

One+all | we care

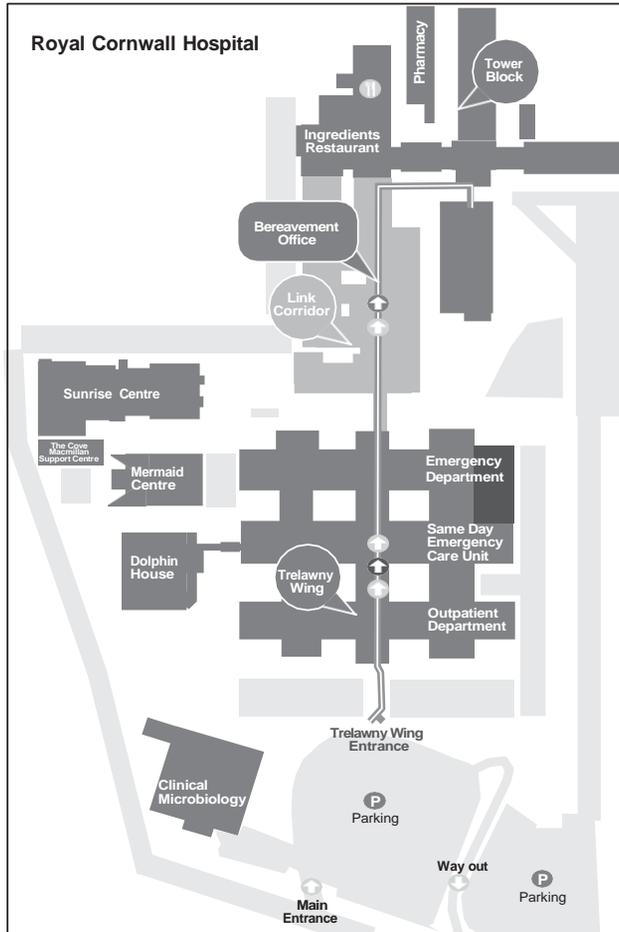


Royal Cornwall Hospitals
NHS Trust



Bereavement care services





Bereavement Office
Link Corridor, Royal Cornwall Hospital
Opening hours
Monday to Friday 08:30am to 3:30pm
Tel: 01872 252713

*“Memories are the loveliest thing, they
last from day to day,
They can't get lost,
they don't wear out,
and can't be given away”*

