

Warrington Hospital

A GUIDE FOR BEREAVED RELATIVES and FRIENDS



Helpful Information

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We extend to you and your family our sympathy at this time of great sadness.

We hope that this booklet will help you register the death which will assist you to arrange the funeral. The information included offers a simple guide to what has to be done in the first few days after your bereavement. We hope it will be of help, alongside the support and advice of your family, friends and funeral director.

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

We would ask you to telephone the Bereavement Office after 11.00 a.m. the next working day on **01925 662294 / 01925 275281**. This will allow us to take the contact name and telephone number of a person who we can call once the doctors have attended the office.

In most cases the hospital will give you a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. We will endeavour to have this available within 48 hours, although it may take a little longer after weekends and bank holidays.

There are some circumstances when a doctor is required to report a death to the Coroner. This means that they will not be able to complete a certificate until after they have done this. As the Coroner's Office is only available Monday to Friday and at certain times of the day, this may cause a slight delay. Occasionally the Coroner's Office may not allow the hospital to issue paper work and may arrange a Coroner's post mortem examination. A Coroner's Officer will contact you as soon as possible if the death is reported to them and discuss any decisions made.

Please try not to worry, our staff will keep you informed as much as possible.

May we advise you in your own interest not to attend the hospital without first telephoning. The appropriate forms may not be available when you arrive, which may cause you an unnecessary journey.

Once the Bereavement Office staff have confirmed that the doctor has been able to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death they will call you back as soon as possible. They will also keep you updated if the certificate is not yet fully processed.

The Bereavement Office opening hours for collection of paperwork/property are:

Monday - Friday: 9.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

The doctor's certificate needs to be taken to the Register Office. You will need to make an appointment to register the death. (Please refer to pages 6, 7 and 8 of this booklet for further information regarding this).

You will also be given by the Bereavement Office staff a Funeral Director's Authority Form (a green hospital release slip). This should be completed and given to the funeral director of your choice.

There may be personal belongings of the deceased which can also be collected from the office.

Where is the Bereavement Office?

The Bereavement Office is located at the rear of the hospital site, on the ground floor of Cheshire House. Cheshire House is one of two three storey buildings near the Guardian Street entrance to the hospital adjacent to the railway line. Access is gained from Lovely Lane by following the road round to the left and continuing on the road adjacent to the railway line. Cheshire House is clearly visible on the left.

Dedicated parking is available, but there is also parking in the very near vicinity. From the Guardian Street entrance, follow the one way system, then turn right between the two double storey car parks, turn right again and Cheshire House is immediately facing.

Cremation

If the deceased person is to be cremated please tell your funeral director **and** the staff in the office. A cremation document will be required to be completed by two doctors, and sufficient time is needed to get the appropriate paperwork signed. Your funeral director will order and collect this paperwork once he has been informed that it is available.

Hospital Post Mortem Examination

Although a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death may still be issued by the hospital, a hospital doctor may ask your permission to perform a post mortem examination. This may allow more information to be gained regarding your relative's illness. If you agree to a post mortem examination, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You may refuse permission for a hospital post mortem but not for a Coroner's post mortem.

The fact that a hospital post mortem examination is to be performed should not cause any significant delay and you may go ahead and register the death. You should inform the funeral director that a post mortem is taking place.

Following a hospital post mortem examination, you may wish to know the result. This information can be obtained by asking your General Practitioner to contact the hospital on your behalf or by arranging an appointment with the relevant hospital consultant.

Organ and Tissue Donation

Many families take some comfort in considering tissue donation after someone has died. Your loved one may have already signed the Organ Donor Register or have previously expressed their wishes prior to their death. Although the donation of organs has to be completed timely (usually patients are ventilated), tissue can be donated in some cases up to 24 - 48hrs.

If you wish to discuss the option of donation further then you can contact a nurse for further information from the National Referral Centre on 0800 432 0559 (freephone). 8am-8pm (nurse available) 8pm-8am (answering machine - messages will be picked up in am).

