

How To Cope When Someone Dies

The Vale Medical Centre has put together a guide to practical implications of bereavement to help you through this difficult time.

Grief and personal distress may make it hard to deal with urgent practical matters and formalities. The following guide is a simple list of steps you need to take when someone close to you dies.

Prior to the Funeral

Obtain the medical certificate of the Cause of Death.

This is the first step in the process and further arrangements cannot be made until this is obtained. Normally your GP or a doctor who has been attending the deceased within the last 14 days of their life will issue the certificate. If the doctor feels he cannot issue the certificate then a coroner will be notified and they will issue a coroners' certificate.

Registering the Death

This must take place within five days of the death, in the district where the death occurred, unless an inquest is to be held. The doctors certificate of death should be taken to the Registrar's Office with, if possible, the Medical Card and Birth Certificate of the deceased.

The Registrar will require the following information.

- Full name of the deceased
- Date and place of birth and death
- Marital status of the deceased
- Home address of the deceased
- If male, his last occupation even if retired.
- If female, either married or widowed, maiden name and husband's full name and occupation
- If married at date of death, date of birth of surviving partner.

It is therefore wise to ensure you have all this information before you go to see the Registrar.

The Registrar will issue a green certificate which you then must hand to the funeral director before the funeral can take place.

Certificate of registration for social security purposes

The Death certificate is needed by many organisations as proof of death. Additional copies may be purchased from the Registrar.

Local Registrar of Births and Deaths

Appointments are required

Lewisham 368 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LQ
Telephone: 020 8690 2128

Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH
Telephone: 020 8313 4666

Greenwich Town Hall, Wellington Street, London SE18 6PW
Telephone: 020 8921 5015

Choose your Funeral Director

You will need the green certificate (given by the registrar). You must decide whether you want the deceased to rest at home or at the funeral directors chapel and whether or not you wish the deceased to be viewed.

Contact the Deceased's Solicitor

If the deceased has left a will you then need to contact the executor's and get a solicitor to read the will as there may be instructions as to the type of funeral required and whether organs are to be donated. There may also be a pre-paid funeral plan in existence which, you may be unaware of. Whether or not there is a will, probate has to be applied for if the estate is over £5,000.

Burial or Cremation

You will have to decide whether you want the deceased to be buried or cremated.

Notifying close Friends and Relations

You will need to notify close friends and relations of the bereavement, particularly those who will be attending the funeral.

Choice of Service

You need to choose the type of service you want, whether it is religious or not. The funeral director can help you with the church and minister.

Flowers or Donation

You need to decide whether you want flowers at the funeral or if you would prefer donations to a nominated charity.

Bereavement Counselling

If you need help with your loss there are a number of bereavement counsellors that you can contact. Lewisham Bereavement Counselling can be contacted at Lewisham Town Hall, Catford, London SE6 4RU on 020 8314 6000 or ask your GP who can arrange this for you.

Press Notices and Obituaries

You may wish to place notices in the local or national press.

After the Funeral

Headstones and Memorials

Organise memorial cards or thank you cards

Returning Documents and Contacting People.

You may have to return:

- Payable Orders
- Passports
- Driving Licence
- Season Tickets (you may need to claim a refund)
- Membership cards
- Library cards
- Library books and tickets

You may have to notify

- Mortgage company or landlord
- Meals on wheels and home help
- Banks and Building societies
- The local council
- Credit card companies
- Loan and Hire Purchase companies
- Investment companies
- Inland Revenue
- Department of Work and Pensions regarding their state pension
- Utilities companies
- Hospital & Doctors' surgery
- Insurance companies
- Pension companies
- Post Office to get mail redirected

Contacting the Bereavement Register

Direct marketing initiative targeting a deceased person can cause added and unnecessary distress for grieving families. By registering, you can put a stop to junk mail and reduce the number of unsolicited telephone calls. This is a free service and you can find information at www.thebereavementregister.co.uk

Footprints

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the LORD. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonged to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it. 'LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.'

The LORD replied 'My precious, precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you only see one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.'

The staff at The Vale Medical Centre hope this leaflet is of help to you and that Footprints brings a little comfort to you and your family.