Anonymous

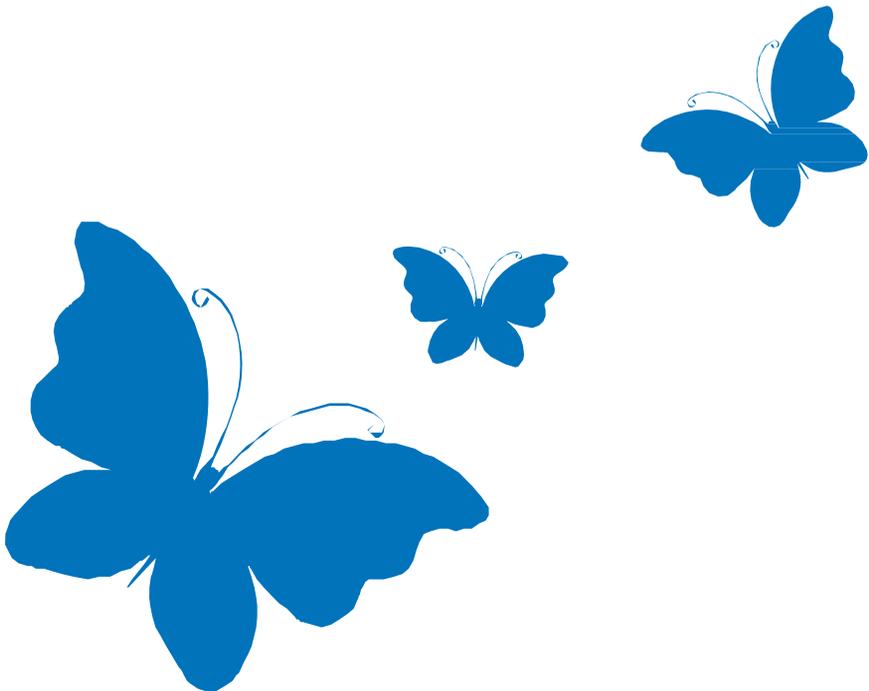


Contents

Our sympathy	4
Initial actions	5
1. Collecting belongings	5
2. Wait for the medical certificate	5 - 6
3. Register the death	7 - 9
4. Arranging the funeral	9 - 11
5. Who to inform about the death	12 - 14
Organ and Tissue donation requests	15
Viewing the deceased	16
Common emotions whilst grieving	15 - 17
Support and things that can help	18 - 19
Important contacts	20 - 21
Advice and support organisation's	22 - 24
Death in hospital summary	26
Notes	27

Our sympathy

We wish to express our deepest sympathy to you and your family at this very sad time. We understand that the time ahead may be difficult and painful, and we are here to support you through the coming days. This booklet explains the practical steps you will need to take, as well as the emotional aspects of losing someone you love.



Initial Actions

A member of staff from the Medical Examiner's Office will call you on the morning of the next working day, once they have been informed of your loved one's death. They will advise you of the next steps and ask for the following information.

- Your full contact details as next of kin
- Whether you have made any decisions relating to Funeral arrangements
- The name of the Funeral Director that you have appointed – by providing the name of your appointed Funeral Director, this gives staff consent to release your loved one into your appointed FD care.

(If you yet to make this decision, the Bereavement Office will contact you once the statutory paperwork has been completed)

The Medical Examiner is a senior doctor who was not involved in the care of the deceased patient. They will look through the case notes to ensure that they understand the circumstances surrounding the patient's death. They will also be able to discuss any concerns that you have regarding the care provided whilst your loved one was in RCHT. They will also speak to medical staff involved in the care of the deceased patient and agree the cause of death which will be recorded on the Medical Certificate or arrange referral to H M Coroner if necessary (see page 6)

1. Collecting belongings

Deceased patient clothing and belongings remain on the Ward for safekeeping and return to NOK, please contact the Ward where your loved ones passed away via Switchboard Tel 01872 250000

Deceased patient cash and valuables are transferred to the General Office for safekeeping, NOK are advised to email the office via rch-tr.GeneralOffice@nhs.net with the following details

- Deceased Patients Name, DOB and Address
- NOK full name, contact number and relation to patient
- What they believe the possessions are if known

Alternatively call the General Office Contact number: 01872 252690
Opening times: Monday – Friday 9am-4:15pm (Lunch 1pm-1:35pm)
Who will arrange a mutually agreeable collection appointment

Steps you will need to take

3. Completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

On completion of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, a member of the Medical Examiner staff will contact you to explain the cause of death. The certificate will then be forwarded electronically to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This will allow you to register the death (see page 7).

The deceased can only be released into the care of your appointed funeral director once the Medical Certificate has been completed. This will be completed as soon as possible – however it is a complex legal process that can often take several days. However, you can make funeral arrangements with you appointed funeral director before the certificate has been completed. Please bear this in mind when arranging to register the death or making funeral arrangements.

Referral to RM Coroner may be necessary if the death occurred in certain circumstances

For example

- Was sudden (without regard to age)
- Involved violence or was caused by an accident
- Resulted from industrial injury or industrial disease
- Occurred when the deceased was undergoing an operation
- Occurred when the deceased was under the effects of anesthesia
- Related to trauma or injury
- Related to self-harm or neglect
- Unknown cause of death

3. Registering the death

Once the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been issued, you will be able to make an appointment to register the death. Please do not make an appointment until you have been informed that the Certificate has been completed as this could result in a cancelled appointment for you.

Who can register a death?