If the death has been reported to the Coroner

Some of the reasons why a hospital death may need to be reported to the Coroner include:

- The cause of death is unknown
- The deceased was not seen by the certifying doctor either after death or within 14 days before death
- The death was violent or suspicious
- The death was unnatural
- The death may be due to an accident (whenever it occurred)
- The death may be due to self-neglect or neglect by others
- The death may be due to an industrial disease or related to the deceased's employment
- The death may be due to an abortion
- The death occurred during an operation or before recovery from the effects of an anaesthetic
- The death may be a suicide
- The death occurred during or shortly after detention in police or prison custody
- The death occurred while the deceased was subject to compulsory detention under the Mental Health Act
- For any other concerning feature

If the doctor reports the death, then one of the Coroner's Officers will usually want to speak to you also. If the Coroner's Officer agrees that the doctor may issue a certificate he will contact the Register Office, giving authorisation for the death to be registered. Relatives will then be able to make arrangements to register the death (although it may not be possible to register until the following day).

If the Coroner's Officer does not agree to the authorisation then the death becomes 'a Coroner's case' which means that the doctor will not be able to issue a certificate, the paperwork is taken over by the Coroner and a post mortem will be required.

If the death you are concerned with has been taken over by the Coroner

A Coroner - a qualified doctor or lawyer - is responsible for inquiring into deaths in certain circumstances. These include all sudden deaths and deaths where the medical cause is unknown, or thought to be unnatural as; for example, the result of an accident or assault.

A Coroner's Officer will tell you if the death has been taken over by the Coroner. This means that the death cannot be registered, nor the funeral take place without the Coroner's authorisation. You should inform the funeral director as soon as possible that the Coroner is involved.

It is advisable to speak to a Coroner's Officer in order to let you know when the death can be registered. The telephone number for the Coroner's Officers is **01606 363892**.

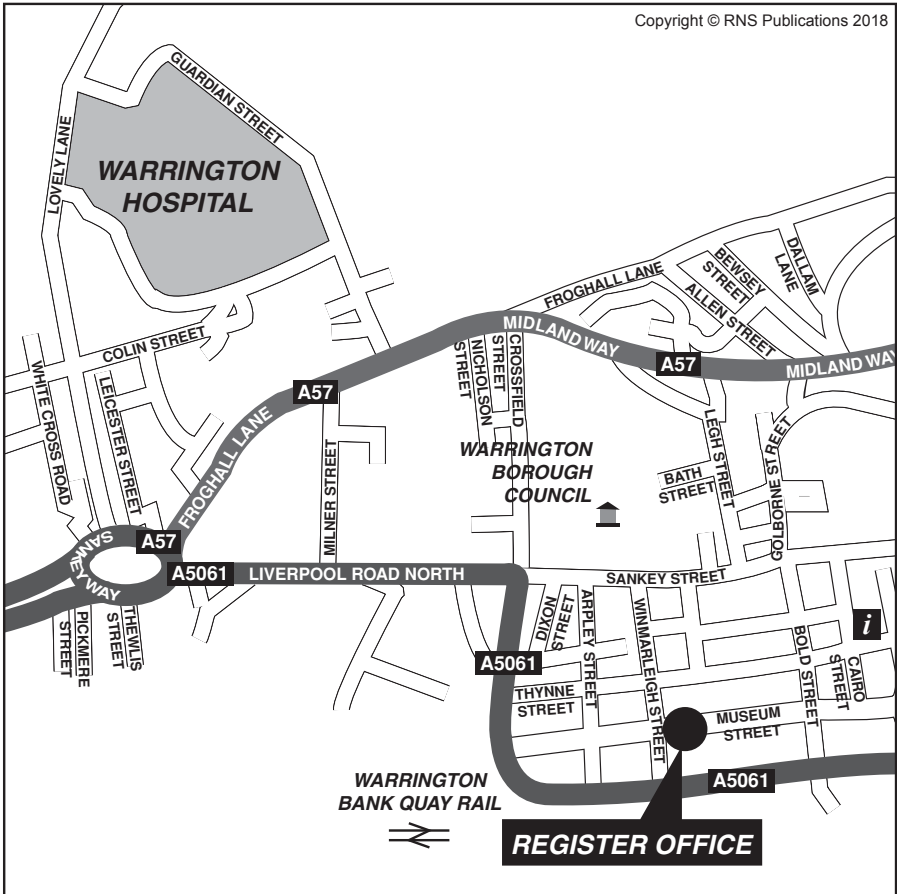
A Coroner can order a post mortem examination without obtaining the relatives' permission. This examination will ascertain the cause of death. He may also wish to hold an investigation into circumstances leading up to the death. This is called an inquest.

