

WESTMINSTER REGISTRATION SERVICE

# BEREAVEMENT GUIDE



City of Westminster

We appreciate that this is a very difficult time and the loss of a loved one can be particularly distressing. We would like to reassure you that we are here to support you and ensure, where possible, that your needs and wishes are met.

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## Coping with loss and bereavement

Bereavement affects everyone in different ways and can be very painful and confusing. Support and resources are available to those in need.

The bereavement care charity Cruse <https://www.cruse.org.uk> provides a range of guidance, including easy-read fact sheets, as well as support for those who have been bereaved.

You can contact the charity's free national helpline on 0808 808 1677 or email them at [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

You can also find support and information through the following:

- CCIWBS: Bereavement and loss counselling in North London [www.bereavement-counselling.org](http://www.bereavement-counselling.org)
- The Compassionate Friends: Supporting bereaved parents and their families [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)
- The Good Grief Trust: Bereavement advice [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)
- The Suicide Bereavement Support Service: Advice and support for those affected by suicide [www.sbls@bwwmind.org.uk](http://www.sbls@bwwmind.org.uk)

- Childhood Bereavement Network has published advice on supporting bereaved children. You can find a range of guidance on their website <https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk>.

## If your loved one dies in hospital

1. A doctor will liaise with the Medical Examiner before completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) form. This will then be scanned and emailed to the Council's Register Office. There is no need to collect this.

2. Once the MCCD has been received the Registrar will contact you to notify you and provide the link for you to book a death registration appointment online. You are legally required to register a death within five days.

If you haven't heard from the Registrar, you can book an appointment and prepay for death certificates [here](#) or by phone on 020 7641 7500. The cost of each death certificate is £11.00

3. You can find industry inspected local funeral directors on The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) and The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) websites. Alternatively you can contact the NAFD by phone on 0121 711 1343.

4. During the death registration appointment the Registrar will issue a form for burial or cremation to you, or alternatively send the form by email to your chosen funeral director or burial society. The funeral director will then arrange the burial or cremation in consultation with you.

5. If your loved one dies in hospital, they will be taken to a mortuary either at the hospital or in another location such as a funeral home. The bereavement team within the hospital will let you know where your loved one has been taken.

If the death took place outside of the City of Westminster, you will need to contact the register office for the area in which the death took place. You can find the relevant register office by entering the postcode of the place of death on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## If your loved one dies at home or elsewhere outside of hospital

1. If your loved one dies at home please call your GP or out-of-hours service. They will arrange verification of death and liaise with the Medical Examiner before completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) form. If the death is unexpected, please phone 999. The operator will provide instructions on what you need to do. The police and trained clinicians will come to your house and submit a sudden death report.
2. You should contact your chosen funeral director to arrange the collection of your loved one. You can find industry inspected local funeral directors on The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) and The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) websites. Alternatively you can contact the NAFD by phone on 0121 711 1343.
3. Following liaison with the Medical Examiner a doctor, usually your loved one's GP, will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) form. This will then be scanned and emailed to the Council's Register Office. There is no need to collect this.
4. Once the MCCD has been received the Registrar will contact you to notify you and provide the link for you to book a death registration appointment online. You are legally required to register a death within five days.

If you haven't heard from the Registrar, you can book an appointment and prepay for death certificates [here](#) or by phone on 020 7641 7500. The cost of each death certificate is £11.00

5. During the death registration appointment the Registrar will issue a form to you for burial or cremation, or alternatively send the form by email to the funeral director or burial society you have chosen. The funeral director will then arrange the burial or cremation in consultation with you.

If the death took place outside of the City of Westminster, you will need to contact the register office for the area in which the death took place. You can find the relevant register office by entering the postcode of the place of death on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

# Information you need to register a death

Please see below a list of individuals who can register a death:

- A relative
- A person who was present at the death
- An occupier of a communal establishment
- The person arranging the funeral if there are no relatives available

In preparation for the death registration appointment please make sure you know the information listed below. You might find it helpful to write it down in advance, or have documents such as passport, birth certificate, and marriage certificate (if applicable) on hand.

Details of the deceased:

- Date and place of death
- First name, middle names (if applicable), and surname
- Any other names the deceased was otherwise or previously known by
- Maiden name (if applicable)
- Date and place of birth
- Occupation and whether they were retired
- Address

Details of the spouse/civil partner of the deceased  
(if applicable)

- First name, middle names (if applicable), and surname
- Date of birth
- Occupation
- Whether they are retired

## Celebrants and burial customs

The council is working with faith leaders and community organisations to offer support and to ensure that, wherever possible, family wishes will be honoured.

Please find below additional resources and guidance that you might find helpful:

- [Muslim Council of Britain](#)
- [Inter-Faith network of United Kingdom](#)
- [Church of England](#)
- [The Baptist Union of Great Britain](#)

Please contact your funeral director, faith and/or community leader regarding any specific religious funeral arrangements and they will be able to provide guidance on these.

## Financial guidance and support

We recognise this is a difficult time for everyone, putting many people in unexpected financial circumstances. Please contact your funeral director to discuss the different services available and, if required, the financial assistance they offer.

If you have not chosen a funeral director, you may find industry inspected local funeral directors via the following websites:

- [The National Association of Funeral Directors \(NAFD\)](#)
- [The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors \(SAIF\)](#)

The Children's Funeral Fund for England can help to pay for some of the costs of a funeral for a child under 18 or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy. You can find out more information [here](#).

You may be eligible for a Funeral Expenses Payment (also called a Funeral Payment) if you get certain benefits and need help to pay for a funeral you are arranging. You can find out more information [here](#).