- A relative
- Someone present at the time of the death
- An occupant of the nursing/residential home or a senior official from the hospital where the death took place
- The person arranging the funeral
- The person in charge of the deceased

You'll need to make an appointment through the registration information service by calling 0300 1234 181. Lines are open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. As a guideline every death must be registered within 5 days from when it occurred. This period can be extended in exceptional circumstances and if H M Coroner is involved.

Registration Offices are based in:

- Bodmin
- Bude
- Falmouth
- Heartlands
- Helston
- Liskeard
- Launceston
- Newquay
- Penzance
- Saltash
- St Austell
- Truro

Steps you will need to take

What you'll need to take to the Registrar's Office

If you can bring the person's medical card, birth certificate, marriage certificate and passport, but don't worry if you can't find these documents, it won't prevent you from registering.

You'll also need to know the following information about the deceased:

- The date and place of death
- Their full name (and maiden name if appropriate) Their
- home address
- Their occupation
- The date and place of birth
- If they were married or in a civil partnership, the full name, date of birth and occupation of their spouse or civil partner
- Their national insurance number
- Whether they received a state pension or allowance.

'Tell Us Once' service

To make things easier for you, when you register a death in Cornwall, you can choose to let the registration service also tell local council services and government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs, Identity and Passport Service, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the Ministry of Defence, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency.

Arrangements can be made to register a death elsewhere, but this may delay the funeral by a few days because the forms have to be posted to the office where you wish to register the death.

Steps you will need to take

After you have registered the death, the registrar will give you:

- A green certificate, which you need to give to your funeral director so that the funeral can be held. In some cases, the Coroner may already have done this. You don't need to pay for this certificate.
- If the deceased was receiving any state benefits, you will also be given a white certificate of death for social security purposes. You don't need to pay for this certificate.
- The death certificate. The registrar can advise on the type and number of certificates you may need (most companies won't accept photocopies). There is a fee to pay for the standard death certificate and any copies. You can pay for these in cash or by cheque.

4. Arrange the funeral

Who can help with funeral arrangements?

A funeral director can help you with all the arrangements for the funeral. A local minister of religion may also be able to help.

If you're having difficulty contacting a suitable minister, the hospital chaplains will be able to help.

You can contact the chaplain on 01872 252883.

If you know a will has been made, it may be worth contacting a solicitor to check whether your loved one left any specific funeral instructions or had already made or paid for any funeral arrangements in advance.

Steps you will need to take

How many days should I allow to make funeral arrangements?

You can begin to make funeral arrangements as soon as you feel able. Before you agree a funeral date, you'll need to check with the Medical Examiner's Office to ensure all the statutory paperwork has been completed

The cost of the funeral

Paying for the funeral can be a worry. Costs for funerals can vary considerably from one funeral director to another so don't be afraid to discuss options and costs with several funeral directors before making a choice.

Paying for the funeral

Funeral costs are normally recoverable from the deceased's estate, but the person organising the funeral will be responsible for paying the bill. It is advisable to check where the money will come from before you make arrangements. Many people now purchase their funeral in advance through a pre-purchase funeral plan. You may need to check if this has been arranged.

Many funeral directors require payment before probate is granted, so ensure you discuss payment from an early stage. Where probate is being requested, many banks and building societies will release money to pay for the funeral before probate is granted but not all.

Where payment for the funeral is an issue, you may be entitled to help with the funeral costs through the Bereavement support payment www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment. There is now a One-Stop contact number at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (0800 731 0139) which will cancel all DWP benefits, as well as help you establish if you are eligible for help towards costs (a funeral grant) and advise on your eligibility for other benefits.

Steps you will need to take

There is a time limit for claiming bereavement benefits and a funeral grant, so it is important to contact them as soon as possible. Funeral grants have a maximum threshold and not every case is eligible for the full amount. It is essential to consider this when organising the funeral to prevent running up large costs.

In some cases, where no one is able to pay for the funeral, the local authority may help - but it is important that you contact them before the funeral has been arranged. Please discuss this with the Bereavement Office team.

