



On behalf of the staff and volunteers at St Luke's, I would like to express our sincere sympathy to you and reassure you that we are here to offer you both practical and emotional support at this difficult time.

We hope you find this booklet a useful guide over the coming days and weeks and please don't hesitate to get in touch if we can support you in any way.

With my best wishes

Kate

Kate Estcourt
Director of Care

What happens after someone dies?

When someone dies at the Hospice

When you are ready to discuss what happens next a member of the nursing team will be available to explain about the necessary paperwork that has to be completed.

You will need to choose a Funeral Director to make the funeral arrangements for you, and the nursing staff will need to know who it is that you wish to use. Friends or family may be able to recommend someone to you and, if you wish, the nursing staff will contact the Funeral Director on your behalf and arrange for your loved one to be taken to their Chapel of Rest. You may prefer to do this yourself from home, but it must be done on the same day the patient dies.

One of our doctors will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and this will be emailed directly to the Registrar within the next working day. Once this is complete, the Hospice will contact you via telephone and at this point you can contact the Register Office to arrange a face-to-face appointment at a time convenient to you.

You may wish to take your loved one's belongings with you, but if you prefer you can collect them at a later date.

The staff will inform you of our bereavement service available to you and your family. If you feel this is not for you at present but find yourself in need of support at a later date, please ring 01606 551246.

If you have received the St Luke's at Home service and your loved one dies at home

When someone dies at home, their local doctor (GP) should be contacted. The GP will issue the Medical Certificate stating the cause of death and this will be sent to the Registrars.

If the death happens at night, over a weekend or on a Bank Holiday, the Out of Hours GP service applicable to your area should be contacted (this is usually accessed via your GP's main telephone number or by calling 111.)

Within 12 hours of the death you will need to contact a Funeral Director of your choice to begin funeral arrangements. This may require them to collect your deceased loved one. It is usually possible for you to visit the deceased at the Funeral Directors or Chapel of Rest at a later date.

If the death is referred to the Coroner

In some cases the doctor may need to report the death to a Coroner, for example if the cause of death is uncertain or sudden, or when there has been a fall. Whilst referrals are uncommon, they are not a cause for concern.

The role of the Coroner is to establish the cause of a person's death and in some cases a post mortem and inquest may be ordered. The family will be kept informed of what is happening throughout this process. The death cannot be registered whilst the Coroner is still investigating. However, this does not necessarily mean that the funeral will have to be delayed. A Coroner's interim certificate can be issued so that you can continue with the funeral or other practical arrangements.

Registering the death

It is a legal requirement that the death must be registered within five working days and the Medical Certificate of Death (MCCD) sent to the Registrar.

You will need to make an appointment to register the death and this can be done at Winsford, Chester or Ellesmere Port. You can choose the office most convenient to you. The appointment will take around half an hour.

To make an appointment please telephone 0300 123 7037. The lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm. Alternatively visit:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Winsford Library

High Street, Winsford, CW7 2AS

Chester Register Office

Goldsmith House, Goss Street, Chester, CH1 2BG

Monday to Friday, 8.45am – 4.45pm

Ellesmere Port Library

Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG

Monday to Thursday, 9.30am – 1.15pm and 2pm – 4.15pm

Friday, 9.30am – 12.30pm

The person registering the death is called 'the informant'. Only certain people can fulfil this duty – close relatives of the deceased, someone present at the death or the person taking responsibility for the funeral. Before going to the Registrar, check that the person planning to register is entitled to do so.

What do I need to take with me to register a death?

It is helpful to take the following documents with you relating to the deceased:

- Birth/marriage/civil partnership certificates
- Passport
- Deed poll (name change)
- Driving licence
- NHS medical card
- Recent utility or Council Tax bill (to verify address)
- Your own passport, utility/council tax bill, driving licence

What will the Registrar ask me?

- The date and place of death.
- The full name and surname of the deceased person (and the maiden surname if the deceased was a married woman/civil partner).
- The date and place of birth.
- The occupation of the deceased and, if the deceased person was a married woman, the full name and occupation of her husband.
- Their usual address.
- Their last occupation.
- If the deceased was married, widowed or registered a formal civil partnership, the full name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner.
- The date of birth of a surviving spouse or civil partner.
- Details of any public sector pension e.g. civil service, teacher or armed forces.

Documents from the Registrar

1) Certified copies of the Death Certificate

The death registration is a permanent record and is retained by the Registrar. You may purchase as many copies of this document as you want, as you will need these when banks and others ask to see an 'original' Death Certificate. The price varies as it is set by the local council but usually rises significantly if you need more at a later date. A rough guide would be to obtain one for each bank account, building society and shareholdings of the deceased. If there is to be an inquest, the death is not registered until after the inquest – the Coroner will issue you with an Interim Certificate which you can use instead of certified copies.

