



**Help
through
bereavement**



St. John's Hospice

'Built by the people for the people'

www.sjhospice.org.uk

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Our condolences.

All of us at St. John's Hospice wish to extend our condolences and sympathy to you.

The first week of bereavement can be a time of grief and sorrow – but it is also a period in which a number of matters must be dealt with.

All this can prove confusing, and we hope this booklet will help you during this difficult time.

What happens immediately after a person's death?

If your loved one dies in St. John's Hospice, they will remain at the hospice. To help us prepare the necessary documents, please tell us if your loved one will be buried or cremated. Next of kin will need to collect the ***Certificate of Cause of Death*** from the hospice, and if appropriate a ***Cremation Certificate***.

You will then need to register the death. The Registrar will give you a green form to pass on to the Funeral Director, and when they have the green form they will then come and collect the body from us.

If your loved one dies at home, you should contact your GP or District Nurse as soon as possible. Once the death has been verified and you have the **Certificate(s)** you can contact a Funeral Director to remove the body and go ahead with registering the death.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the GP or the hospice to contact the Coroner, for example if mesothelioma is diagnosed or suspected. If the Coroner becomes involved, they may issue the ***Certificate of Cause of Death*** .

What to do next

Registering the death

The death must be registered within five days with the Registrar of births, marriages and deaths for the area where the death occurred. For Lancaster and Morecambe, including the hospice, this is at:

4 Queen Street, Lancaster LA1 1RS.

You must make an appointment - **Tel: 0845 053 0021**

You may also register at Morecambe Town Hall on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, by appointment at the same number.

To register you must be a relative, or present at the time of death, or a person arranging the funeral, or an executor of the Will.

For directions to the Registrar, see map on back of this booklet.

If the death is outside of these areas, you can register in Lancaster or instead at a more local Registrar's Office:

Barrow in Furness	Tel: 01229 407510
Kendal	Tel: 01539 713567
Settle	Tel: 0845 034 9473

You will need the following with you:

- ◇ **Certificate of Cause of Death**
- ◇ If available, the person's **Birth Certificate, Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate**, and their **NHS Number/Medical Card**.

You will be asked for the person's:

Full name, home address, date & place of birth;

Last occupation, date & place of death;

Date of birth of surviving partner;

Whether the person was receiving a State Pension.

If the deceased is a woman, you will also need:

Her maiden name, her husband's name & last occupation.

The Registrar will then give you:

Death Certificate which is a certified copy of the entry in the deaths register. You will need this to prove the will and making claims for pensions and other financial affairs. It is wise to purchase several copies, as photocopies cannot be used for legal purposes. Cost £3.50 each

Certificate for Burial or Cremation, a green form you must give to your funeral director to enable them to collect the body from the hospice. Cost: Free.

Certificate of Registration of Death, Form BD8, which you will need to send to the Dept. of Work & Pensions. Cost: Free.

The Registrar will also offer their **Tell us Once** service, which will inform a range of organisations about the death to save you doing so yourself.

Organising the funeral

- see our **'Help Planning a Funeral'** booklet, which includes a telephone list of all funeral directors

Paying for the funeral.

Funerals can be costly, but funeral directors understand people's different circumstances and will suggest affordable choices. A typical cost for a simple funeral with one car for relatives would be around £2,900 for cremation, £3,100 for burial in an existing plot (Sept. 2011).

Bereavement Benefits.

You may be entitled to certain Bereavement Benefits. These can be obtained through the form BD8 you have been given. You may be eligible for a contribution from the Social Fund towards the cost of a basic funeral.

For all issues to do with bereavement including benefits, pensions etc. you can contact the Bereavement Service of the Department of Work and Pensions:

Tel: 0845 606 0265

www.dwp.gov.uk

You can also contact the Social Worker at St. John's Hospice, Tel: 01524 382538, for advice.

