**Actions after End of Life**

**Introduction**

* When the life of a person comes to an end, the first thing you need to be able to do is recognise this fact, and to know what to do next.
* Whether the death occurs in hospital, a hospice, or at home, you need a plan in place.
* There are also lots of legalities and practicalities that need to be completed. For example, did you know you need to register the death with the Registrar of Births, Marriage and Deaths, but in order to register the death, you need a death certificate from the person’s GP or hospital clinical team

This is all at a very emotional time, when it may be hard to think clearly, and hard to find the right information.

**This paper will include information about:**

* When death occurs in a hospice or hospital
* What to do if a person has died at home
* Tell us Once service (DWP)
* Medical Certificate
* Death certificate
* Registering a death
* Funerals
* Reading the will (now usually a letter from a solicitor or Executer)
* Returning NHS and other equipment
* Banks
* Insurance companies
* Bereavement services - Cruse
* Counselling
* Peer support
* Information on how to move on

**What you need to do to register a death.**

**If the Death occurs In Hospital.**

If the death occurs in hospital, the hospital staff will contact the person named by the deceased as next of kin. The hospital will keep the body in the hospital mortuary until the executor arranges for it to be taken away. Most funeral directors have a chapel of rest in which the deceased will be held pending the funeral.

There are different arrangements for different cultures and faiths

**If the Death occurs Elsewhere**

**If the Death was expected.**

If the death was expected, contact the doctor who attended the deceased during their final illness. If the doctor can certify the cause of death he or she will give you the following items:

* A Medical Certificate - that shows the cause of death
* A Formal Notice - that states that the doctor has signed the Medical Certificate.

You may wish to contact the deceased's minister of religion. Arrangements for the funeral may be made by a funeral director.

**If the Death is unexpected.**

If you discover a body or the death is sudden or unexpected, you should contact the following people:

* the family doctor
* the deceased's nearest relative
* the police, who will help to find the people listed above if necessary

If there is any reason to suspect that the death was not due to natural causes, do not touch or remove anything from the area. The death may be referred to the coroner. The doctor may ask the relatives for permission to carry out a post-mortem examination. This is a medical examination of the body which can find out more about the cause of death.

**When does the Death need to be registered by?**

Normally this will be registered within 5 days, unless the Coroner is investigating the circumstances relating to the death.

**Who has to register the Death?**

People with legal responsibility to register include:

* A relative
* A person present at the death
* The occupier of the premises where the death occurred if he/she knew of it happening
* The person arranging the funeral. (See also the list on the Notice to Informants attached to the Doctor's medical certificate of cause of death).

**What documents will the Registry Office require?**

* The medical certificate of cause of death issued by the doctor treating the person who has died.
* The deceased person's birth certificate. A passport can be helpful.

**What questions am I likely to be asked?**

The Registrar will interview you in private and will need to know the following information:

* The date and place of death.
* The full name and surname, and maiden name if the person who has died was a married woman.
* The occupation and, if the deceased person was a married woman or widow, the full name of her husband.
* The usual address.
* If the person who died was married, the date of birth of the surviving spouse.
* Whether the person who has died was receiving a pension from public funds.

The Registrar will enter these details into a computer and will then give you the opportunity to check that they are correct. The information will then be written into a register.

This is the 'original' legal record and you should check it through very carefully before signing it, as any mistakes discovered later on may be difficult to correct.

**What Documents Will I Receive?**

* A 'Green Form' which enables you to arrange the funeral.
* You will also be given a form for Social Security purposes.
* Certified copies of the entry can also be obtained upon payment of a statutory fee.

**Where must the death be registered?**

The death must be registered in the District Register Office for the area in which it occurred.

