



Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Help for the Bereaved

A Practical Guide for Family and Friends





A message from us to you

We would like to express our deepest condolences to you, your family and friends during this very sad time. We understand that the time ahead may be difficult and painful for you and we would like to support you through this.

This booklet has been provided to assist with some of the practical and emotional aspects of losing someone that you love.

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Introduction: the first few days after the death

There is no normal or right way to feel following bereavement, and most people experience a whole range of emotions.

The information in this booklet is designed to try and make the early days as easy as possible. Take time to read the information within this booklet and do not hesitate to ask hospital staff if you need assistance or further information.

In the first few days following your bereavement, the Bereavement Officer will contact you to advise you regarding the next steps and to answer any of your questions. You will also be contacted by one of the Medical Examiners.

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be emailed to the Dorset Registration Service by the Bereavement Officer, there is no requirement to collect any paperwork from the hospital.

Please note: The Bereavement Office is open Monday to Friday between 9am - 4pm and can be reached on **01305 255125**. Should you be unable to reach a member of the team please leave a message on the voicemail. This is checked regularly within working hours and your call will be returned.

Please be aware that the Bereavement Office is closed at weekends and during public holidays, but please feel free to leave a voicemail during these times.

Donation of Organs or Tissues

The law around organ donation in England has changed from 20th May 2020.

For more information please visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk/uk-laws/organ-donation-law-in-england/ or call NHS Blood and Transplant on 0300 123 23 23.

Organ and tissue donation gives many families the option of making a difference to others, the gift of such a donation has the ability to help save or improve the lives of many other individuals. Sadly many people die in the UK whilst waiting for an organ or tissue to be available.

After the law changes it will mean that most people will be considered for organ donation when they die, unless they have opted out of the NHS Organ Donor Register. As family members you will still be asked about the donation of organs from your loved one.

The Medical Examiners Process

Medical Examiners are senior medical Doctors, who are trained in the legal and clinical elements of death certification processes. They review every death in the hospital on the same or next working day.

The role of the Medical Examiner includes:

1. Reviewing the medical records of the patient.
2. Liaising with the doctor(s) who treated the patient in their final illness.
3. Agreeing the proposed cause of death with the most senior attending doctor and discussing the overall accuracy of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD).

Once steps 1 to 3 have been carried out, the Medical Examiner (or a member of the team) will contact you via telephone and discuss the cause of death and provide an opportunity for any concerns to be raised.

There are circumstances which require referral to His Majesty's Coroner. The Medical Examiner will inform you if this is the case.

The Medical Examiners liaise closely with the Bereavement Office to ensure that there is no significant delay in the issuing of an MCCD.

Registering the Death – By appointment only

A death should be registered at the Registrar's Office covering the district where the death occurred within 5 working days of the MCCD being issued. A list of the local Registrar of Births and Deaths offices is on page 7.

However you can register outside the district, this is known as 'Registration by Declaration'. Please inform the Bereavement Office if you wish to register by declaration.

To register the death you will need the following information:

- The persons full name, home address, date and place of birth and occupation
- Whether the person had a pension or allowance from public funds
- If the person was married the details of their spouse.

The Registrar will give you a green form that authorises burial or cremation and this should go to the undertaker. Certified copies of the death certificate are also available from the Registrar for which there is a charge.

Tell Us Once Service

The Registration Service also provides the National 'Tell Us Once' service when you register a death within the borough. On your behalf they can notify all central and local government and council departments that need to be informed of the death.

Which organisations will be notified?

If you decide to use the 'Tell Us Once' service, the following departments and organisations will be notified.

Council services

- Council housing
- Housing and council tax benefit
- Council tax
- Libraries
- Blue badges
- Adult social care (including attendance allowance)
- Collection of payments for council services
- Electoral services

Government organisations

- Department for Work and Pensions
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Identity and Passport Service
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Ministry of Defence, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

When you make an appointment to register a death you will be asked if you wish to use the 'Tell Us Once' service. If you do, you will be informed of the extra information required to bring to the appointment. There is no charge to use this service.

The information that is given will be treated securely and confidentially. The organisations that are contacted will use the information to update records, to end services, benefits and credits provided, as appropriate, or to start up services. They may use the information in other ways, but only as the law allows.

