

## WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

### At home

Call the family doctor and nearest relative. If the death was expected, the doctor will give you a medical certificate showing the cause of death. They'll also give you a formal notice that states they've signed the medical certificate and explain to you how to register the death. If the person is to be cremated, you'll need two certificates signed by different doctors.

### In hospital

The hospital will usually issue a medical certificate and formal notice. The body will often be kept in the hospital mortuary until the funeral directors or relatives arrange a chapel of rest, or for the body to be taken home.

### Unexpectedly

If someone dies unexpectedly, or the family doctor hasn't seen them in the last 14 days, the death is reported to a coroner. A coroner is a doctor or lawyer responsible for investigating unexpected deaths. They may call for a post-mortem or inquest, which could delay the funeral.

### Abroad

If someone dies abroad, you will need to register the death according to the regulations of the country and get a consulate death certificate. Register it with the British Consul in the country too, so a record can be kept in the UK. The GOV.UK website provides two leaflets which explain the practical support British consular staff can offer and what you need to do.

### Register the death

Once you have been given the Medical Certificate of Death you should book an appointment with a registrar within 5 days of the death. If it's difficult to attend the office in the district where the death happened, it's possible to register the death by 'declaration' at any register office in England or Wales. *However, the funeral arrangements could be delayed if you choose to do this.*

If the death has been reported to the coroner there may be a delay. You can contact the Kent Coroner on 03000 41 05 03.

## **Kent Registry Offices**

The central number to call for Kent is 03000 41 51 51. They will be able to advise you of your nearest office.

## **Who can register a death?**

- a relative
- a person present at the death
- a person making the funeral arrangements

Other people may be able to register the death in certain circumstances. If you are unsure as to whether you can register, telephone the Registrar who will advise you.

## **What information will I need?**

- the Medical Certificate of Death
- the date and place of the death
- the full name of the person who has died (and maiden name if the deceased was a married woman)
- his/her date and place of birth
- the occupation of the person (if the deceased was a married woman or widow, the full name and occupation of her husband)
- their usual address
- if the deceased was married, the date of birth of their surviving spouse
- whether the deceased was receiving a pension from public funds
- his/her medical card

## **What documents will the Registrar give me?**

- a green form to take to the funeral director or to use yourself to book the cremation or burial. In some cases, this will be issued by the Coroner.
- occasionally a registrar may be able to issue a certificate for burial only (but never cremation) where no one has yet been able to register the death.
- forms for the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions)
- Guidance on using the Government's "Tell Us Once" service.

These documents will be issued free of charge.

You may need additional copies of death certificates which you can purchase from the registrar. These may be required for:

- solicitors
- banks or building societies
- post office accounts
- probate insurance companies
- private pensions
- stocks and shares

If you don't buy enough certificates at the time of the registration, further copies can be purchased but they cost more.

## **Arrange care of the body**

Contact us on 07806 613297 to find out what arrangements will be necessary and what options you have for caring for the body.

## **Think about arranging a funeral**

It can be helpful to think about funeral arrangements but there's no need to be too concerned about details right away as you will be guided through these in time.

Think about the sort of event that would best represent the deceased. How did the dead person live and how can this be reflected in the way we say goodbye? Think about funerals you've been to... What worked? What didn't? Could there be an element of participation or creativity?