Wills

If you have any queries about the will or regarding the absence of a will, you can contact:

Probate Registry
Magistrates Court
Launceston Road
Bodmin Cornwall
PL31 2AL

Tel: 0300 303 0648

A useful booklet on 'How to obtain Probate' (PA2) is available from the Probate Office. There is also information online at www.gov.uk/applying-for-probate/apply-for-probate

Arranging the service

Your funeral director will help you decide on the service you would like and will help with arrangements. Please ask them anything you would like to know - they can be most helpful and problems that may seem difficult can often be easily solved.

Steps you will need to take

Who to inform about the death

There are various people who need to be informed of the death and it may be useful to use these checklists to guide you:

People to inform	Contacted	Completed
DWP - benefits or pension stopped 0800 169 0310		
Employer		
Inland Revenue (HMRC)		
Banks / Building Societies / Credit Card Companies		
Local Tax Scheme		
Insurance companies: Life insurance Car insurance Property insurance		
Mortgage company / Land Registry		
Housing Association / Landlord		
Social Services - If involved		
Family Doctor		
Relevant Hospital Doctors		
Utility providers - Gas, Water etc		
School / College - If applicable		
National Savings and Investments		
Store cards		
Telephone company inc. Mobile		

Steps you will need to take

DVLA		
Union / Professional organisations		
If already a grave owner notify Cornwall Council of any changes		
Stopping junk mail www.stopmail.co.uk		

Things to cancel	Cancelled
Care / household service: Home help / Meals on wheels / Cleaner etc	
Appointments: Hospital / Dentist / Optician etc	
Newspapers	
Redirect mail if required	
Milk if required	
Magazine subscriptions	

Items to return	Returned
Medicines back to Pharmacy	
Driving licence returned to DVLA	
Library books	
Any equipment borrowed from Hospital or Social Services - Commode, walking sticks etc	
Passport returned to passport agency	
Season tickets / concessionary travel documents - Bus pass to relevant company	

Steps you will need to take

Disabled parking (Blue Badges) to ESCC	
Car insurance certificate	
Car registration documents - for change of ownership	

Tax help for the bereaved

The HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have created a dedicated telephone helpline, an address box and a new form for people who need to contact them about PAYE and Self-Assessment matters relating to bereavement. When you call the HMRC, an automated message starts, select option 2, then option 4 to speak to an advisor on the Bereavement Helpline.

- Telephone Helpline 0300 200 3300
Office hours: 8am to 8pm (Monday to Friday) 8am to 4pm (Saturday)
- For anyone who is deaf or has a hearing or speech impairment telephone 0845 302 1408 (Textphone)

If you need to write to HMRC about income tax and bereavement, such as form R27 (reclaiming tax or paying tax when someone dies), self-assessment tax return and any other correspondence relating to bereavement for Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and Self-Assessment, write to the address below:

HM Revenue and Customs
Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and Self-Assessment PO
Box 4000
Cardiff
CF14 8HR

Steps you will need to take

Organ and Tissue donation requests

A donation is where a person donates their organs and tissues for transplant, which can save another person's life or improve their health and quality of life. The majority of people can be tissue donors and unlike organ donation, tissue can be donated after death, for a limited period up to 24 hours giving relatives the opportunity to fulfil their loved one's wishes. Many bereaved families find this a great comfort.

Offering donation

You can offer to donate your loved one's tissue via the transplant coordinators who will review the donor's medical history to ensure the safety of the tissue. Tissue donation will not cause a delay to the funeral. Our specially trained staff will always treat donors with the utmost dignity and respect, taking care to retain their appearance.

UK Organ Donor Referral Line: 03000 20 30 40

South West Regional Pager: 07623512213

Tissues National Referral Centre: 0800 432 0599

Viewing the deceased

If you would like to view the deceased whilst they are in our care at the hospital, contact the Mortuary team on 01872 252555 to arrange a mutually agreeable time. Outside working hours please contact the on-call mortuary technician through the hospital switchboard 01872 250000 for advice.

