



# Advice & Support Following Your Bereavement

SUPPORT, CARE AND HOPE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE  
AND THOSE WHO LOVE THEM

Ford Park Crescent

Tel: 01229 580305

Ulverston

Fax: 01229 583072

Cumbria

Email: [info@stmaryshospice.org.uk](mailto:info@stmaryshospice.org.uk)

On behalf of all the Trustees and staff of St Mary's Hospice we wish to extend our sincere sympathy to you at this sad time.

We hope this booklet will provide you with some help, practical advice and reassurance during your bereavement.

Every person's bereavement is a unique and deeply personal experience for that person and their family and friends. St Mary's Hospice team feel very privileged to have been entrusted with the responsibility for the care of your loved one at such a personal and sensitive time. We feel it is important that we acknowledge the life of everyone we have cared for by entering their name in our Book of Remembrance (normally names are entered in the book approximately one month after the person has died). This book is available at all times for family and friends to view. We do, however, recognise that not everyone may want us to do this. **Please do let us know as soon as possible if you prefer us not to do this and we will respect your wishes.**

**The inclusion of any advertisements does not imply that the organisation endorses any particular product or service.**

*Part 1.* The Practical Necessities

*Part 2.* Looking after yourself and how grief may affect you

*Part 3.* Bereavement Support at St Mary's Hospice

*Part 4.* Useful Local and National Resources

## **Part 1.** The Practical Necessities

### **Registering a death: What to do first**

Following the death of a relative or friend there are certain formalities to which you must attend.

### **The medical certificate**

The death will need to be registered but, before this can be done, you will require a medical certificate which shows the cause of death.

Depending on where the death occurred, this will be issued by a Hospice doctor or General Practitioner (GP). In some cases it may not be possible for the Hospice Doctor or GP to issue a medical certificate showing cause of death (e.g. if the death is referred to the coroner). In these circumstances notify your funeral director and follow his advice.

### **Collecting the medical certificate**

If the death occurs at the Hospice then please telephone the in-patient unit to find out when the certificate will be ready. If the death occurs at home the GP will issue the death certificate; a slight delay can sometimes occur if the Hospice Doctor or GP have to attend to an emergency.

### **Contacting a funeral director**

You can contact your funeral director at any time (most offer a 24 hour service) and you can start to make provisional arrangements before the death is registered. The choice of funeral director is important as you should feel comfortable and confident with him or her. You can ask for an estimated cost in advance of making a commitment to using their service. The funeral director will guide you through the process that follows and can help you to plan if you are unclear about what you want to do. The funeral director will have a chapel of rest and friends and relatives can make an appointment to pay their last respects to the deceased.

## Solicitors

If you have not done so then you should ascertain if the deceased made a will and consult the solicitor who holds it. The will should disclose the names of executors or the person legally entitled to deal with the deceased's estate. You will also need to check if the will has instructions about burial or cremation. If no will exists then the in-patient unit staff or GP will need to know your choice around this in order to prepare the appropriate documentation for the undertaker.

## How do I register a death

By law, a death must be registered within 5 days of the death, unless the Registrar says that this period may be extended or if the coroner is involved. The Registration itself will take approximately 30 minutes.

### **You will need to make an appointment with the Registrar to do this.**

Since December 2011, Cumbria County Council has been operating as a single Registration District which means you can register a death anywhere within Cumbria. There are Registration Offices in most large towns throughout the County which means you can register the death at any one of these offices and receive the relevant documentation and certificates the same day. You can also register the death anywhere else in England or Wales if you prefer, **however this may cause delays** in issuing the documents and therefore organising the funeral. If you choose to see a Registrar outside the Cumbria area they will not be able to give you the certificate for the funeral director nor any other certificates. They will take details and forward these to the Registrar in the district where the death took place and the certificates will then be posted to you by the Registrar in that district.

In a minority of cases the Coroner may need to be involved, and a post-mortem carried out. Following this, the Coroner will issue the Cause of Death Form to the Registrar and you will then be able to proceed with the funeral.

## **Paying for a funeral.**

Costs can vary a lot, it is a good idea to contact more than one funeral director to get an idea of costs. Do not feel afraid to ask the funeral director about ways of reducing the cost.

You can only get help towards the cost of a funeral if you or your partner are receiving a qualifying benefit or on a low income. It is unlikely however to cover the full cost of the funeral.

Visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) for more information.

You will need form "SF200 - Help when someone dies" which you can download at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or get from the Department of Work and Pensions at Jobcentre Plus.

**The Quakers Social Action** – Down to Earth provides practical support for those on low incomes struggling to afford a funeral. If you need help e-mail [downtoearth@qsa.org.uk](mailto:downtoearth@qsa.org.uk) or phone 020 8983 5055 10am-4pm weekdays or visit, [www.quakersocialaction.org.uk](http://www.quakersocialaction.org.uk) for more information.

## **Who may register a Death?**

It is preferable that a close relative of the deceased registers the death. If there are no relatives, then it is possible for other persons to register the death, such as a person present at the death. Please contact the Registrar's Office for advice if you are unsure.

## **The Registrar will ask for the following details when you register the death:**

### **About you**

The forename(s) and surname by which you are known; your usual address and your relationship to the deceased.

### **About the person who has died**

When registering a death, you'll need to take the following:

- medical certificate of the cause of death (signed by a doctor) and, if available:
- birth certificate
- marriage or civil partnership certificate
- NHS Medical Card

## **Information you will need to tell the registrar:**

- the person's full name at time of death
- any names previously used, including maiden surname
- the person's date and place of birth (town and country if born in the UK and country if born abroad)
- their last address
- their occupation
- the full name, date of birth and occupation of the surviving spouse or civil partner
- if they were getting a state pension or any other benefit

## **Documents and help you will receive**

If a post-mortem is not being held, the registrar will give you:

- A certificate for burial or cremation (called the 'green form'), giving permission for the body to be buried or to apply for the body to be cremated
- A certificate of registration of death (white form BD8), issued for social security purposes, if the person was on a state pension or benefits. It should be completed as soon as possible and sent to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It is not required in all cases, but, if in doubt, it should be completed and submitted. The DWP will use the form to make an assessment on state pensions and benefits. The form will then be forwarded by them to HM Revenue & Customs.

You will be able to buy one or more death certificates at this time (the price varies between local authorities). These will be needed by the executor or administrator when sorting out the person's affairs.

The registrar will also give you a booklet called "what to do after a death", with advice on wills, probate, funerals and financial help.

You may need to tell a number of different government departments and agencies about the death. The registrar can advise you on how to go about this. Some local authorities have started offering a new service to help you report a death, and the registrar will let you know if it is available in your area. This is called Tell Us Once Service (see page 7 for details).

If a post-mortem is needed, the coroner will issue any documents you need as quickly as possible afterwards.

## **Location of local Registry offices and contact details**

You may now register deaths anywhere in Cumbria in any office convenient to where you live but please note Ulverston and Millom offices are no longer open.

We have listed below some local Registry Offices for South Cumbria; other offices can be found by looking at the Cumbria County Council website at [www.cumbria.gov.uk](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk).

Please remember to phone to make an appointment at any of these offices below (please note that e-mail can be used to make appointments, however, **not** if the Coroner's Office is involved).

### **Barrow Register Office**

Nan Tait Centre  
Abbey Road  
Barrow In Furness  
LA14 1LG

**Email: [barrow.registeroffice@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:barrow.registeroffice@cumbriacc.gov.uk)**

Opening times: Monday to Friday  
9.00am - 4.30pm

**Phone: 0300 303 2472**

---

### **Kendal Register Office**

County Offices  
Busher Walk  
Kendal  
LA9 4RQ

**Email: [kendal.registeroffice@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:kendal.registeroffice@cumbriacc.gov.uk)**

Opening times: Monday to Friday  
9.00am - 4.30pm

**Phone: 0300 303 2472**

Any of these offices will let you know of other Registry Offices in your local area.



## **Tell Us Once Service**

When someone has died, there are lots of things that have to be done, at a time when you feel the least prepared to do them. One of these is contacting government departments and local council services. Cumbria County Council and South Lakeland District Council are providing a service which will make this process easier. This can only be accessed once you have registered a death. The Registrar will give you details of how to access this service. You can learn more about this service on [www.gov.uk/tell-us-once](http://www.gov.uk/tell-us-once).