Other practical matters

Letting people know

- **Medical:** GP, Hospital clinics, NHS equipment, Dentist
- **Employers:** including any trades union and voluntary work
- **Local authority:** Council tax, Social Services, Disabled Parking permit
- **Government agencies:** HM Revenue & Customs, JobCentre Plus or The Pension Service (for the Dept. of Work & Pensions)
- **Utilities:** Gas, Electricity, Water, Telephone, Mobile phone, Internet suppliers, TV licence
- **Finance:** Banks, Credit cards, Building societies, Insurance
- **Car:** Insurance - if you are insured to drive the car in the person's name, you may not now be legally covered; DVLA
- **Passport office:** to cancel the passport, and return it if requested
Tel: 03000 222 0000 www.passport.gov.uk
- **Library, clubs and associations**

- **To help prevent unwanted mail continuing:**
The Bereavement Register
Tel: 0800 082 2130 www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk
Deceased Preference Service
Tel: 0800 068 4433 www.deceasedpreferenceservice.co.uk
Mailing Preference Service
Tel: 0845 703 4599 www.mpsonline.org.uk

Most banks now have a team dedicated to help you through this time.

You may find it helpful to have the following information about the person to hand to complete the various forms:

Full name	Address
Date & place of birth	Date & place of death
National insurance number	NHS number

You may also find it helpful to write a standard letter you can copy.

Sorting out the Will

Ideally a Will should have been made and you will know where it is. Often a copy is left with their solicitor or bank and you should contact them for it.

If a person dies without making a will, this is called 'intestate', and a solicitor will need to follow certain procedures. This is explained on p49 in 'What to do after a death' from Dept. of Work & Pensions; also www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Death/index.htm

If the person who died left a will, they will usually have asked an 'executor' to deal with their 'estate' (money, belongings, property).

If the person did not name an executor the court will appoint someone (usually someone named in the will) to administer the will.

Probate.

If you are an executor and entitled to deal with someone's estate, you will probably then have to apply for legal permission (called 'probate') from the Probate Registry to do so. This may also involve sorting out any Inheritance Tax due.

Contact: Probate & Inheritance Tax helpline

Tel: 0845 30 20 900 www.hmrc.gov.uk

Probate information: www.theprobateservice.gov.uk

You may choose to sort out probate yourself if the estate is relatively straightforward, or you can use a solicitor to help you.

Should you find it helpful to take advice from a solicitor, you can have a short consultation, for a fee you should agree in advance. You can then decide if you will need their help. Telephone the solicitor to find out what their fee would be for providing an initial consultation and subsequent charges.

The whole process of going through Probate may take many weeks. The Probate Office for the Lancaster area is in Liverpool (0151 236 8264). To complete probate an interview is needed; these interviews are run daily in Liverpool, or you can choose to have the interview in Lancaster but this is only done one day a month so may take much longer. For Cumbria, the Probate Office is in Carlisle (01228 521 751). You will then be given a 'Grant of Representation' form to give to financial and other organisations to release the 'estate' to you.

How are you feeling?

In bereavement, each one of us has suddenly embarked on a new, and maybe at times painful, journey. A journey we may have felt quite unprepared for, and one that may take us into un-chartered territory for our thoughts, feelings and emotions.

At first, the shock of loss may have left us with feelings of disbelief: we simply can't believe that this has happened, and happened to us.

We may still expect the person we have lost to be there. We still long for them, look for them, and may on occasions feel we see them. This is natural, and whilst may be disconcerting at first, can be reassuring.

We may also, at times, feel numb, have a sense of being on 'automatic pilot.' And whilst our family and friends can interpret this as 'coping well,' we ourselves may actually feel the opposite, or just not know quite how we feel.

And then there are the physical feelings: we might be sleeping badly, feel exhausted, have aches and pains we hadn't had before, find it hard to concentrate.

All these are natural responses in bereavement, how our body and mind are designed to cope with this part of our life's journey.

