which are obtained from accredited suppliers and meet the necessary standards for use by the crematoriums and burial authorities we work with.

Collection of ashes

Dianne's team will arrange to collect your loved one's ashes from the crematorium to be kept at our office until you are ready for the next stage.

Ashes containers

We stock wooden oak caskets and a variety of Scatter tubes, and also offer willow baskets which are available to order.

Interment of ashes

Some people prefer to scatter ashes privately. Alternatively, you may wish to have your loved one's ashes interred in an ashes plot or an existing full-sized grave at a local churchyard or cemetery, with a minister/celebrant present. We can arrange all this for you, please ask for more details.

Stonemasons

- M J Sly of Pelham Court, London Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 2AG
 - Tel: 01672 516797.
- Swindon Memorials – Mr Matt Finnegan
 - Tel: 07532032054

Payment

An estimate of costs will be prepared and sent to the applicant before the funeral. The invoice will be issued after the funeral (usually within two-three weeks). Payment Terms are strictly within one month of the issue of our invoice, otherwise subject to additional charges. Payment accepted by cheque or BACS. We do not have card payment facility.

Bereavement benefits

There are three state bereavement benefits for which you may be eligible:

- Bereavement payment (lump sum)
- Widowed parent's allowance
- Bereavement allowance

Some of these benefits are dependent on the national insurance contributions of the deceased. Please see the following web sites for more information:

- www.gov.uk
- www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Please note that for most people the awarded benefits generally fall far short of the maximum claimable and invariably do not cover the full cost of a funeral.

If finance is a problem, it is advisable to keep all funeral costs and expenses to a minimum. Dianne and her team are always happy to advise families on how to keep costs down.

Coping with grief

It is perfectly natural to grieve, and it can be very helpful to share your feelings at this very emotional time with others. Do not be afraid to approach your doctor, religious minister, or an organisation such as Cruse or Age UK.

There is some useful information on the following websites:

- Age UK
 - Tel: 0800 009 966
 - www.ageuk.org.uk
- Cruse Bereavement Support:
 - Tel: 0808 808 1677
 - www.cruse.org.uk
- Child Bereavement UK
 - Tel: 0800 0288840
 - www.childbereavementuk.org
- Child Death Helpline
 - Tel: 0800 282986
 - www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk
- Samaritans
 - Tel: 116 123
 - www.samaritans.org