

# Guidance on Preparing for Bereavement for You and Your Relatives



**This guidance has been co-produced by The Charnwood Community Medical Group and the Patient Participation Group.**

Dealing with a bereavement is difficult and individuals experience grief in many ways. Helplessness, loneliness, sadness, and guilt to name but a few. We will all handle things in our own way. However, as a relative when faced with loss the initial period is a time when so many things must be dealt with.

Therefore, planning for a bereavement, whilst not something that any of us perhaps want to consider, could save you and your family a tremendous amount of initial stress.

This document provides some useful guidance to refer to in the following situations:

- Guidance on Preparing for Bereavement for You and Your Family.
- What to do in the event of an unexpected Bereavement.
- What to do in the event of expected Bereavement.
- How to obtain a medical certificate of death.
- How to register a death.
- Tell Us Once Service.

## **Guidance on Preparing for Bereavement for You and Your Family (attached checklist)**

The document is designed to be completed by individuals to assist your next of kin in the identification of essential information that will be needed following your death.

### **What to do in the event of an unexpected death.**

If someone dies unexpectedly you should dial 999 and ask for an ambulance. The ambulance service call taker will ask you a series of questions and give you advice on what to do whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive. The ambulance crew will manage the situation and give you advice on what to do next. In most cases they will leave the person at home and arrange for a funeral director to attend.

You can find more information by following this link:

<https://www.dyingmattersleicestershireandrutland.com/in-an-emergency>

### **What to do in the event of expected death.**

If you are the carer for someone who is nearing the end of their life due to an illness it is important to know what to do to help make the experience less daunting. In most situations a care plan will have been put in place and contact details given to provide help and support. Make sure you know where these are kept. The care plan may contain information about discussions on the patient's end of life wishes, i.e. Do Not Attempt Resuscitation. This information will be found on the patients ReSPECt form which will have been completed by a healthcare professional.

The healthcare professional team are there to help and support you/the patient through these difficult times. As a carer it is important to know in advance what to expect and what you should do when your loved one's condition changes.

You can find more information by following this link:

<https://www.dyingmattersleicestershireandrutland.com/last-days>

If the patient has chosen not to be resuscitated and this information is recorded in the ReSPECT form, then when your relative or friend dies you should call the GP surgery. In out of hours times, you can call NHS 111. In some cases, you will have contact details to ring which will have been discussed with you and recorded in the healthcare plan.

If you do call 999 and a ReSPECT form has been completed, ensure you tell the 999 operator and show the form to the ambulance crew on their arrival.

### **Verification of Death**

When someone dies a Doctor, Nurse or Paramedic will come to verify (confirm) that they have died to then note the day and time for records purposes.

If someone dies during the night or at the weekend 111 will arrange for the Out of Hours team to do this but please be aware that it can sometimes be several hours before they are available to visit.

If the death occurs during GP surgery opening hours then the surgery will arrange for someone to visit as soon as they are able that day.

The Funeral Directors you have chosen will be able to come to take over looking after someone after the death has been verified.

### **How to obtain a medical certificate of death.**

In the event of a death, unexpected or expected the persons GP will be informed. This will either be by the ambulance service if called, or by the healthcare professionals who attend to provide the final care and support.

Across Leicestershire and Rutland, a new role of a medical examiner is being introduced. The patients GP will inform the medical examiner and a decision will be made as to whether the coroner needs to be informed. In most cases the medical examiner will contact you to advise on the process that needs to be followed, they will also inform you how to obtain the certificate of death. This will be issued by the GP, or by the coroner if involved.

Loss of friends or family can be a worrying time, however, help and guidance will always be available through the GP Practice.

### **How to register a death.**

Registering a death is a legal requirement and must be carried out before a funeral can take place. You will be able to make an appointment to register the death with the local registrar for births, marriages, and deaths as soon as a death certificate has been sent to the registrar. In Loughborough the office of the registrar is on Southfields Road, and an appointment can be made by ringing, 0116 3056565. Unless the coroner has been involved, all deaths must be registered within 5 days, including weekends and Bank Holidays.

## **What you need to take with you.**

To register a death the registrar will need the following information about the deceased:

- Forename(s), surname and maiden surname if applicable
- Dates and places of both birth and death
- Occupation or last occupation if retired
- Home address
- Whether the deceased was receiving a pension or allowance from public funds
- If the deceased was married or in a civil partnership
- The name and occupation of spouse or civil partner
- Driving Licence Number
- Vehicle registration number
- Passport number
- The date of birth of the surviving widow, widower or civil partner

If you have the deceased's birth or marriage certificates these can be helpful. The deceased medical card if available, should also be given to the registrar.

## **Certificates you will receive.**

At the registration you will receive the following certificates:

- Certificate for burial or cremation, this will be needed by the funeral director
- Certificate for applicable Social Security benefits, to send to the Department of Social Security

A death certificate once registered will be issued. Additional copies can be purchased at the time. Consider how many copies you may need, Banks and insurance companies along with other legal bodies will not accept photocopies.

## **Tell Us Once Service.**

At the time of making an appointment with the Registrar to register the death, you will be asked if you wish to use the Tell us Once Service. This is a very useful service that helps you let most government services and local councils know that someone has died. To use the service, for which there is no charge, you will need to bring along certain documents and information.

### **Tell Us Once is a service from the government**

Tell us once helps you let most government departments and local councils know when someone dies.

Tell us once is free to use.

The Tell us once office will contact:

- HMRC (Revenue & Customs), personal tax, tax credits, child benefit (not business taxes e.g.VAT)
- DWP (Department for Work & Pensions – to cancel any benefits/pensions)

- Passport Office – cancel British passports
- DVLA – cancel driving licence and tax for a vehicle if required (not sale of vehicle or change of details)
- Local Council: cancel Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support if appropriate, Blue Badge, Electoral register
- HMRC and DWP will contact the next of kin or executor if they need to.
- Other Public Sector pensions e.g. Civil Service Pension, NHS Pension, Pension schemes for Teachers, police, Local Authority pensions

- Veterans UK: Armed Forces Pension Scheme, War Pension Scheme, Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

*Veterans UK is an organisation within the Ministry of Defence and support service personnel, veterans and their families. They will also check if any payments can be made to a dependant.*

A dependant can be the child, spouse or civil partner of the person who died

**Tell Us Once will NOT contact:**

- Bank or building society
- Private pension and insurance providers
- Utility companies: gas, electricity etc.
- TV licensing

Before you contact Tell Us Once you need the following information:

- Date of Birth of the person who died
- National Insurance Number
- Driving Licence Number
- Vehicle registration number
- Passport number
- The date they died
- Personal details of their spouse or partner, if they had one. This includes, name, address, phone number, National Insurance number and date of birth
- Personal details of a family member: this would be if the person who died had no spouse or civil partner.
- Details of any benefits they got or could get e.g. State Pension
- Details of any local council services they got or could get e.g. Blue Badge
- Details of public sector or armed forces pension schemes they were getting or paying in to.
- Permission to share any details about any of the people who you get the information from

You will find lots of information covering death and bereavement on the Dying Matters website:

<https://www.dyingmattersleicestershireandrutland.com/>