Then there may be a gradual realisation that we will never see the person we love again in this life, and this can bring a whirlpool of intense, confusing and often contradictory emotions. We sometimes experience:

Feelings of intense grief

Feelings of guilt . . 'if only' . . if only I had said this,
if only I had done that differently

Feelings of anxiety, of fear about the future

Feelings of anger towards others, towards ourselves,
even towards the person who has died

Feelings of relief that the pain and suffering has ended

Painful though such feelings can be, they also are part of the healing that is in grieving. As time goes by, these intense feelings may subside, and we might come to a time of flatness, depression or loneliness. We might also feel a loss of our own identity and purpose in life.

But grief is not an illness, though it can perhaps feel like one, and we need not be frightened by some of the natural feelings and emotions we may experience.

Gradually we can begin to realise that we have our own lives to live without the physical presence of the person we have lost. This realisation is not a betrayal, for we will never forget them, and they will always be a part of us, in our hearts and our memories, and in how they have shaped our lives.

Each of us will travel the journey of bereavement in our own way, and we may be surprised how long that journey takes.

Along this journey it may help to share your feelings with those who can help – a family member, a close friend; or it may help to talk to someone outside the family. We may wish to check if our experiences are similar to others, or discuss different ways of managing the coming weeks or particular events, or just simply release our feelings.

Suggestions that may help:

- Try sharing your feelings with those who can help
- Try to eat and rest well
- Try not to make major decisions (eg. housing, finance, relationships) too soon, or be rushed into them.

So that, in time, your own journey may again become more peaceful and serene, with hope renewed.

Talking with children

As adults we often try to protect one another through illness and in bereavement. Particularly adults often feel the need to protect children from what is happening, and from death. We may feel that it will make them too upset, or that they won't understand. But children do have huge resources and ability to cope with such times of crisis.

Children may in fact find it harder to cope if they are not told what is happening, because their fears may then run away with their imagination. Children do appreciate being told the facts, and in a simple and straightforward way appropriate for their age. Do try to use words such as 'death' and 'dead' rather than 'lost' or 'asleep'. Encourage them to ask whatever questions they want, and give them time and plenty of reassurance.

Your children may find it helpful if you share your own thoughts and feelings with them, as it will help them to understand their own feelings and that it is OK to be sad and upset. Some children find it helpful to draw or paint pictures, or to write a poem, when someone dies, to express their feelings that way. Do also keep those at school aware of your situation.

Support for Children and young people

CancerCare, at Slynedales next door to the hospice, offer a special support service for children (from the age of 3) and young people and their families who are experiencing loss through cancer. They offer meetings, resources and information, and telephone support for families. For children and young people they also offer individual child therapy / counselling. Having someone to turn to who is not part of the immediate family is often helpful for young people. It enables them to explore and find reassurance for worries, concerns and questions they may have, without worrying further about other adults' needs. Children and young people can also benefit from peer contact with others who have had similar experiences in group support.

Contact CancerCare: Tel: 01524 381820 www.cancercare.org.uk

How can we help?

We are here to continue to help you in many different ways.

Our Bereavement Service offers support for families linked to the Palliative Care services in the Hospice, Hospital and Community.

Our **team of Bereavement Visitors** provides an opportunity to share thoughts and feelings in confidence – either by phone or meeting in person with one of our team of trained volunteers. They can also provide practical information, or help put you in touch with other organisations that can give you that bit of extra help you may need, including specific bereavement counselling if that is appropriate.

Complementary therapy sessions are also available to help you relax –contact the hospice to speak with Sarah Bowers our therapist.

The Bereavement team host **Tea and Support on Sundays** at 2-4pm on the second Sunday of each month in the hospice Oak Centre, an informal time of company and support for those recently bereaved.

Friday Coffee Morning is on the first Friday of each month, 10:00—12 noon, in the hospice Day Lounge.

If you feel you would like help or advice from the Hospice Bereavement Support Team, please contact the

Bereavement Service Co-ordinator

St. John's Hospice, Slyne Road, Lancaster LA2 6ST

Tel: 01524 382538

Email: ctownson@sjhospice.org.uk

Sorting out a person's possessions is a difficult thing to do, and only you will know when is the right time and what to do with them. If it is of any help to you, our **Hospice Shops** are happy to take good quality clothing and other items, and will collect these from you. Please phone the hospice, or our warehouse at Edenvale Crescent, Lancaster, 01524 64733.

