



# What to do when someone has died



Alice House Hospice  
Serving the communities of  
Hartlepool & East Durham

*When someone dies it can be a very emotional time and this can make it hard to know what practical things you need to do next.*

*The following information has been put together with the assistance of Alice House Hospice to help you with some of the decisions and arrangements that will need to be made.*

## Covid-19

*Please Note: Some systems or procedures may differ due to Covid-19. Care staff and/or funeral directors will advise on this.*

## What to do first

You will need to contact a funeral director of your choice following the death. Care home staff may be able to do this on your behalf if required. A member of the clergy can be contacted as soon as you wish, if they are not already involved.

The medical/death certificate must be collected from the care home along with your relative's personal effects. The home will inform you when the certificate is available.

You will need to register the death within five days, unless a Coroner is conducting an inquest into the circumstances.

If you wish to see the deceased, you may be able to do so whilst they remain at the care home, after that time you will need to make arrangements with the funeral director.

## Choosing a Funeral Director

The choice of a funeral director is important. You should feel comfortable and confident with him or her. You can ask any funeral director for an estimated cost before making a commitment to use their services. It is reasonable to seek estimates from more than one company.

The funeral director needs to know and discuss with you:

- The name, age and religion of the deceased.
- The place of death and name of the doctor who has signed the medical certificate.
- Any particular requests left by the deceased.
- If burial or cremation is required.
- The type of service, hymns, cars, flowers, newspaper notices etc you would like.
- The style of coffin.

The funeral director will need the Green Form from the Registrar's Office.

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## How to register a death in Hartlepool

The death must be registered at the local office of registration, which is in the:

Civic Centre  
Victoria Road  
Hartlepool  
TS24 8AY

### An appointment system is in operation

To make an appointment you will need to telephone the following number: 01429 523337.

The Registrar's Office is open at the following times:

Monday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Thursday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Friday	8:30 am - 4:30 pm

## How to register a death in Stockton

The death must be registered at the local office of registration, which is in the:

Nightingale House  
Balaclava Street  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 2AL

### An appointment system is in operation

To make an appointment you will need to telephone the following number: 01642 527720.

The Registrar's Office is open at the following times:

Monday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Thursday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Friday	8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday	8:30 am - 5:00 pm

## People who can register a death

A death can be registered by one of the following people:

- A relative of the deceased
- A person present at the death
- If the death occurred in a Nursing Home/Hospital and no relatives are available then the death could be registered by a senior member of staff at the establishment.
- The person who is making the funeral arrangements (but not the funeral director).

**Fees for registering a death** There is no fee to register a death.

## Document and other information required to register a death

The following documents must be presented when registering a death:

- Either a medical certificate (issued by a GP or hospital Doctor) or a Coroner's certificate
- Full name of the deceased (and maiden name if relevant). Any other names used or change of name
- Date and place of death
- Occupation (even if retired)
- If the deceased was a married woman, the name and occupation of her husband or civil partner
- Date of birth of a surviving husband, wife or civil partner
- The usual address
- The medical card (if available)

When attending to register you will be asked questions regarding names, dates and addresses which will feed into the register entry. To help ensure the accuracy of the information recorded it would be useful if you could bring supporting documentation with you (e.g. passport, driving license, utility bill, birth and marriage certificates).

*Do not worry if any of these documents are not available as the registrar can still proceed to register the death.*

## You will receive two Statutory forms free of charge

- The certificate for Burial or Cremation (unless the Coroner has already issued one)
- A form BD8 for the DWP, which relates to state Pensions and Benefits.

At the Registrar's Office you will be issued with a copy of the Death Certificate. If you think you may need more than one copy to give to other parties such as insurance companies, it would be better to obtain more copies at this time; some organisations may not accept photocopies of the certificate.

*Death certificates, which are full copies of the entry in the register, will cost £11.00 per certificate.*

## Post Mortem

Where the cause of death is uncertain, a post mortem may be required. If an industrial claim is being made, a post mortem is a definite requirement. Until this has been performed, neither a burial nor cremation can take place.

**Cremation** No one can be cremated until the cause of death has been identified. There will be certain forms you will be required to sign. The local authority governs the cost of the cremation.

It is important to contact the funeral director of your choice as soon as possible. They will explain everything you need to know clearly and find out your special requests. If you wish, a service may be held at your own church before the committal takes place at the crematorium.

It is important to state clearly what you would like doing with the cremated remains.

The options are: Ashes to be scattered in the Garden of Remembrance buried or scattered in a favourite spot or at sea.

They may be placed in a churchyard, taken to the cemetery and placed with other family members, or you may want to keep them yourself.

**Burial** Firstly find out if a plot in a churchyard or cemetery has already been arranged. Check the Will or any other papers which might inform you. If you want a burial to be in a churchyard, you find out from the priest or minister about the plot and the right to burial there.

If it is a new grave, the cost of a headstone is extra to the funeral cost. If it is an existing grave, there will be a charge for re-opening the grave and for any extra inscription to be made on the headstone.

if cremation is the wish of the deceased, it is possible to have internment of the ashes into a family grave. The funeral director can arrange this and advise you as necessary.

**Grief** When someone close to us dies we probably experience the most severe form of loss in our lives. It is important to remember that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to grieve, but that grieving is a necessary part of recovery. Grief can be painful and we may experience a whole range of strong feelings, thoughts and physical symptoms we did not expect and which can seem frightening and strange. It may take some time to get through this process and unfortunately it cannot be hurried.

Often the support of those around us is sufficient to help us work through our grief. However, sometimes we get stuck or feel we need the help and support so someone outside the situation in order to work through our feelings and move on in our grief.

Alice House Hospice provides a free **Community Bereavement Service** for those in the Hartlepool area. For information or to make an appointment contact the team on 01429 855550

**Cruse North East**, provides information, advice and support with twice monthly drop in sessions across the North East. [www.crusenortheast.org.uk](http://www.crusenortheast.org.uk)

**Bereavement Support Network** - a national organisation that can provide help and advice on practical aspects such as legal and probate matters, as well as a free of charge service to help stop the distress caused by unwanted mail to the deceased.

Free Helpline: 0333 240 0343 | [www.bereavementsupport.co.uk](http://www.bereavementsupport.co.uk)