*These departments are detailed below:*

- **Local Councils**

- Housing Benefit Office
- Council Tax Benefit Office
- Council Tax
- Collection of payment for local services
- Libraries
- Electoral Services
- Blue Badges
- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Council Housing

---

- **Department for Work and Pensions**

- Pension, Disability and Carers Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- Overseas Health Team

- **HM Revenue & Customs**

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit & Working Credit
- Personal Taxation

---

- **Identity and Passport Service**

---

- **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**

---

- **Ministry of Defence, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency War Pension Scheme**

A dedicated helpline for people dealing with tax related issues related to bereavement has been set up by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Family members or personal representatives who phone HMRC about tax and bereavement will be able to speak to a dedicated team of advisors.

The bereavement helpline is **0300 200 3300**.

After feedback from customers and tax specialists, HMRC has also simplified its guidance, letters and forms with the aim of making the process of dealing with tax following bereavement more straight forward. The new version of the main form people need to use to finalise the tax affairs of anyone who has died - ***R27 - Reclaiming tax or paying tax when someone dies*** - is now available on the HMRC website.

### **Other people who may need to be informed**

There are various other people, companies and other interested parties who may also need to be notified. ***Here are some suggestions:***

- Any hospital the deceased was attending
- Family Doctor
- Employer or trade union
- Car insurance company. People driving a car insured in deceased's name are not legally insured
- Gas, Electricity, telephone companies, local newsagents
- Banks and Building Societies
- Teachers/Youth organisation leaders - they can be more responsive to a child or young person's needs if they are made aware of a death in the family

## *Part 2.*

# Looking after yourself and how grief may affect you

Do try to talk about what has happened with your family or friends.

If you are struggling, you can talk to your GP, or contact St Mary's Hospice Family and Bereavement Support Service or any bereavement service available in the area where you live (which you can find listed at the end of the booklet).

Do take care of yourself, eat properly and try to rest.

Don't be hurried into making decisions until you are ready to do so.

Give yourself time to adjust to your new life situation before making major changes.

Don't be afraid to ask for help.

The death of a family member or friend can be a devastating experience and may bring far stronger emotions than you have ever felt. Different people react in different ways and, even when you have known that the person is dying, there may still be a sense of shock when the death occurs. You may feel emotionally cold, numb, empty and unreal for a time. You may experience anger, panic, guilt or sadness or all of these. These feelings may be accompanied by restlessness, especially at night when it is difficult to sleep. You may react by becoming irritable or critical of yourself or others which in turn may lead to feelings of despair.

Grief can be physically exhausting; you may lose your appetite or experience changes in your sleep pattern. It is not uncommon for some people to feel that they have developed similar health problems to those that caused the death of their loved one. This can be very

worrying so don't hesitate to talk to your GP as a health check and reassurance from the doctor may be all that is needed to put these worries to rest.

Remember to be gentle with yourself, all these are very natural reactions to bereavement and are not signs that you are not coping. During this time you may need the support of others. Talking to someone about how you feel can help to make you feel less isolated in your sadness.

This can be a difficult time for family and friends who may be afraid to speak about the person who has died for fear of upsetting you or getting upset themselves. It might help to consider taking the first step and letting others know that talking about your feelings and the person who died may help to support you. Sometimes people also find it easier to talk about their feelings to someone outside the circle of family and friends. There is help available at St Mary's Hospice and from other local services which you can read about in Part 3 of this booklet. Asking for help can be hard but you may find the subsequent support invaluable.

Grief is a very individual process, so don't think you must experience things exactly as someone else might. It is important you allow yourself time to grieve and come to terms with your loss in whatever way that is right for you.

## **Grief in children and young adults**

The level of the meaning of death and individual responses will vary according to the age of each child. Even very young children will have some awareness of the death and will feel the sadness and distress which they may not be able to express openly or even understand. We often think we should protect children and that they will not cope but, with sensitive information given in small chunks and by giving informed choices, children can learn to cope with grief.

Children can experience the passage of time differently to adults and can therefore appear to overcome grief quite quickly which may upset you as a grieving adult.

It is very important to allow the expression of feelings in children. It is common, for example, that a child may in some way feel responsible for the death or he/she may exhibit similar symptoms to the person who has died.

Children should feel that they are part of the changes which the whole family is experiencing at this time. This may be difficult for you to face so think about asking another adult to provide reassurance and to explain something about the funeral which they may want to attend or be involved with. Always give children the choice to decide themselves whether they want to participate or attend the funeral, even if they do not want to go they may want to write a poem or put something special on or in the coffin. Include them as much as you can, it is important that they feel included and it will help their grieving process.

