



Help for the bereaved

Following your loss



01935 384 746
yeovilhospital.nhs.uk



The staff at Yeovil Hospital would like to express our sympathy and condolences to you and your family.

This booklet is not intended to replace personal help and advice, but aims to provide you with practical support and guidance during the early days of your bereavement.

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Introduction – the first few days after death

There is no normal or right way to feel following bereavement and most people experience a whole range of emotions. The information in this booklet is intended to make the early days as straightforward as possible.

Take all the time you need and do not hesitate to contact the hospital bereavement service or the hospital chaplain if you need assistance or information.

What to do first

Please telephone the hospital bereavement service on 01935 384 746 (9am to 5pm weekdays) on the next day to be advised when the Medical Certificate of Death will be ready for collection.

The bereavement service is part of the wider patient experience team and is situated on Level 3, near the main entrance to the hospital. Please ask the staff at the reception desk to inform the bereavement officer of your arrival.

When you collect your relative's certificate, you will be given any property and valuables. If you are not the patient's registered next of kin in the medical records you will need to be an executor of the patient's will, or the person obtaining letters of administration if no will exists, in order to receive any property and valuables.

Viewing arrangements

Relatives and friends may wish to visit the deceased at the hospital to pay their last respects. This will be arranged as soon as possible for you.

Please ask the ward staff to make arrangements or telephone the mortuary on 01935 384 332 to make an appointment before you visit. The phone line is open during standard weekday working hours and viewings are arranged Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Chaplaincy services

Hospital chaplains are available to offer support and can be contacted 24 hours a day via the hospital switchboard on 01935 475 122.

The hospital chapel is on Level 4 and is open from early morning until the evening for personal reflection and prayer. Visitors from all religions are welcome to pray in the chapel and may use the sacred texts, prayer mats and other resources kept in the chapel. The hospital chaplains have links with most local churches and faith groups and can help put you in contact if you wish.

Book of Remembrance

The hospital's Book of Remembrance is in the hospital chapel and you may wish to have an inscription inserted in the book in memory of your loved one.

If you wish to remember somebody in this way, please contact the hospital chaplain or the hospital bereavement service.

How a death is registered

A death must be registered at the Registrar of Births and Deaths Office within five working days. In Somerset, details can be registered at any Registrar's Office within the county.

Most deaths are registered at the local office covering the area where the death has occurred and a list of the Registrar's Office is given on the next page. Alternatively, you can obtain details from the Somerset County Council website at somerset.gov.uk You can also follow a link to allow you to book an appointment online. Please let us know if we can help you to book this online.

The Registrar's Office will also give you details of all Somerset outstation offices which may be more convenient to where you live.

It is important that you telephone the Registrar's Office to arrange an appointment before you attend to ensure that they are expecting you.

If it is more convenient, you can also register outside the county. The registrar at your local office will be able to give you more information about this process.

Registrar of Births and Deaths Offices in Somerset

Central booking number: 01823 282 251

South Somerset Registrar's Office

**The Library
King George Street
Yeovil
BA20 1PY**

Taunton Registrar's Office

**The Old Munciple Buildings
Corporation Street
Taunton
TA1 2AQ**

Sedgemoor Registrar's Office

**Morgan House
Mount Street
Bridgwater
TA6 3ER**

Shepton Mallet Registrar's Office

**Mendip Council Offices
Shepton Mallet
BA4 5BT**

West Somerset Registrar's Office

**2 Long Street
Williton
TA4 4QN**

There is also an outstation at Chard

Please ask for additional information

To register the death you will need the following information:

- The Medical Certificate of Death from the hospital
- The deceased person's full name, home address and occupation
- If the person was married, the full name of their spouse
- The date and place of birth of the deceased

The registrar will give you a green form that authorises the burial or cremation, and this should be given to the funeral director.

The registrar will also give you a Registration of Death form which is for pension purposes.

Certified copies of the death certificate which you may need for the bank and insurance companies are also available from the registrar for which there is charge.