Please note in exceptional circumstances viewings may be restricted, dependent on the circumstances of death and may require permission from H M Coroner or restorative work prior to proceeding. Any request to decline estranged family viewing requests cannot be accepted unless the deceased in life had specified this in their hospital notes or in their last will and testament

Common emotions whilst grieving

Death can be very distressing, and grieving is a normal human response to loss or death. It can affect people in different ways, and it may be a long time before it feels as if life is returning to normality. These are some of the emotions you may experience. Not everyone feels all of these, and some emotions may be more intense than others. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

How you may feel

It is normal to initially feel very shocked or completely numb. You may become quiet and rather detached during this period or you may feel like you're on autopilot, or in a bad dream or just completely lost. This can last a few minutes, a few hours or a few days.

Common emotions whilst grieving

Disbelief and unable to accept the loss

You may try to deny that the death has happened or find yourself thinking that you have heard or seen the person who has died. You may even lay his or her place at the table or even find yourself actually looking for or talking to him or her. This is completely normal, so don't worry if you find yourself doing this.

Sadness and loneliness

Sadness and loneliness are often the longest stage. You may have feelings of emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable. In some cases, you may have lost interest in living or feel there is no point in going on.

You may also feel you should not be troubling other people after 'all this time' so the sense of loneliness increases. These feelings are a common and normal part of the grieving process and as time moves on, you will become better able to cope with these feelings.

Moving on

This usually happens with the passage of time and when the pain of losing the person has eased. You will begin to find you can think of your loved one without getting to upset.

This can be a time for you to begin life again, not forgetting the past but able to look to the future again. This might seem disloyal to the person who has died, but what has happened in the past will always be part of you and isn't affected by your enjoyment in the present.

Support and things that can help

Mortuary and Bereavement service

Can offer practical support and advice on viewing the deceased and making funeral arrangements.

Hospital chaplains

You may also like to seek support from a local minister. If you would like to speak to the hospital chaplain, please call 01872 252883.

Medical Examiner's Office

Are available to explain the cause of death and provide information on timescale of the completion of the statutory paperwork.

Your friends

It's natural to want to hide your feelings, but it can be extremely helpful to find someone with whom you can share your feelings openly. You may also feel that other people avoid you. This isn't because they don't care but because they don't know what to say or how to say it. Go to them and show you want to be open with them. They will usually be pleased to help in any way they can.

Your health

You may feel mentally tired, physically run down and find it difficult to sleep, eat or carry out normal daily tasks. These physical symptoms are not uncommon but if they continue, make an appointment to see your doctor. Your doctor may also be able to help you if you have unanswered questions about the death of the person you loved.

Support and things that can help

Don't make any hasty decisions

It's sometimes very tempting to feel that life would be more bearable if you could move house, quickly dispose of possessions or refuse to see people. This can only make things worse in the long run. Though painful, these emotions are better faced head on rather than swept under the carpet.

Remember...

Grief is a very individual process. Each of us reacts differently so please don't worry if your grief doesn't follow a general pattern. It is a time consuming, exhausting and isolating experience. But it can help to remember that millions of people have survived grief, and in time you will too.

If you need to speak to someone urgently:

We are not able to provide 'crisis' support and we do not provide a 24 hour helpline.

However, if you feel you need to speak with someone urgently, you can call the support group below:

The Samaritans Listening Service Tel:

116 123 (24 hour)

This number is free to call.

Important contacts/Important Information

Medical Examiner's Office Tel: 01872 252553

Bereavement Services Tel: 01872 252713

Mortuary Tel: 01872 252555

Outside normal working hours, you can contact the on-call Mortuary staff for advice and guidance via the hospital switchboard on 01872 250000.

Hospital Chaplains Tel: 01872 252883

You may need to leave a message on the answerphone. Please contact on call Hospital Chaplain via the hospital switchboard 01872 250000.

Patient and Family Experience Team

Can help you:

- Make a suggestion or comment.
- Find out who to talk to.
- Find out about independent advice for advocacy services.
- With on-the-spot support, information and advice for bereaved families.

Tel: 01872 252793

Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.30pm. 1st Floor Trelawney Wing

Important contacts/Important Information

HM Coroner for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

Opening hours

Monday to Thursday - 7:30am to 3:30pm Friday - 7:30am to 3:00pm

The office is closed for lunch between 12:30pm – 1:00pm each day.