Further details can be obtained from the registrar office on: 01305 225153

Registrars of Births and Deaths Offices

For appointments at all offices please telephone: 01305 225153 or find them online at: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages/registration-offices-in-dorset.aspx

Blandford

Nordon Lodge
58 Salisbury Road
Blandford DT11 7LN

Gillingham

Gillingham Town Hall
School Road
Gillingham SP8 4QR

Bridport

Bridport Town Council
Mountfield
Rax Lane
Bridport DT6 3JP

Wareham

The Library
South Street
Wareham BH20 4LR

Dorchester

Dorset History Centre
Bridport Road
Dorchester DT1 1RP

Weymouth

Weymouth Library
Great George Street
Weymouth DT4 8NN

Ferndown

King George V Pavilion
Peter Grant Way
Ferndown BH22 9EN

The offices open at variable times Monday to Friday; some offices also open on Saturdays.

The Coroner

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer who enquires into deaths, which appear to be violent, unnatural, or of sudden and unknown cause. Some deaths are reported by hospital doctors to the Coroner's Office, typically deaths where:

- The cause of death is uncertain
- Death was sudden or violent or caused by an accident
- Death might be due to an industrial injury or disease
- The death occurred while the patient was undergoing an operation or was under the effect of anaesthetic
- The patient was subject to safeguarding concerns

The Coroner will decide whether or not a post mortem examination is needed. The Coroner has a legal right to request a post mortem even if this is contrary to the family's wishes although relatives are entitled to be represented by a doctor if they wish. After the post mortem the Coroner's Office will advise you on how to register the death.

If further investigations are needed the Coroner's Office will inform you on the process and the potential need to hold an inquest. An inquest is an enquiry into the medical cause and circumstances of death. It may be held in public, sometimes with a jury present.

The Coroner's Office can be contacted between 9.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Thursday, and between 9.00am and 3.30pm on Friday on 01202 123900.

The Coroner's Office address is:	Coroner's Office for the County of Dorset Town Hall Bournemouth BH2 6DY
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Arranging the funeral

Check if there is a Will made by the deceased as it may include requests or details of funeral arrangements. The cost of a funeral does vary and the deceased may have contributed to a funeral plan to help pay for the funeral with a specific undertaker or there may be an insurance policy in place.

You may wish to contact several funeral directors to compare prices before you make a decision.

If you are having difficulties dealing with the cost of a funeral, you may be able to get assistance from the government to help you. To qualify you, your partner or immediate member of your family must be receiving an eligible benefit visit www.gov.uk/funeral-payments for details or more information.

Unless there are religious or cultural reasons for holding a funeral quickly you can take some time to make sure that the funeral is arranged in a way that will be special to you. Once you have appointed a funeral director they will guide you through the process of arranging a service.

After the funeral

As a representative of the deceased you may need to contact organisations such as the bank or building society, insurance companies, utility companies and any other organisations not informed by the 'Tell Us Once' service.

If there is no Will or you need assistance to obtain Probate or Grant of Representation then visit www.gov.uk/probate-estate or call 0300 1231072 for advice.

Alternatively you can contact the Citizen Advice Bureau on 0344 4111444 or www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

If you do not wish to become involved in dealing with the deceased's estate then it may be advisable to seek professional advice from a solicitor or accountant.

Help and support

Grief is a very individual process and we all react differently. It is important that you allow yourself time to grieve and come to terms with your loss in whichever way you feel is right.

The hospital chaplaincy team are available directly on 01305 255198 with an answerphone message should you be unable to speak to them. The Chaplains can be very helpful in providing support at this very difficult time.

Your GP surgery can provide a counselling service or you may find these addresses useful for support following your loss:

Samaritans

(Emotional support for any issue)

Tel: 116 123

The Samaritans of Dorset

13 King Street, Weymouth DT4 7BJ

www.samaritans.org Email: jo@samaritans.org

Citizens Advice Bureau

(a range of advice)

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

1 Acland Road, Dorchester DT1 1JW

Tel: 0344 4111444

www.centraldorsetca.org.uk

CRUSE Bereavement Care

(specialised bereavement support)

Tel: 0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

AGE UK

Tel: 0800 678 1174

www.ageuk.org.uk

Age UK Dorchester

Units 1 & 2, 5 Crown Square, Poundbury, Dorchester DT1 3EN

Tel: 01305 269444

www.ageuk.org.uk/dorchester

Department for Work and Pensions

(advice on funeral payments and other benefits)

Tel: 0800 731 0469

www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/bereavement

HM Revenue and Customs

(advice on inheritance and probate)

Tel: 0300 123 1072

www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve the care and services we provide at Dorset County Hospital, you might receive a survey in the post. This will ask for your feedback relating to the care your loved one received, as well as the support provided to you. We fully respect this is a very difficult time for you and your family, so do not feel rushed or feel you must complete the survey.