The coroner

The coroner is an independent judicial officer who enquires into deaths that are sudden or of an unknown cause.

Sometimes it may be necessary for the hospital doctors to refer a hospital death to the coroner; typically, if the death occurred within 24 hours of admission or surgery, or if the cause of death is unknown or was related to an industrial disease. Doctors caring for your loved one will contact the Coroner's Office for guidance in these cases.

After this discussion, the coroner may authorise a Medical Certificate of Death to be issued by the hospital doctor, or the coroner may order a post mortem to establish the precise cause of death. The hospital bereavement service or hospital doctors will advise you if a coroner's post mortem examination is necessary and will give any guidance you require.

The post mortem will be undertaken promptly at the hospital and the results will be made available by the coroner as soon as possible.

The hospital is licensed by the Human Tissue Authority to undertake post mortem examinations and adheres to the conditions of the Human Tissue Act (2004). All post mortem examinations are undertaken by consultant pathologists trained to Royal College of Pathology standards.

The Coroner's Officer will advise you about how to register the death after the post mortem and obtain the paperwork that you will need for the funeral directors.

The Coroner's Office can be contacted on:
01823 363 636

More information on the work of the coroner can be found by visiting the website:
www.justice.gov.uk

Inquest

An inquest is an inquiry into the medical cause and circumstances of death. It is generally held in public and sometimes with a jury.

It is up to the coroner to decide how to organise the inquiry in a way to best serve the public interest and the interests of the relatives. The coroner will tell you if an inquest is to be held.

Organ and tissue donation

Organ and tissue donation gives many families the option of making a difference to others. We would like to offer this choice to you. After death many people can be considered for tissue donation (such as heart valves or eyes). Your relative may have carried a donor card, be on the organ donor register or may have discussed donation with you during their lifetime.

Eyes for corneal transplantation can be donated up to 24 hours after death and heart valves up to 48 hours after death.

The deceased will be cared for with dignity and respect and their appearance will be restored. Tissue donation will not delay funeral plans.

Vital organs (such as heart and kidneys) can only be donated in certain circumstances and only when a patient is in the Intensive Care Unit or in the Emergency Department: advice can be obtained from hospital staff or from the specialist nurse in organ donation.

A specialist tissue donation nurse may contact the family after a patient dies to offer information about tissue donation. The individual we contact would be the designated representative on the patient's records. The tissue donation nurse will explain the options available for tissue donation and answer questions.

Please remember, tissue donation is entirely voluntary and dependent on the generosity of patients and families. If you would like further information please contact the Bristol tissue co-ordination service - Tel: 07699 704 933. Alternatively you may ask a doctor, nurse or the hospital bereavement service for guidance.

The Garden of Life

The Garden of Life, to remember organ donor patients and their families, is situated near the Women's Hospital. The garden is intended to be a lasting legacy for those who have donated organs and tissue at the end of their life. For more information about joining the organ and tissue donor register please contact www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Body donation

Instead of organ and tissue donation, your loved one may have wished to donate their entire body to medical science for medical research. Guidance on body donation is available from the Human Tissue Authority website at www.hta.gov.uk or by telephoning the medical school at the University of Bristol on 0117 954 6203. Please also inform ward staff or the hospital bereavement service.

Arranging the funeral

Unless there are religious or cultural reasons for holding a funeral quickly, there is no need to hurry. You can take the time you need to make sure the funeral is arranged in a way that will be special to you.

There is no need to wait for hospital documentation before contacting a funeral director. They can begin formalities as soon as you contact them and will provide information and support to you and your family.

Check if a Will has been made by the deceased as soon as possible as it may include special requests about the funeral arrangements.

Costs of funerals do vary and you may wish to contact several funeral directors in order to compare prices before you make a decision. Also check whether the deceased has contributed to schemes to pay for the funeral with a specific funeral director or if there are insurance policies in place.

Funeral directors are very experienced and can provide you with suggestions and guidance concerning the funeral arrangements. A list of local funeral directors is available from the hospital bereavement service.