Telephone:

Next of Kin Enquiry Line: 01872 227190

Out of office hours: Devon and Cornwall Constabulary on 101

Email: CORNWALLCORONERSOFFICERS@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

The Registration Information Service

Tel: 0300 1234 181

Open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm on Saturdays.

Advice and support organisations

Age UK

Age UK Advice Tel:
0800 678 1602

www.ageuk.org.uk

British Humanist Association

39 Moreland Street London
EC1N 8BV

Tel: 0207 324 3060

www.humanists.uk

Compassionate Friends

Email: helpline@tcf.org.uk Helpline
number: 0345 123 2304

www.tcf.org.uk

CRUSE

An organisation that offers general and practical advice, details on benefits and local cruse organisations to anyone who has been bereaved. Cruse also provides befriending and bereavement counselling in people's homes.

Email: cornwall@cruse.org.uk

Tel: 01726 76100

Helpline number: 0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk



Advice and support organisations

Gingerbread Helpline

Support for single parents

Tel: 0808 802 0925

www.gingerbread.org.uk

Hope again young people living after loss

A website for children and young people who have been bereaved. Also have details of a confidential telephone number for professional confidential bereavement counselling.

Freephone: 0808 808 1677 Email: hopeagain@cruse.org.uk

Independent Age

Advice line: 0800 319 6789

www.independentage.org

Switchboard LGBT+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

Helpline: 0300 330 0630

Advice and support organisations

Penhaligon's Friends

Cornish charity which supports children and young people who have experienced bereavement. Also support for children and families when someone close is very ill.

Trecarrel,
Drump Road,
Redruth,
TR15 1LU

Email: enquiries@penhaligonsfriends.org.uk
Tel: 01209 215889 or 01209 210624
www.penthaligonsfriends.org.uk

Samaritans

One to one support available 24 hours. Tel:
0330 094 5717 (Truro)
Tel: 116 123 (National)
www.samaritans.org

Widowed and Young

For those widowed under the age of 50.
Monday to Friday: 9:30 – 3:30
Saturday to Sunday: Closed
Helpline: 0300 201 0051

Email: enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk
www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

*Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away to the next room.
I am I and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other,
That, we still are.*

*Call me by my old familiar name.
Speak to me in the easy way which
you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.*

*Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Play,
smile, think of me. Pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that
it always was.
Let it be spoken without effect.*

*Life means all that it ever meant. It is
the same that it ever was.
There is absolute unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because
I am out of sight?*

*I am but waiting for you.
For an interval.
Somewhere. Very near.
Just around the corner.*

All is well.

*Henry Scott Holland
1847 - 1918
Canon of St Paul's Cathedral*

Administration Of Death Summary

The Medical Examiner's Office is notified of the patients' death and will liaise with medical staff involved in the care and treatment of the deceased

Medical Examiner scrutinises clinical history and discusses with clinicians and NOK

Can the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death be issued?

Yes

Dr issues the certificate.

MEO staff will advise the NOK.

Medical staff may need to complete additional paperwork. The funeral directors will collect this paperwork on your behalf; until this is completed the deceased must remain in the care of Mortuary Staff.

No

They will need to report the death to the H M Coroner.

The Dr will attend the ME Office and discuss the deceased medical history with the Medical Examiner. A written report is then sent to the Coroner for review.

HM Coroner decides on what happens next.

The Certificate can be issued.

Further investigation is required this may involve a Postmortem or Inquest. The Coroner's Officers will keep you informed in these circumstances.

We understand that during this period, you may be anxious to proceed through these steps. However, sometimes due to circumstances beyond our control, the pathway through these steps can take up to 10 working days. Please bear this in mind when making your funeral arrangements. If you have any concerns or questions regarding these stages, please speak to a member of the Medical Examiner team.

Notes

Reference: Royal Cornwall Hospital
Publication date: July 2023
Review date: July 2025

Notes