2) Certificate of Registration/Notification of Death

This form is free and you need to complete the form on the back to notify the Department for Work and Pensions of the death if the person received a state pension or any other benefits. The Registrar may give you an envelope to post the certificate or you can hand it in at a Jobcentre Plus Office. You can obtain this form from the Registrar even if the death cannot be registered yet. This form is sometimes referred to as 'the BD8'.

3) Certificate for Burial or Cremation

This is free and is commonly referred to as 'the green form'. It proves to the funeral director and the cemetery or crematorium authorities that a funeral may take place. The green form is replaced by a document from the Coroner if there will be an inquest or if the funeral will be a cremation following a Coroner's post-mortem examination.

Tell the Registrar if the funeral is to be overseas as the green form is not issued and other forms are needed.

‘Tell Us Once’ service

Tell Us Once is a free service that lets you report a death to most government organisations and council departments in one go.

The Registrar will explain the Tell Us Once service for you and give you a unique reference number. You must use the service within 28 days of receiving your unique reference number.

You can find out more about the Tell Us Once service on the gov.uk website.

Banks should be contacted quickly to secure the estate and prevent fraud.

The ‘Stop Mail’ service

The Stop Mail service works alongside thousands of commercial companies to reduce the volume of unsolicited mail addressed to those who have recently died.

By registering with the free service www.stopmail.co.uk, the names and addresses of the deceased are removed from mailing lists, stopping most advertising mail within as little as six weeks. If you cannot access the internet you can call 0808 168 9607, where you will be asked for very simple information that will take only a few minutes to complete.

This free of charge service provided by the Bereavement Support Network will actively reduce unwanted marketing mail, while also reducing the likelihood of identity theft following the death of someone. The information is not used for any other purpose and you only have to complete this once.

Arranging a funeral

We understand that it can be a daunting task to contact a Funeral Director and sometimes hard to decide which one to use. The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) recommends that you choose an accredited Funeral Director. Where possible, it is advisable that you choose and contact a Funeral Director within 24 hours following the death.

You may find it helpful to contact several Funeral Directors and ask the following questions:

- How much will it cost?
- What options do you have?
- What are the transport options?
- What types of services do you offer?
- What deposit is required?
- What are my payment options?

The number of decisions to be made for a funeral can seem daunting. Unless you have to arrange the funeral quickly for whatever reason, you can take your time, talk with family members and close friends and ask as many questions of your Funeral Director as you need to.

If you find it helpful, a member of our Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Team can tell you more about the various choices and can help with any questions you may have.

Things to think about

What style of funeral is required – a religious service in a church, a civil funeral (with or without religious content in a secular setting) or a humanist service, which is non-religious?

The major decision is whether to have a burial or cremation if this is not predetermined by your religion, culture, or the expressed wishes of the deceased. This will help you decide where the funeral is to take place.

Your answer to the question about the style of funeral will influence other content such as ideas about music and readings. You may also want to start making a note of any specific anecdotes about the person that you would like included in any tribute (sometimes called the eulogy).

Do you want a funeral cortege (i.e. the hearse and any following cars) to leave from a family home or will people assemble at the place of the ceremony?

What type of coffin would you prefer? There is a huge range available from traditional solid wood, various materials such as banana leaf and wicker through to cardboard decorated with artwork using a picture or photo of your own choice.

Gathering

Most funerals include a gathering of mourners after the ceremony with refreshments served. The venue might be your own home, a church hall, a pub or more formal venue such as a hotel.

Think about your budget, and how many people may attend, to help with your decision. Legally most of the expenses connected with the funeral can be claimed from the money left by the deceased but a gathering of mourners is not considered an essential funeral cost.

Donations or flowers?

At many funerals people often prefer to offer the opportunity to give donations to charity instead of floral tributes.

If your loved one has requested that donations be made to St Luke's Hospice at their funeral, or if you feel that this is what they would have wanted, then we can help.



Funeral donations are a simple and effective way to support St Luke's Hospice, whilst remembering and celebrating the life of your loved one. Your Funeral Directors can arrange this for you.

Other considerations

Many mourners appreciate guidance about what to wear. Traditionally this was always black but, except for very formal funerals, grey, navy and other sombre colours are generally acceptable. Some families request that mourners wear a specific colour or theme.

You can take time to decide on the design of a headstone for a grave or you may want to consider an alternative memorial such as a bench or tree. In the case of a headstone you will generally be advised to allow some months to pass before installation.

