**Heathbridge Practice**

# ****BEREAVEMENT INFORMATION****

**What to do after a death**

Losing a loved one is a traumatic experience. Death in itself is distressing and unfortunately the administrative procedures which must be followed can be an additional unwelcome burden. These pages are designed to provide some useful help and advice with the arrangements for dealing with a death.

1. **Expected Death**

**Registering a death during the Covid19 pandemic:**

**Step 1:**

If the death was expected and occurred in our opening hours, contact the doctor who attended the deceased during their final illness. He/She will issue a medical certificate.

If the death is outside opening hours then you will need to contact the Out of Hours Medical Service and they will attend to certify the death. The death certificate will usually be issued by the deceased’s normal GP the next working day, please ring in the afternoon to see if it is ready.

**Step 2:**

Following the implementation of the Coronavirus Act and for the duration of the pandemic period, deaths will be registered by telephone appointment. There will be no requirement for relatives to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death from the hospital, care home or GP. A scan of the signed certificate will be sent by the GP to the registrar directly at registeroffice@wandsworth.gov.uk.

The green certificate for burial or cremation will subsequently be transmitted electronically to the chosen Funeral Director, crematorium or cemetery office. There will be no requirement for relatives to attend the office in person. The office will be closed to the public.

Please contact the office on 020 8871 6120 to confirm that the Register Office have received the Medical Cause of Death Certificate before making an appointment.

**Subesquently**[**book an appointment**](https://registrars.wandsworth.gov.uk/OnlineBookings/default.aspx)**online once it is confirmed that they have the necessary paperwork.**

The registrar will call you at your scheduled appointment time.

**The death certificate should be registered to the Registry of Births, Death & Marriages within 5 days of death.**

**Details of Register Office:**

Register of Births and Deaths:

Register Office
Wandsworth Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
SW18 2PU

Tel 0208 871 6120

Email: registeroffice@wandsworth.gov.uk

1. **Unexpected Death:**

If you discover a body or if the death is sudden or unexpected, you should contact the following:

* The family doctor
* The deceased’s nearest relative
* The police

The death will be reported to a coroner in the following circumstances:

* An accident or injury
* An industrial disease
* During a surgical operation
* Before recovery from anaesthetic
* If the cause of death is unknown or unexplained.

The coroner may arrange for a post-mortem examination of the body. The consent of relatives is not needed, but they are entitled to be represented at the examination by a doctor.

**Arranging the funeral**

Once the death has been confirmed by a medical practitioner, a Funeral Directors should be contacted so they can collect the deceased and take them to the Chapel of Rest. Below is a list of some of the local funeral directors:

Your funeral director can make all the arrangements for the funeral, burial or cremation, religious or secular service. The funeral director can also advise on all the procedures and documents need to register the death.

You can contact the funeral directors out of normal working hours.

**Help with the cost of the funeral**

If you are having trouble paying for a funeral that you have to arrange, you may be able to get a Social Fund Funeral Payment to help with the cost. To qualify, you or your partner must be receiving one of the following benefits:

· Employment Support Allowance

· Personal Independence Payment

· Pension Credit

· Working Tax Credit

· Child Tax Credit

· Housing benefit

· Council Tax Benefit

You can claim this funeral payment with form SF200 up to 3 months after the date of the funeral. The form should be sent to you by the local DWP office (Jobcentre Plus).

**After the funeral**

**The “Tell Us Once” Service** is a partnership project between Wandsworth Borough Councils and Government departments. The way it works is that you ring just one number and they inform other agencies for you, eg DVLA, Dept Work & Pensions, Passport office, Tax credits and Council services.

When you ring the Registrar you will be asked if you would like to use the “Tell Us Once” service to automatically notify central Government Deptartments and local Council services of the death. If you choose to opt in, you will be told what additional information you will need to bring with you to the Register Office appointment.

The death can be registered by a relative of the deceased or by a person arranging the funeral. You will need to take with you the following documents:

· the medical certificate of cause of death

· information regarding a pension or allowance from public funds

The Tell it Once helpline is 0800 085 7308

**Probate**

Probate is a document issued by the Probate registry confirming that an executor has the right to wind up an estate of the person who died. The “estate” is the house, money, savings left by the deceased. The “executor” is the person chosen in the will to sort out the estate and make sure it goes to the people named in the will.

**Benefits**

If you are widowed or become a surviving civil partner, you may be entitled to bereavement benefits. All bereavement benefit claims must be made on form BB1. You can get this form from your local Jobcentre Plus office.

**Bereavement Allowance** – This must be claimed within 3 months of the death of your spouse or civil partner. You may be able to get bereavement allowance if you were aged 45 or over but below state pension age when your spouse or civil partner died. The amount you get will depend on your age, when your spouse or civil partner died, and his or her NI contributions.

**Bereavement Payment** – This must be claimed within 12 months of the death of your spouse or civil partner. This is a tax-free lump sum paid if your spouse or civil partner had paid enough NI contributions and one of the following applies:

· you were under state pension age when your spouse or civil partner died

· your spouse or civil partner was not entitled to a CAT A state pension

**Child Benefit** – If a child has died, HM Revenue and Customs must be told within 8 weeks. Child benefit will be paid for 8 weeks after the death.

**Widowed Parents Allowance** – This must be claimed within 3 months of the death of your spouse or civil partner. You may be able to get widowed parents allowance if your spouse or civil partner died and you have at least one child for whom you can get Child Benefit or you are expecting a child by your late husband.

For comprehensive information on Bereavement Benefits you should consult your local Jobcentre Plus office.

**Bereavement Support**

Most people experience bereavement at sometime in their lives and grief is a natural response. However grief is very complex and it is not always easy to talk to family and friends about the difficult emotions involved. There are a number of organizations who specialise in helping people understand and cope with grief. Below is a list of some local and national services:

**Local and National Organisations**

* Wandsworth Bereavement Team Tel 0207 223 3178 **www.wandsworthbereavement.org.uk**
* CRUSE Bereavement Care Tel 0844 477 9400
* The Way Foundation Tel 0870 0113450
* The Compassionate Friends Tel 0845 1232304

**Normal procedure to register deaths**

If the death was expected, contact the doctor who attended the deceased during their final illness. If the doctor can certify the cause of death he or she will give you the following:

· a Medical Certificate that shows the cause of death (this is free of charge and will be in a sealed envelope addressed to the registrar).

· a Formal Notice that states that the doctor has signed the Medical Certificate and tells you how to get the death registered.

If the death is outside working hours then you will need to contact the Out of Hours Medical Service and they will attend to certify the death. The death certificate will usually be issued by the deceased’s normal GP the next working day, please ring in the afternoon to see if it is ready.

The death certificate should be registered to the Registry of Births, Death & Marriages within 5 days of death.

Register of Births and Deaths:

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*Produced by Heathbridge Practice*