In looking to the future you may feel you need to change, or make, your own **Will**. At St. John's hospice we offer you a completely free service for you to do this with local solicitors—please contact the hospice Reception to arrange this.

Useful contacts and websites

General

Age UK

Formerly Age Concern and Help the Aged, wide range of advice

Tel: 0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk

Armchair Advice

Website with general bereavement information incl. legal advice

www.armchairadvice.co.uk/bereavement

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Advice on benefits, tax and money management

Tel: Lancaster 66529

www.northlancashirecab.org.uk

Morecambe 400405

www.morecambecab.org.uk

Kendal 01539 738772

www.cabsouthlakeland.org.uk

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Carers UK

Advice and support for carers, including in bereavement

Tel: Advice Line 0800 808 7777

www.carersuk.org

Direct Gov website

Government website for all information about public services, including tax, benefits, probate

www.direct.gov.uk

Help Direct Lancashire

Practical support, advice and information

One Stop Shop: 7-11 Chapel Street, Lancaster, LA1 1NZ

Tel: 0303 333 11 11

www.helpdirect.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

Support and information for those in bereavement from cancer

Tel: 020 7840 7840

www.macmillan.org.uk

Samaritans

Confidential support for any person in despair or feeling suicidal, 24 hours a day support

Tel: 08457 909090

Email: jo@samaritans.org

www.samaritans.org

Bereavement support

Bereaved Parents Network

Help and support to those who have lost a child of any age

Tel: 0292 081 0800

www.careforthefamily.org.uk

Bereavement Advice Centre

Advice on any benefits, tax or probate issues

Tel: 0800 634 9494

www.bereavementadvice.org

Cancer Care

A range of support for those bereaved by cancer.

Tel: 01524 381820 (Slynedales), 01539 735800 (Lakes Centre, Kendal)

www.cancercare.org.uk

Child Bereavement Charity

Support on the death of a child, or when a child has been bereaved

Tel: 01494 568 900

www.childbereavement.org.uk

Child Death Helpline

Support for anyone affected by the death of a child

Tel: 0800 282 986

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends

Help to parents whose children or grandchildren have died

Helpline: 0845 123 2304

www.tcf.org.uk

Help to people whose brother or sister has died

www.tcfsiblingsupport.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

Information, advice and support to all bereaved people

Helpline: 0844 477 9400

www.cruse.org.uk

London Friend LGBT Bereavement Helpline

Support and practical information to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people who have been bereaved or facing bereavement

Helpline: 020 7837 3337

www.londonfriend.org.uk/bereavementhelpline

MerryWidow

Online resource for anyone who has lost a partner
www.merrywidow.me.uk

National Association of Widows

Support and friendship for men and women who have lost a partner. Also local groups, nearest one meets in Garstang
Tel: 0845 838 2261
www.nawidows.org.uk

Way Foundation

Helps the under 50s who have lost a partner
Tel: 0300 012 4929
www.wayfoundation.org.uk

Support for young people**Cruse Bereavement Care for children and young people**

Website support designed by young people for young people
Tel: 0808 808 1677
www.rd4u.org.uk

Childhood Bereavement Network

Information, support and guidance for bereaved children and young people
Tel: 020 7843 6309
www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Riprap