If an inquest is to be held a Death Certificate may not be available for some time. However the Coroner can issue an Interim Certificate for administrative purposes.

At the conclusion of the inquest the Coroner registers the death with the Registrar. A copy of the Death Certificate can be obtained from the registrar a few days after the inquest.

Where is the Register Office?

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Museum Street,
Warrington,
WA1 1JX
Tel: 01925 442194
Fax: 01925 442739
www.warrington.gov.uk

Registering the Death

Deaths must be registered in the district which they occur. For Warrington this is at:

The Register Office, Museum Street, Warrington.

This office is open from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Please telephone 01925 442194 to make an appointment (The Register Office will usually wish to know if the death has been reported to the Coroner before an appointment is booked).

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death should be taken to the registrar in Warrington. However, if you find it difficult to travel to Warrington Register Office you can register the death by declaration at any other register office in England and Wales. They will note the information needed for the death registration and will send it to the Warrington registrar for you. Forms and certificates will then be posted to you. This procedure may take several days to complete. For further details of this please contact the Register Office at Warrington. You must register the death within 5 working days of it occurring unless the Coroner is conducting an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death.

What information will the Registrar need to know about the deceased

- Date and place of birth.
- Full name and surname, and maiden surname if a married woman.
- Occupation and if a married woman or widow, the full name and occupation of her husband.
- Usual home address.
- If married, the date of birth of the surviving widow or widower.
- Whether in receipt of a pension or allowance from public funds.

Who may register the death?

It is preferable for a close relative of the deceased to register the death. If there are no relatives, then it is possible for other persons to register the death. Please telephone the Register Office for advice.

What does the Registrar give me?

The Registrar will provide:

- **Green form** - This is free and will be required by the funeral director for cremation or burial (unless the Coroner is involved).
- **Certificate of Registration of Death** - BD8 (For Social Security purposes). This is different from the Death Certificate. It is free and you should send it to the Department for Work and Pensions.
- **Death Certificate**
A fee will be charged for Death Certificates.

Contacting a Funeral Director

You may contact a funeral director for help and advice immediately following the death. However, the funeral director needs to have the green form (from the registrar) as soon as possible.

Telling People About The Death Of A loved One

In addition to contacting a funeral director/undertaker and having registered the death of your loved one there are a number of other bodies that need to be informed. A useful checklist is provided below.

- Accountant
- Bank/building society
- Benefits agency
- Church or other place of worship
- Clubs and social groups
- Council tax office
- Credit card companies
- Creditors/debtors
- Dentist
- DVLA – to return driving license and cancel car tax
- Employer
- Hire purchase/loan companies
- Home help agency
- Income tax office
- Insurance companies (house, contents, car)
- Internet provider
- Landlord
- Library
- Life insurance provider
- Local authority
- Mortgage provider
- Motoring breakdown provider
- National insurance contributions
- Optician
- Passport office
- Pension plans
- Post office to redirect mail
- Premium bonds
- Professional bodies
- Private healthcare
- Relatives and friends
- Solicitor
- TV license
- Telephone provider
- Utility suppliers (gas, water, electricity)

Also, 'Tell Us Once' is a service offered by most local authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The service allows the bereaved person to inform central and local government services of the death at one time rather than having to write, telephone or even attend each service individually. The Tell Us Once service can save you a great deal of time and effort. Further information is available from the registrar, when you register the death.

Coping with grief and loss

You may well feel quite numb in the first few days, unable to believe that what is happening is real. Please do not shut out your family and friends who offer help and companionship at this time. Sometimes just being with them helps you face what has happened. Perhaps they need your help too.

As the numbness passes and reality breaks in, the sense of loss may become more acute. Decisions have to be made and events and dates faced during the coming months, but you will gradually come to terms with your new circumstances. At first you may wish to remove painful reminders, cherished objects, or photos, but in a few months those same things can be a positive link with happy memories and years of shared love.