It is important that grief in a young person is not overlooked as they may not want to burden a grieving parent with their own feelings. Schools should be informed about the death in the family as they will then be able to support the child in their bereavement. Many schools have excellent processes in place. There are also local specialist services which we can refer you on to or you can contact yourself who can help you support your children.

Use simple everyday language appropriate to the age of the child...it is better to be clear and use "died" rather than "fallen asleep" as child may be frightened to fall asleep, or worried about others going to sleep.

Be creative you can use play, drawing, storytelling and writing stories to help children to express their emotions in different ways and/or create memories about the person who has died...national children's bereavement websites (listed at the end of the booklet) have lots of ideas and resources to help you with this.

Do make sure you leave time for any questions that children may have, and check their understanding of situations....their answers may amaze you!!

## **Part 3.**

# Family and Bereavement Support at St Mary's Hospice

Unless you have told us otherwise, our Family and Bereavement Support team normally contacts next of kin or other identified members of family or friends within approximately 8-10 weeks after the bereavement. We do this by phoning you and it is an opportunity to talk with you and to see if there is anything that we may be able to support you with. You do not have to wait for us to contact you as we also accept self-referrals at any time after your bereavement.

### **Our bereavement team can offer the following services:**

#### **One to One Support**

Many people find it helpful to talk with someone other than a member of their family or a close friend. After an initial assessment, you will be offered confidential one to one emotional support with a trained and supervised support volunteer by telephone or face to face whichever you prefer. You will be offered up to ten support sessions with dates and times flexible to your needs and availability.

#### **Online Bereavement Groups**

In July 2017 we set up a closed Facebook page to support people digitally recognising that evenings and weekends can often be the most difficult times. Our online support group provides a safe platform for people to share experiences, ask questions and chat to people who maybe in a similar position and who support each other.

Monthly informal coffee evenings are held for our online group members. These are held in the Orangery café at St Mary's Hospice in Ulverston on the last Thursday of each month, 6 – 7.30 pm.

## **Make, Do and Mend Workshop**

Our Make, Do and Mend upcycling workshop is based within our Furniture Warehouse at our Living Well Centre at 299 to 301 Duke St, Barrow in Furness. The workshop provides a chance for bereaved men and women, those caring for their partner or loved one or those living with their own life-shortening illness to come together to share experiences, ideas and enthusiasm , and ultimately, to help each other through loss.

## **Bereavement Craft Group**

Throughout the year we hold 6 week bereavement craft groups at our Living Well Centre at 299 to 301 Duke St, Barrow in Furness. These groups aim to give people the chance to meet people in a similar position to themselves through being creative.

## **Bereavement Café**

This takes place at the Café in Asda, Barrow-in-Furness on the first Thursday of each month, 10 am-12 noon). The aim of the bereavement café is to provide a drop-in session for those coping with bereavement. The drop-in is not designed to be a counselling session; it is a supportive environment for reflection and conversation, a place where people will be able to find mutual support and encouragement when they need it most.

## **Drop-in**

We offer a monthly drop in at Barrow Library 10am - 12 noon on the last Monday of every month.

## **Bereavement Groups**

These run periodically according to demand throughout the year and offer the chance to share experiences and support with others in a similar situation.



## **Support Groups**

We support drop-in groups in Millom, 2nd Tuesday each month, 5 – 6 pm at Methodist Church, Queen Street, Millom.

Also drop-in group at Grange Over Sands, second Friday each month, 2 - 4 pm

## **Light up a Life**

We hold a Tree of Lights ceremony in several locations around the area each December where lights shine out in memory of a loved one who has died. These lights can be sponsored and details are available from the Fundraising office at St.Mary's Hospice.

If you would like more information about any of these services then please do not hesitate to ring the Family and Bereavement Support team on 01229580305 , option 6. If we are unavailable when you phone please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as we can.

**We are here for you whenever you may need us; grief is on-going and individual**

**St Mary's Hospice bereavement service:**

*'Our Support Service is available to anyone over the age of 18 who is experiencing loss, irrespective of time lapsed, cause or relationship. There is also no requirement to have had previous contact with the hospice services.'*

Our specially trained Family and Bereavement Support Team is made up of a Palliative Care Social Worker, Family Support Coordinator and Family & Bereavement Support Worker, along with a team of highly trained and supervised volunteers

**Cruse bereavement care:** Counselling, support and advice for bereaved people, national daytime helpline 0808 808 1677 (Cumbria area 07071 780761).