If you are arranging a cremation there are many choices available for what you do with the ashes (cremated remains). There are also a wide variety of style of containers (urns) which can be used to store the ashes while you make a decision. The ashes can be stored at the crematorium or Funeral Director's premises, or at home.

Paying for the funeral

A good Funeral Director will explain all the different charges and give you an itemised estimate. It is important not to sign a contract with the Funeral Director until you have considered how the funeral will be paid for. If you are tasked to sign to confirm the arrangements you are entering a legal contract and agreeing to be responsible to ensure the funeral is paid for.

Sometimes people pay for their funeral in advance by pre-arranging their funeral with a chosen Funeral Director or through an insurance policy. It is worth checking if this is the case.

The cost of the funeral has priority over most other debts on the estate and will be something any professional helping you with probate will be able to take care of. Provided there is sufficient money in an account belonging to the deceased, a bank will usually write a cheque to the Funeral Director from that account if the bank is given the invoice. This is one of the reasons it is important to inform banks about the death as soon as possible in addition to helping prevent fraud.

If there is not enough money in the estate AND the person who is the most appropriate person to arrange the funeral (usually the nearest relative) is in receipt of a means-tested benefit from the Department for Work and Pensions, that person may be entitled to help with funeral costs. For more information contact the Department for Work and Pensions or visit www.gov.uk/after-a-death

Please be honest with yourself and the Funeral Director about what can be afforded for the funeral, however hard it is to think about practical things like money at this time.

Finding out about probate

For more information about applying for probate please visit: www.gov.uk/applying-for-probate

Finding out about benefits

You may be able to claim some money if someone has died. What you can claim depends on your circumstances and what your relationship was to the person who died.

For more information visit:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/claiming-bereavement-support-payment

www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/bereavement

Caring for yourself and those close to you

At St Luke's we understand that you may need our continued support at this time and we offer several bereavement services. We will contact you, normally within two weeks, to offer you further support, but if you feel you would like to see someone before then simply give us a call on 01606 551246 or email vrccg.familysupportandcounsellingteam@nhs.net

How to help yourself

- **Be gentle with yourself**
It is vital that you don't expect too much from yourself. Give yourself permission to be disorganised for a while. It's okay to not be okay.
- **Care for yourself physically**
Lack of sleep and nourishment may mean that you are more prone to infections and illness, so eating little and often and getting rest if at all possible are both important.
- **Take things slowly**
Making big changes such as moving house, or changing your job, should be delayed. You have suffered a huge loss and need to adjust to that change in your life first.
- **Don't rush to dispose of clothing**
Rushing to clear clothes and possessions after a death, even if you are persuaded by friends to do so isn't necessarily helpful. It is best to do this when you feel ready.



Individual counselling

St Luke's has a team of professional counsellors to whom you can talk freely and in confidence and who have been specifically trained to support people with distress related to illness and bereavement. Sessions are arranged by appointment and last one hour.

Phoenix Group for children and young people

The Phoenix Group is a counselling service and support group for children aged six to 16 who have experienced the loss of someone close due to illness.

Spiritual and religious care

Team members are available to support patients, their families and friends of any or no faith. They offer one-to-one support and exploration, and can offer practical as well as spiritual support.

Creating a lasting legacy

If your loved one was cared for by St Luke's Hospice, you may feel you would like to honour their memory and give something back. We are here to support you in whatever way you would like to do this.

One way is by requesting donations to the Hospice in lieu of flowers from those attending your loved one's funeral. If you would like, we can supply you with donation envelopes for use at the funeral. To speak to a member of our Donor Care Team please call 01606 555816.

Join our Lottery

Our Lottery is the Hospice's biggest single source of income, funding the care of one in every five patients. It costs just £1 a week to play and really is one of the easiest ways you can support St Luke's in the years ahead. Plus you could win our weekly jackpot of £1,000.

Sign up online at www.slhospice.co.uk/lottery, call 01606 553553 or email lottery@slhospice.co.uk

Fundraise in memory of a loved one

Many families and friends wish to take part in organised events such as our Midnight Walk; organise their own fundraising event or make a donation on special anniversaries. Whatever you would like to do, our team is here to help and support you.

Your gifts and donations will help us to support others whilst remembering and celebrating the life of your loved one. If you would like further information please contact our Community Team on 01606 555811 or by emailing: community@slhospice.co.uk. More information can also be found on our website at www.slhospice.co.uk

Without the generous support we receive from our community, we would not be able to provide the dedicated care which means so much to so many people. Thank you.



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