The journey through grief is one we all have to make in our own unique way. No one can tell you what is appropriate behaviour. You will sometimes feel utterly lost, often be 'back to square one' and only gradually begin to feel in control of your emotions.

If you feel you need to talk to someone, even if it is months or years later, the following agencies can help. The service they provide is confidential.

Hospital Chaplains
Samaritans

(01925) 662146
(01925) 235000

Paying Your Respects

Sometimes we receive requests from families who wish to see a loved one after death. Once a patient has left the ward care of that individual is transferred to the mortuary staff. Within the mortuary department there is a viewing room which provides the opportunity to spend time with your loved one. The viewing room is a private, quiet space accessed by appointment only. Appointments can be made by phoning the Mortuary on telephone 01925 662107 (answerphone before 13:00). The Mortuary is open from 09:00 until 16:00 Monday to Friday, with viewing arranged from 13:00 until 15:00.

Spiritual and Religious Care

The trust has a team of chaplains who are available to give confidential spiritual care and support. You do not have to be religious to receive their support at this difficult time. If you prefer, we can liaise with your own minister or faith leader for you.

The chaplaincy team can be contacted by phone on 01925 662146 or anytime via the hospital switch board on 01925 635911.

Useful information/contacts

- Hospital Chaplains
(01925) 662146
- Hospital Bereavement Office
(01925) 662294
- National Referral Centre (tissue donation)
0800 432 0559 (freephone)
- Age NI (combined - age concern and help the aged)
□ <http://www.ageni.org>
- Cruse Bereavement Care
□ <http://www.cruse.org.uk>
- The Lullaby Trust (baby sudden death)
□ <http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>
- The Miscarriage Association
□ <http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk>
- Samaritans
□ <http://www.samaritans.org>
- Support After Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)
□ <http://www.samm.org.uk>
- The Terrence Higgins Trust (AIDS or HIV)
□ <http://www.tht.org.uk>
- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide
□ <http://uk-sobs.org.uk/>
- Child Bereavement UK
□ <https://www.childbereavementuk.org>
- The Compassionate Friends
(support for bereaved parents of child of any age)
□ <https://www.tcf.org.uk>
- Winston's wish – the charity for bereaved children
□ <https://www.winstonswish.org.uk>

Or alternatively your own GP should be able to support you further at this difficult time.

Care Review – Bereavement Information

As part of national requirements, Warrington & Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust reviews a number of deaths every year to ensure that the care provided has been of the highest quality possible and that improvements are made where needed. These reviews are undertaken by doctors and other staff not directly involved in the care of the patient.

Reviews are automatically undertaken on certain groups of patients. These are:-

- Patients under the age of 18
- Maternal deaths
- Neonatal deaths
- Patients whose death is sudden, unexpected, untoward or accidental

The Trust also undertakes reviews when a significant concern is raised about the care provided to a patient. A significant concern is considered to mean:-

1. Any concerns raised by the family that cannot be answered at the time; or
2. Anything that is not answered to the family's satisfaction or that does not reassure them.

In most cases the reviews find that care is very good and no concerns are raised. However, in a small number of cases the review may identify something that requires further investigation. If this is the case, the Trust will get in touch with you to give you the name and telephone number of a contact in order for you to be involved in any discussions.

The Trust apologises if this causes any distress, but it is important to learn from any care provided which was considered to be less than expected.

Donate In Memory

REMEMBERING A LOVED-ONE

WITH AN ONLINE TRIBUTE PAGE

Creating a personal online tribute page in memory of a loved one is an extremely valuable way to celebrate and remember their life.

It's also a wonderful way to share messages and memories with family and friends, whilst at the same time supporting Warrington and Halton Hospitals' Charity with a small donation.

Your contribution to WHH Charity will play a vital role in helping provide additional equipment, comforts and care for the benefit of our patients and their families, beyond that which the NHS is able to provide

To remember a loved one with a personalised tribute page, donate now at whhcharity.org.uk/inmemory

**Warrington & Halton
Hospitals' Charity**
Registered Charity: 1051858



