



**Airedale**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Information for Bereaved Relatives and Friends

YOUR HOSPITAL *Here to care*

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When someone dies, you may find yourself filled with strong and varying emotions or unable to feel anything much at all. We are all different and moments of particular significance in our lives often show this very clearly.

Over the coming days, as well as coping with your grief, there are things to organise and arrangements to make. We hope the information in this leaflet will provide useful help and advice.

## **What is the first step?**

We appreciate that you may be experiencing additional distress as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. We have amended our information below to reflect current changes and guide you through the new registration process.

If your loved one has died of COVID19 there is a website set up by Cruse for further information <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>

### **The 'death certificate'**

A doctor who has been caring for the patient will need to write a Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) (unless there is a need to speak to the Coroner- see page 5). The doctor will try and do this as soon as possible but it can sometimes take a day or more. We are aware that delays can lead to increased stress and will try and avoid these wherever possible.

The procedure for registering a death during the COVID-19 crisis has changed. You need to phone the Bereavement Officer at the hospital who will explain how to do this.

The Bereavement Officer works from 8am to 1pm Monday to Friday. Please call between 08:30 and 09:30 on the first working day after the death (eg if death was Fri/Sat/Sun call on the Monday. Tuesday after a bank holiday).

The phone number to call is: 01535 294329 - this is the direct number through to the Bereavement Officer.

Leave a message with your name and telephone number if you call outside of these hours. The Bereavement Officer will call you back but it may not be on the same day. The Bereavement Officer will make an appointment to explain what to do next and also about collecting any belongings that have been left at the hospital.

The Bereavement Officer will ask you whether you are arranging a cremation or burial. This can save time by getting appropriate forms signed by hospital doctors. Once the decision is made the hospital will deal with the forms for you.

### **Funeral directors**

Most people choose to use a funeral director to help with arranging a funeral and other practical matters. You can search online or in a local paper for funeral directors.

It is possible to make the necessary arrangements without a funeral director but this can be time consuming and complicated. The Natural Death Centre can help with this (see page 10 for contact details).

### **Registering the death**

All deaths must be registered in the district in which they occurred, even if the deceased lived elsewhere. Arrangements for registering the death have been changed in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Registration should be done by telephone and the Bereavement Officer will explain how to do this.

Bradford Register Office:  
City Hall,  
Centenary Square,  
Bradford,  
BD1 1HY  
Telephone: 01274 432151

## **Who can register the death?**

Certain people have a legal duty to give information: In order of preference (interpreted by the Registrar), they are as follows:

- A relative of the deceased who was present at death.
- A relative of the deceased who was in attendance during the illness.
- Any relative residing or being in the district where the death occurred.
- Anyone present at the time of death.
- An occupier of the house where the death occurred.
- The person arranging the funeral
- The Funeral Director (when acting on behalf of the family)

## **What will the Registrar ask me about the person who has died?**

- The dates and places of birth and death.
- The full name and marital status.
- The home address.
- Last occupation (even if retired).
- If married – the date of birth of the surviving partner.
- If female – the maiden name and husband's full name and occupation.

At this time, it is possible to purchase certified copies of the Death Certificate from the Registrar. You may need this document to send to banks, building societies, insurance companies etc. You may find more than one copy useful, as some organisations will not accept photocopies.

## **When is the Coroner involved?**

The law requires that the hospital informs the Coroner of the death in certain cases, such as:

- Sudden, violent or unnatural death and where the cause is unknown or cannot be ascertained.

The Coroner is responsible for establishing the cause of death. He is helped in this by a Coroner's Officer. The Officer will usually speak to relatives soon after death in order to gather facts and information about the person who has died. This is a legal formality and is not intended to cause any concern. He may also contact the deceased's GP for a recent medical history.

If the cause of death still remains unknown the Coroner will then order a post-mortem examination. The Coroner may also decide to hold an inquest into the death. In these circumstances, the Coroner's Officer will inform you of the time and place. Please note the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death cannot be issued until the Coroner is satisfied of the cause of death. In these circumstances, it is acceptable to register the death after the five day period. You should also advise the funeral director that the Coroner is involved.

## **What if I have concerns?**

You may have questions or concerns about the care your loved one received before they died; if so the Patient Advice and Liaison Officers at Airedale Hospital can arrange for someone to talk to you. If you think this may help, please contact 01535 294019 or [PALS.Office@anhst.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS.Office@anhst.nhs.uk)

## **Bereavement**

### **In the early days**

You may feel distressed immediately after your relative or friend's death, or it may take a few weeks or months to sink in. However, whenever it hits you, you should allow yourself a full range of emotions.