The publishers of this booklet have displayed the following advertising to provide some help in arranging a funeral in your area. Although this does not include every service in your locality, we hope it will be of assistance to you at this time.

The hospital does not endorse any of the products or services offered.

All information found in this booklet, including addresses and telephone numbers, is correct at the time of printing. From time to time local changes occur of which we are unaware. Although we try to keep information as up to date as possible, if you find any information to be incorrect, please let us know by telephoning:-

Bereavement Office
Dorset County Hospital
Tel: 01305 255125

Reference: Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust
Bereavement Book
Review Date: December 2025
Publication Date: December 2023



The Hospital would like to thank RNS Publications for publishing this information and the following pages contain some features from services offering their help at this time.

Whilst the Hospital is grateful of their support it does not endorse or recommend any of the services that they provide.



stopping mail

STOPPING JUNK MAIL

It is distressing to deal with a bereavement and unsolicited mail can be insensitive and destructive during a grieving process.

By scanning the below QR code on your phone or visiting www.stopmail.co.uk, we are able to securely share this information with mailing organisations and under the Data Protection Act the information will not be used for any other purpose.

Other benefits reduce the possibility of identity fraud, such as assumed identity and you will only have to supply the information once.



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Tel: 01935 816817



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Beaminster

Dorset

DT8 3DZ

Tel: 01308 862358

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Correct at time of publication
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Email: info@abbottandrees.co.uk

Website: www.abbottandrees.co.uk

Do you need help with

Probate Matters?

You may need help, support or advice on what to do when someone dies in relation to probate.

Freephone: 0808 168 5181

Mobiles: 0333 240 0360

We offer free guidance and advice on the legal and financial aspects of bereavement including your responsibilities and whether probate is required.

Calls are free from most land lines, some calls may be monitored for training purposes and all calls are confidential. This service is provided by the Bereavement Support Network Ltd.

 **bereavement**
support network



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is from
£990.00**

Price valid at time of publication
but may be subject to change.



This publication has been jointly developed between ourselves and the hospital. We hope that it has been or will be of help at this time and we welcome any comments or suggestions that you may have.

Please contact us either by phone, email or by post.

RNS Publications, Trium House, Unit 15,
Broughton Way, Whitehills, Blackpool FY4 5QN

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PLEASE ACCEPT OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES FOR YOUR LOSS

We understand that the prospect of dealing with the estate of a lost relative can be daunting. We are here to offer you free advice relating to any of our services which could help, including:

- Sales Appraisal for Probate
- Lettings Appraisal
- Auctions
- Conveyancing
- Mortgages
- Valuation and Specialist Surveys
- House Clearance
- Property Preparation for Market
- Instant Offer for Quick Sale

Please contact us to speak with one of our friendly team.



Dorsetproperty

L E T T I N G S • S A L E S

heretohelp@dorsetproperty.co.uk

www.dorsetproperty.co.uk

Blandford
01258 452444

Dorchester
01305 257357

Shaftesbury
01747 853590

Sherborne
01935 815300

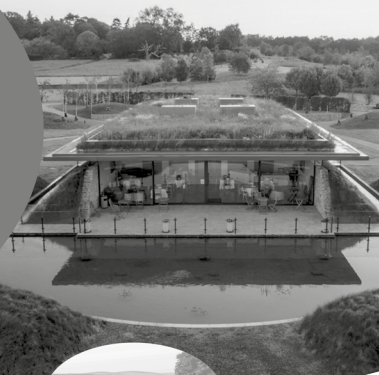
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01305 774800

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www.harbourview.co.uk
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WEYMOUTH

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Weston Street Chapel, Portland

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