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) [www.crusecumbria.org.uk](http://www.crusecumbria.org.uk)

**Cancer Care:** Offers a range of support for children and adults with South Lakes and Furness area.

Phone 01539 735800 or visit [www.cancercare.org.uk](http://www.cancercare.org.uk)

**Merry Widow:** This is an online resource for anyone who has lost a partner.

[www.merrywidow.me.uk](http://www.merrywidow.me.uk)

**WAY Widowed and Young** for young widowed men and women (aged less than 50 years).

[www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk) online support

## Resources for children and schools

**Bluebell Foundation:** local Barrow based organisation offering support to children and young people up to age of 18 years who are grieving through the death or anticipated death of someone important to them in the South Cumbria area. 07516556081/07849400315  
[www.bluebell.org.uk](http://www.bluebell.org.uk)

**Child Bereavement UK:** supports families when a baby or child of any age dies, or is dying, or when a child faces bereavement  
[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org).  
01494 568900 or phone 0800 02 888 40 for support and information.

**Winston's Wish:** grief support programme for children and young people, advice to parents, carers and schools on supporting children.  
Helpline 08088 020 021  
[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

**Rip Rap:** support for children aged 12-18 whose parents have cancer.  
[www.riprap.org.uk](http://www.riprap.org.uk)

### Other useful resources:

**Macmillan Cancer Support:** advice and support for patients, family members and friends when a life limiting diagnosis is made and in bereavement period.  
Helpline 0808 808 00 00  
[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

**Age UK** has large range of useful services for over 50's and booklet "what to do when someone dies"  
[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)  
For information and advice 0800 169 2081

**The Samaritans:** This service offers 24 hour confidential telephone support to people experiencing extreme distress or feeling suicidal.  
National helpline 116 123  
Barrow-in-Furness Samaritans 01229 825656  
Or visit [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

**Carers UK :** advice and support for carers, including bereavement.  
Advice line 0808 808 7777  
or phone 01229 822 822 (Barrow-in-Furness)  
[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

**Citizens Advice Bureau:** advice on benefits, tax and financial issues.  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)  
South Lakes Citizens Advice 015394 46464

**Direct Gov website:** informative government website regarding public services, including tax, probate and benefits.  
[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### **Stop Mail**

To stop unwanted junk mail addressed to the recently deceased, please visit [www.stopmail.co.uk](http://www.stopmail.co.uk) or ask the bereavement team for a leaflet. This free of charge service provided by the Bereavement Support Network will actively reduce the unwanted mail and the likelihood of identity theft Following the death of someone close.

### **Bereavement Support Network**

Is a free of charge online resource that provides clear advice and information following the death of someone close. From help with arranging a funeral, to what to do if there is no money, the website has been designed to give you guidance and support in a clear and easy to understand format.

[www.bereavementsupport.co.uk](http://www.bereavementsupport.co.uk)

**Do you want to tell us anything about our services?**

If you have any suggestions which could improve any of our services, or have any complaints about your care please contact:

Chief Executive Officer

St Mary's Hospice

Ford Park Crescent

Ulverston

Cumbria

LA12 7JP

Telephone: 01229 580305

If you are not satisfied with the response, please write to The Trustees at St Mary's Hospice or you can contact The Care Quality Commission by telephone on Tel: 03000 616161 or by email at [enquiries@cpc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cpc.org.uk)

## St Mary's Memory Tree

Our Memory Tree offers a unique and meaningful way to remember a loved one whilst helping to raise funds for the hospice. Each leaf that you buy will help us to make a difference to people with life-shortening illnesses and their loved one.



This unique sculpture is being adorned with a total of 250 autumnal coloured leaves, creating a stunning piece of art. Each element can be engraved with the name of a loved one as a lasting tribute to their memory. The Memory Tree is displayed upon an external wall at our main entrance, where families can take time see their lasting tribute to their loved ones.

For further information please contact the Fundraising Team on 01229 580305 or e-mail: [Geoff.Steele@stmaryshospice.org.uk](mailto:Geoff.Steele@stmaryshospice.org.uk)

Reference: St Mary's Hospice Bereavement Booklet

Publication date: November 2017

Review date: November 2019