If you may have trouble in paying for the funeral then you may be entitled to receive a payment from the Department of Work and Pensions Social Fund. To qualify, you or your partner must be receiving an eligible benefit. Contact your local Social Security Office to check eligibility and ask for leaflet DWP 1027 - 'What to do after death in England and Wales'.

After the funeral

The assets of a deceased person have to be administered by collecting in any money and transferring property to new ownership.

In addition, organisations such as pension providers and the Inland Revenue will have to be informed.

This can be attended to after the funeral and normally there is no need to make this a priority in the first few days after death.

If there is a Will, then this should confirm who has been appointed as executors to administer the estate. The executors may have to apply to the Court for Probate to distribute the estate in accordance with the deceased's wishes. Probate confirms who has authority to administer the deceased's estate and many financial organisations normally expect to see Probate before they release significant funds to the beneficiaries of a Will.

The Probate Office help line on 0845 302 0900 will assist you or you may wish to visit Her Majesty's Court Service website at www.hmcourts-service.gov.uk and follow the links to the Wills and Probate section. Regional Probate Offices are located in Bristol on 0117 927 3915 and Winchester on 01962 897 029.

If there is no Will, or the appointed executors do not wish to act, then it is still possible to administer and distribute the estate and guidance is available from the Probate Office telephone number or their website. You will be given details on how to apply for Letters of Administration, which will confirm who has authority to act for the deceased.

Applying for Probate or Letters of Administration can be complicated and time consuming and you may simply feel too upset and unable to deal with all the paperwork. If this is the case then it may be advisable to seek professional advice from a solicitor or accountant.

If the estate and account balances of the deceased are relatively small, and the estate is not complex or contentious, then some organisations will release funds to the executors or next of kin without Probate or Letters of Administration. Contact the organisations where the deceased maintained accounts to establish their requirements. The government leaflet DWP 1027 - 'What to do after death in England and Wales' also provides guidance and is available from the hospital bereavement service or the local Job Centre Plus' office.

Looking to the future

We are all individuals, and each of us will react in our own unique way to being bereaved. There is no right or wrong way to go through bereavement and it is important you allow yourself time to grieve and come to terms with your loss in whichever way you feel is right.

At first, you may feel numb and in a state of shock, unable to believe that this person has died. You might feel upset because other people don't seem to understand what you are going through, or even that some people may seem to be avoiding you. You may even feel angry with the person who has died, as if they have, in some way, let you down.

You might feel unable to concentrate on tasks which normally you have always found so easy. You will probably feel that being very busy, perhaps arranging the funeral, is helpful but you might also feel afraid about how you are going to cope.

It may feel odd that some of your feelings are opposite to each other and you might feel in one moment very sad, and then happy, and then quite indifferent; this too is natural. You may have friends and family who are eager to help and yet you still feel very lonely at times.

You may feel that your body, as well as your emotions, are affected. Getting to sleep at night may be difficult. You may be disturbed by dreams and you may become very tired. Grieving is almost always a very tiring process.

You might have been spending a lot of time and energy looking after your loved one and it is now important to look after yourself.

Many of us, when we are bereaved, find that it helps to talk. The hospital bereavement team, the hospital chaplain and your GP are all available to listen.

In addition there are local and national organisations that specialise in bereavement support and details of these are available from the hospital bereavement service, on the back of this leaflet, or via the links to the bereavement team web page on the Yeovil Hospital website at yeovilhospital.nhs.uk

We are happy to receive your comments or investigate any concerns you may have about the care or standards of service you have experienced at the hospital. Do feel free to raise this with the bereavement team when collecting the certificate, or at a later date if you prefer.

Please use this space for any notes you may have:



Useful contact numbers:

Cruse Bereavement Care

0808 808 1677

cruse.org.uk/bereavement-services/get-help

Samaritans

01935 476 455

samaritans.org

Macmillan

0808 808 00 00

www.macmillan.org.uk

Hospital chaplaincy

01935 384 357

If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.

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