

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Firstly, we would like to extend our deepest sympathy and condolences at this time. When someone you love dies there are lots of things that need to be done, at a time when you probably least feel like doing them. Whether their death is expected or not it is a very stressful and difficult period and a time when things should be made as easy as possible, this guide has been produced to help you navigate through the urgent practicalities and formalities in the period immediately after someone dies and in the first few days/weeks or even months. There is a lot of information to take in but to help you further we've put together a step-by-step guide of what you will need to do first, followed by a simple but comprehensive checklist of other things you may need to do (if applicable). We have also included contact information for some agencies that you may find helpful now or in the future.

What to do first:

As soon as you can, you will need to get a medical certificate, register the death and arrange the funeral. You don't need to deal with the will, money and property straight away, this can be done in your own time over the following days and weeks.

If your loved one passes away at home and it is expected you will need to contact their GP or health-care team as soon as possible, you should have been provided with this information by the care team, if not then please call 111 for advice. The GP or nurse will usually attend the home to certify the death and issue a medical certificate giving the cause of death, if the person passes away outside of normal surgery hours this may not be issued until the next working day. If your loved one passes away in a hospital or nursing home arrangements will be made by the staff for the medical certificate to be issued. A doctor is not allowed to issue this certificate if they are unsure about the cause of the death, if this happens the death will be referred to a coroner and the body will be taken to a hospital mortuary for further investigation - a hospital may ask for your permission to carry out a post-mortem examination to learn more about the cause of death.

If applicable, you may also be asked about organ donation at this point, this is a process in which suitable healthy organs and/or tissues may be used to help save the lives of up to 9 people by transplant. From Spring 2020 all adults (exclusions apply) in England will be considered eligible for organ donation unless they have a recorded decision to opt-out, this is easier if your loved one carried a Donor Card or were on the NHS Donor Register but the family will also be asked for consent before donation. You can find further information by calling 0330 123 2323 or at www.organdonation.nhs.uk

It is important to contact a Funeral Director as soon as possible after the death of your loved one, this can be done before the medical certificate has been issued. The undertaker will come to collect the body from home or from the hospital mortuary, they will advise you of the next steps and your family member will be taken into their care until further arrangements are made. Although, there is no immediate hurry to do this so you and your family may like to take this time to spend a few minutes with your loved one. Once the undertaker arrives you will be asked