Support for young people age 12-18 whose parents have cancer
www.riprap.org.uk

Winston's Wish

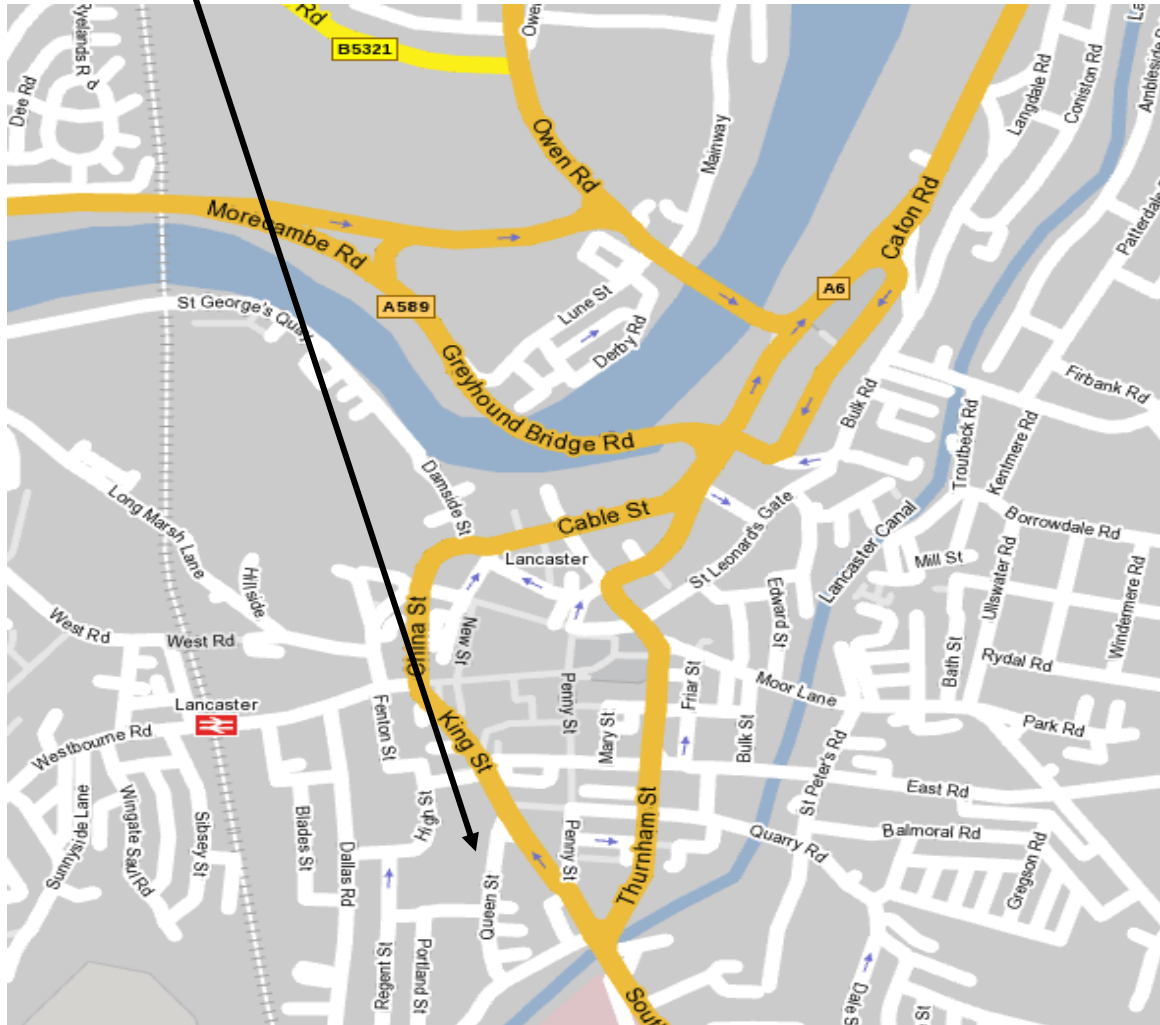
For bereaved children, young people and their families
Helpline: 0845 203 0405
www.winstonswish.org.uk

Your notes

Please note that this booklet is as accurate as we can make it.
Information contained in the booklet does not mean
recommendation or endorsement.

Directions to The Register Office

4 Queen Street, Lancaster LA1 1RS



Produced by the Family Support
Team
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Slyne Road, Lancaster, LA2 6ST
Tel: 01524 382538



ST. JOHN'S
HOSPICE

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