

What to do When a Relative Passes Away After a Long Illness

We have written this leaflet to hopefully give you more information about what you need to do after a loved one passes away to ease any worries or concerns.

Please do not telephone 999 these calls are not necessary when death is expected

WHO TO PHONE STRAIGHT AWAY

If your relative dies when the surgery is open, contact the GP (01226 216000 / 282820) or District Nurse (01226 729871 / 730000 main hospital reception) who have been caring for your relative. You need to inform them that your relative has passed away and that it was an expected death. The District Nurse or GP will then come out and visit to certify the death.

If your relative dies at night or outside of our normal opening hours then you need to contact the out of hours GP (0333- 2004055) or the Rapid Response Nurses (01226 730000 main hospital reception) and inform them that your relative has passed away. Tell them that it was an expected death and they will come and visit to certify the death.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

After your relative has been visited and the death has been certified, you can then, in your own time, contact the funeral director from the firm of your choice, to collect your relative and take them to their chapel of rest.

If this was an expected death then your relatives GP will complete the death certificate. If the death occurred during GP working hours, the death certificate will be issued that day if the relatives GP is working. If the death occurred outside of working hours, the death certificate will be issued when your relatives GP is working**. The surgery will contact you when the death certificate is completed so that you can make arrangements for collection. You will need to contact the Registry office (01226 773555) to make an appointment to register the death. It is important that you make an appointment at the registry office and do not just turn up.

** Please note the GP who has recently seen the deceased patient is required to complete the death certificate unless the coroner advises otherwise.

Special Cases – death due to Industrial Illness

If your relative has died of an industrial disease then it is the law that a post mortem is obligatory. When they die, the post mortem has to be carried out by the Coroner's office. Your relative will need to be transported under the direction of the police and it just "procedure and protocol" You will need to contact the police for a GUIDED ESCORT please telephone 999 or 101 and advise the police that it is an expected death and two officers will come to your house and arrange for the deceased to be taken in a special ambulance to the hospital. Often the health care professional who certifies your relative can contact on your behalf if you find this part stressful.

AT THE REGISTRY OFFICE

You will need to take the following documentation with you when you register the death

- Death Certificate (obtained from GP)
- Birth Certificate (If possible)
- Medical Card (If possible)

The registry office will make a charge of £4.00 for each death certificate issued (you may need more than one copy if you have to sort out any financial matters regarding the deceased)

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

If the decision is to have a burial then your funeral director will make all the necessary arrangements and talk you through what you need to do.

If the decision is for a cremation then the funeral director will contact the GP who saw your relative prior to death. The GP will complete the first part of a legal document called a cremation form. The GP will need details such as time of death and who was present at the time of death. The GP may need to speak to whoever was with your relative when they passed away and ask if there are any concerns regarding their care or circumstances leading up to them dying. If any District Nurses were involved the GP will also speak to them. We will also need to know the occupation of the deceased.

The cremation form has two parts. The first part is completed by your relatives own GP, the second part is completed by a GP from another practice. (This GP will have not been involved with the care of your relative). The part two GP may also contact you to discuss how your relative passed away, they will also contact other professionals who cared for your relative during their final illness. This is now a legal requirement and will occur in every cremation to ensure the relatives/ nursing staff have no concerns regarding the final days of care surrounding their family member's death. If you do have any worries or concerns please express these to the Dr who telephones you.

Occasionally the GP of the relative who has passed away will need to speak to the coroner for advice about the death certificate. This is a routine occurrence and should not cause you any further worries. However, if the GP has concerns or is unclear about the cause of death, then they may ask the coroner to be involved, occasionally it may be necessary to proceed with a post mortem (autopsy to find out the cause of death), before the funeral can be held

If you have any worries or concerns about the death of your relative then you can always contact the GP, Coroners officer or the registrar when you register the death.