



The Clatterbridge
Cancer Centre
NHS Foundation Trust

A large, abstract purple graphic on the left side of the page, composed of several concentric, curved segments that resemble a stylized smile or a series of overlapping arcs.

Practical advice following a bereavement

Rehabilitation and Support

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Please accept our condolences. You may be responsible for making the funeral arrangements.

We understand that this may be a difficult and confusing time and hope that this booklet will give you some practical advice about what you need to do.



When someone dies, the doctor will usually complete a medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) straight away. If this is not possible, we will let you know why. When the death occurs in hospital, we will move the deceased person to the hospital mortuary within a few hours (unless in exceptional circumstances). If you were not present at the time of death, you can visit the deceased at the Hospital Mortuary or your chosen funeral director's chapel of rest.

Formalities that need your immediate attention

- 1.** Please telephone The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre on **0151 318 8653** the next working day (not weekends or bank holidays) between the hours of 10.00am - 1.00pm to arrange an appointment to collect the medical certificate of death and any personal belongings. At this appointment, a Clinical Nurse Specialist or Senior Nurse will meet with you and go through all relevant paperwork including information on how to register the death. This is a good opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. The staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre will also make an appointment for you to register the death at the Registrar's Office.
- 2.** You must register the death in the area that the death occurred. The Registrar's Office for this area is located in **St Georges Hall, The Heritage Entrance, St Georges Place, Liverpool, L1 1JJ.** The Registrar Office is open Monday - Friday 9am - 4.30pm.

Registering a death should normally be done within five working days of the death (unless it has been reported to the coroner).

Please note: a death cannot be registered without a MCCD (unless the coroner has been involved and issues the required paper work (directly to the Registrar Office)).

Who can Register the death?

- A relative of the person who died
- A person who was present at the death
- The person responsible for arranging the funeral

Post-mortem

Even if the doctor knows the cause of death, they may ask your permission to carry out a post-mortem examination and will explain their reasons for this. However, in certain circumstances, the doctor must inform the Coroner who will decide if a post-mortem examination is necessary. If the Coroner decides a post-mortem examination is necessary, this is a legal requirement and the Coroner will issue the death certificate following the conclusion of the post-mortem examination. If the Coroner decides a post-mortem examination is not necessary, the doctor at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre will issue the medical certificate of death. If the Coroner has been contacted, even if a post-mortem examination is not necessary, you will have to wait 24 hours before you can register the death.



The Registrar's office

When you register the death, the Registrar will need the following information:

Essential

- Medical certificate of death
- Deceased's name (and maiden name if appropriate)
- Last known address
- Date and place of birth and death
- Occupation of the deceased and spouse (if applicable)
- Date of birth of surviving spouse (if applicable)
- Whether the deceased was receiving a State Pension or any other benefits

Desirable

- Medical card of the deceased
- Birth certificate of the deceased (if available), or date and place of birth
- Marriage or Civil Partnership certificate

The Registrar will provide you with:

- A green form, for you to give to the funeral director which allows the funeral to take place
- Form BD8 a Certificate of registration of Death for the Department of Social Security, which allows you to deal with any pensions or benefits
- The death certificate and any additional copies you request

You will be charged an administration fee for the death certificate and any additional copies you require. You may require separate copies for:

- Pension claims
- Savings bank certificates
- Bank accounts, etc
- Insurance claims
- Premium Bonds

Most companies will not accept photocopies of the death certificate.

Tell Us Once Service

Most local councils run a service called 'Tell Us Once' which lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go.

The Registrar will tell you about using Tell Us Once and give you a unique reference number to access the service.

Tell Us Once will notify:

- HM Revenue and Customs - to deal with tax and cancel benefits
- Department for Work and Pensions - to cancel benefits
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority - to cancel a driving licence
- Passport Office - to cancel a passport
- The Local Council - to cancel housing benefit, council tax benefit, a Blue Badge, inform council housing services and remove the person from the electoral register

Notification

It is not easy to remember everyone you need to inform, the following list may therefore be helpful.

- Employer
- General Practitioner (if hospital has not done so)



- Church or spiritual support (if applicable)
- Bank and building society
- Insurance company
- Clubs and organisations
- Solicitor
- School or college

Funeral directors

If you are responsible for making the funeral arrangements, you may contact a funeral director of your choice as soon as you wish, although they are unable to collect the deceased's body until the death has been registered. The staff at the funeral directors will help and advise you and, if you wish, can take over the organisation and planning of the funeral. It is hard to think about costs at a time like this, but there are variations and you might want to compare the facilities of several funeral directors.