There will come a time when it feels right for you to make decisions regarding disposing of possessions of your loved one or possibly moving house, do not feel pressurised into making these decisions until you feel ready. It may be helpful to accept help from others and to share your feelings with someone you trust.



## **Feelings and emotions**

Bereavement is something which most of us experience at some time in our lives.

The process of grieving is an essential part of acknowledging what your relative or friend meant to you. It can be difficult to accept and adjust to the loss of someone we love deeply. You may feel confused by the different emotions that may at times overwhelm you.

Adjusting to this loss may be difficult and can take a long time. But remember grieving is normal and there is no right or wrong way to do it.

## **Shock and disbelief**

You may not accept that your loved one has died. It may feel unreal. This is a normal reaction that initially cushions you against the loss.

## **Longing**

Longing can be a big part of grieving. You may think you sense the presence of the person who has died, or hear their voice, or you may look for them in a crowd, even though you know they are dead.

## **Sadness or depression**

It is not uncommon to have feelings of sadness or depression. You may feel tired but unable to sleep, hungry but not able to eat. It may be difficult to concentrate and simple problems may get exaggerated out of all proportion. You might find yourself in a state of panic or you may feel run down or lethargic, experiencing aches and pains you don't normally suffer from.

While all this can be a normal part of the grieving process, you must not be afraid to seek advice from your GP.

You may also find that friends and neighbours sometimes avoid you. This may be because they do not quite know what to say to you, or are finding it difficult to cope with their own feelings of loss. It may help if you take the first step by letting them know that you would appreciate their friendship and support.

### **Anger**

Sometimes this is directed at others, sometimes at yourself, with thoughts such as “Why me?” or “Why have you left me?”

### **Guilt**

You may find yourself thinking “If only I had” or “If only I had not”.

### **The passage of time and anniversaries**

You may find memories are less painful with time and that you are able to think about the person who has died without being so distressed. You may also find yourself wanting to go back to your old interests or pursue new ones. There is nothing wrong in this, just allow yourself time to grieve in the way that feels right for you – there are no set right or wrong ways – and bear in mind that particular dates and anniversaries can trigger the grief process all over again.

## **For advice and support**

### **Bradford Counselling Collaborative**

(Mind in Bradford Guideline Service)

For people living in Airedale, Bradford and Craven.

Tel: 01274 594594

### **Manorlands Hospice**

For relatives and friends of patients who have been involved with any Manorlands services.

Tel: 01535 642308

**Sue Ryder Online Community and free online counselling service**, open to all adults. Go to: [www.sueryder.org/support](http://www.sueryder.org/support)

### **Marie Curie Hospice Bradford**

For relatives and friends of patients who have been involved with any Marie Curie Service.

Tel: 01274 337000

### **Pendleside Hospice**

For anyone living in East Lancashire, regardless of whether or not the patient was known to Pendleside Hospice Services.

Tel: 01282 440100

[www.pendleside.org.uk/Bereavement-support](http://www.pendleside.org.uk/Bereavement-support)

West Yorks & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership  
Grief and Loss Support

Tel: 0808 196 3833 (8am - 8pm every day)

[griefandlosswyh.co.uk](http://griefandlosswyh.co.uk)

Further advice about practical issues can be obtained from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Other sources of help and support both national and local are:

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)  
[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)
- Bereavement Advice Centre  
[www.bereavementadvice.org](http://www.bereavementadvice.org)
- Cancer Support Yorkshire  
[www.cancersupportyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.cancersupportyorkshire.org.uk)
- Bradford Bereavement Support 01274 619522  
[www.bradfordbereavement.org.uk](http://www.bradfordbereavement.org.uk)
- Child Bereavement UK  
[www.childbereavement.org](http://www.childbereavement.org)
- Craven and Bradford Cruse 01756 797799  
[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)
- Asian Family Counselling Service 020 8571 3933  
[www.asianfamilycounselling.org](http://www.asianfamilycounselling.org)
- Samaritans 01274 547547  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- Lesbian & Gay Bereavement Helpline 020 7837 3337
- Winstons Wish 08088 020 021  
[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)
- The Natural Death Centre 01962 712690  
[www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)
- Dying Matters 0800 0214466  
[www.dyingmatters.org](http://www.dyingmatters.org)

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01535 294019.

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, the Text Relay Service can be used to contact us. Dial **18001** followed by the contact number.

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[www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk](http://www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk)

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