Funerals can be very expensive. In certain circumstances you may be eligible for a Funeral Payment from the Social Fund if you are in receipt of certain benefits. You may also be eligible for a Bereavement Payment. Please discuss with a member of staff during the follow-up appointment, who can offer further advice and support.

Cremation

If you are planning cremation rather than a burial, please inform the staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre when you collect the medical certificate of death, and the funeral director.

How to cope after a bereavement

Most people experience bereavement at some time in their lives. A death can be a devastating experience and may bring about strong emotions. People react to this in different ways. Even if there has been a long illness, there is still a sense of shock when a death occurs.

Responses to loss

Every loss is a very personal experience and no two people experience loss in the same way – there is only your way. It is impossible to say how long your grief will last, or exactly how you will feel. When you lose someone, you may feel that part of yourself has gone (you are no longer a couple, or a parent, or a sibling). You may wonder how the world can go on, when your world has stopped. You may have physical symptoms such as aches or pains, feel run down, lose sleep or lose your appetite. Grief can be time-consuming and exhausting.

You may also:

- Feel cold, numb, empty and unreal for a time
- Experience anger, panic, guilt or sadness
- Feel a sense of relief that the suffering is over and then feel guilty about thinking this way
- Have periods of restlessness, especially at night when it is difficult to sleep
- Experience depression and occasionally despair
- Feel that you have lost all interest in anything
- Direct blame at other people
- Have less patience than usual



- Lose concentration and things seem to go wrong
- Lose confidence in yourself and your ability to do simple tasks
- Have a delayed reaction to grief and then it can surface at a later date or during another major event in your life

Be gentle with yourself. These are natural reactions to loss and are not signs that there is something seriously wrong; that you cannot cope any more or that you are letting down your family and friends.

People around you

People may avoid talking to you about feelings because they are also finding it difficult to cope and don't know what to say. They may think they are protecting you by not talking about the person who died. However, you may also find support and kindness from people you may not know well, but who have some understanding of what you are going through.

Family members also grieve in different ways and each person will be struggling with their own grief. This can create problems, when each person is not able to understand the needs of the others. Sometimes children's needs are overlooked, or adults try to protect them and they feel shut out and not able to express their grief.

Things to avoid

Try not to:

- Make any major changes to your life too soon. Give yourself time to think about changes and discuss these with others
- Let other people rush you into anything before you are ready, but remember that you sometimes have to give new things a try
- Turn to drugs, smoking or alcohol to stop yourself feeling the pain of your loss

Things to do

- Express your feelings as much as possible
- Allow yourself time to grieve in the way that feels right for you. There is no fixed time to get over bereavement
- Be gentle with yourself. Look after yourself, eat sensibly and take time to rest and think. Look after your health
- Contact your doctor if you feel unwell
- Allow yourself to laugh, cry and be angry. You have lost someone from your life and it hurts, but do not feel guilty if you enjoy some moments
- Keep in touch with family and friends. They may feel awkward offering help, so you may need to let them know what you need or when you are ready to seek help
- Do not be afraid to seek help outside, if you feel it would be easier talking to someone else or if you need some practical assistance
- Family and friends will want you to feel better and may push you to move on, but it will take time to deal with all the upheaval and change that is going on. Gradually, start to think about what you may like to do in the future so that you will have something to look forward to
- Take time to remember the person in special ways. Plant a tree, name a star, create a memory box, or learn to do something new

Bereavement Support

There are several ways in which you may find the right support for you:

- Talking to someone who will be able to listen to your experience of grief and help you cope with some of the distressing feelings and reactions



- Groups where you can meet people who have suffered a similar loss
- Telephone help lines
- Online support through the internet
- Books and literature
- If you have a religious faith, this may be of support to you
- If you give your permission, a member of Staff from The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre will contact you after about 6-8 weeks, to advise you on support available in your area

Useful support organisations

Some GP Surgeries offer a Counselling Service.

Cruse Bereavement Care

PO Box 800
Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1RG
0844 477 9400
Mon - Fri - 9.30am - 5pm
Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk
www.cruse.org.uk
For young people: 0808 808 1677
www.rd4u.org.uk

Samaritans

24 hours a day, 7 days a week
08457 90 90 90

Age UK

Free helpline 0800 169 6565
www.ageuk.org.uk

WAY Foundation (for adults under 50 years)

0870 011 3450
www.wayfoundation.org.uk

Winston's Wish

Help for grieving children and their families
Helpline 0845 20 30 40 5
General enquiries 01242 515 157
www.winstonswish.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment, London
SE1 7UQ
Telephone: 0808 808 0000
www.macmillan.org.uk

How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

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