**When death occurs at home**

* You are not responsible for verifying death – this needs to be carried out by the patient’s GP and should be carried out as soon as possible after the person has died.
* You do not call 999 or 111
* If the death was expected, the GP should be able to issue a medical certificate verifying death so that a death certificate can be obtained from the Registrar.
* If the person did not have a GP or you do not know the name of the GP, an ambulance should be called instead.
* A doctor is not allowed to issue a certificate if they are unsure about the cause of death. When this happens the death must be reported to a coroner and the body will be taken to a hospital mortuary, where a post mortem may need to take place.
* It is important to understand and be able to recognise the following signs of death:-
* the heart stops beating
* breathing stops
* body colour becomes pale
* the body cools
* muscles relax
* urine and stools may be released
* the eyes may remain open
* the jaw can fall open
* the trickling of internal fluids may be heard
* Immediately following death, nothing has to be done. Take the time you need to start the grieving process. Some people want to stay in the room with the body; others prefer to leave. Some families want time to sit quietly with the body, console each other, and maybe share memories. A member of the person’s religious community or a spiritual counselor may also be invited at this time.
* If you have a list of people to notify, this is the time to call those who might want to come and see the body before it is moved
* You might want to have someone make sure the body is lying flat before the joints become stiff and cannot be moved. This *rigor mortis* begins sometime during the first hours after death.
* Once death have been verified by the patient’s GP:-
* If the forms have been completed for donation of the body for medical education or research, the information on the forms should be followed to allow the body to be collected
* If an autopsy is required, the body will be taken to hospital. This will be arranged by the GP.
* The body may be moved to a funeral home in preparation for the funeral
* If you are not using a funeral home, you should ensure you have planned what to do at this stage.

**Registering a death**

* If the death has been [reported to a coroner](https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/when-a-death-is-reported-to-a-coroner) you can’t register the death until the coroner gives permission.
* Use the ‘Register a death’ tool - <https://www.gov.uk/register-a-death/y>

**Death certificate – including differences between burial and cremation**

* Medical Certificate - hospital - two signatures for cremation

**Funerals**

* Prepare a Funeral Plan

Determine what you want to do e.g. type of service, woodland burials, cardboard coffins

* Implementing a funeral plan

Once you have made a funeral plan, you need to talk about how to implement the plan and who will do this.

# Arrange the funeral if there is no plan

# The funeral can usually only take place after the death has been registered. Most people use a funeral director, though you can arrange a funeral yourself.

# Funeral directors - You can get more than 1 quote to compare costs. You should choose a funeral director who’s a member of either:

* [National Association of Funeral Directors](http://www.nafd.org.uk/funeral-advice/funeral-arrangements/choose-a-funeral-director.aspx)
* [Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors](http://www.saif.org.uk/website/common/search.html)
* Both organisations have codes of practice and members must give you a price list when asked. Some local councils run their own [funeral services](http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/index.jsp?LGSL=671&LGIL=8&ServiceName=Find%20out%20about%20a%20council%20funeral) - eg non-religious burials. The [British Humanist Association](http://humanism.org.uk/ceremonies/non-religious-funerals) can also help with non-religious funerals.

### Paying for a funeral

You can apply for a [Funeral Payment](https://www.gov.uk/funeral-payments) if you have difficulty paying for the funeral. https://www.gov.uk/funeral-payments

**Reading the will - old terminology**

* We no longer read wills in the old sense of the word, so we don’t all sit around at the solicitors, listening to a grim faced bearded man tell us about what is in the will. But we do need to look at what is in the will, ideally before the funeral as some people put information in the will about where and how they want their funeral to take place.
* An executor of the will is the person, named in the will, who is responsible for dealing with the estate of the person who has died. An executor may have to apply for a special legal authority before they can deal with the estate. This is called probate.

**Bereavement services**

Sometimes people need help to move on.

Cruse Bereavement Care is just one of a number of organisations who can help. They can be contacted on 0844 477 9400 and offer face-to-face and group support is delivered by trained bereavement support volunteers [across the UK](http://www.cruse.org.uk/in-your-area).

**Information on how to move on - good planning leading to a better eolc experience - improves moving on**

References:

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/end-life-helping-comfort-and-care/things-do-after-someone-dies>

citizens advice bureau

<http://lmrpcc.org.au/admin/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Customs-Beliefs-Death-Dying.pdf>

https://www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/death

**Returning NHS and other equipment in Hampshire**

* **Returning equipment from OT**
  + If OT are able to reuse the item they will arrange a suitable time to collect it from you. Contact [OT Direct](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/adult-services/adultservices-professionals/aboutas/structure/ot.htm) to arrange. Otherwise for equipment that has previously come from ICES (there should be a bar code on the piece of equipment indicating this). Contact The Integrated Community Equipment Store (ICES) Tel: 01256 476800
* **Stair lifts**
  + If the lift installed came from Hampshire County Council recycled stock then it still belongs to us, and we will require client details and contact information.  
    Contact [OT Direct](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/adult-services/adultservices-professionals/aboutas/structure/ot.htm) to arrange.
* **Returning equipment from the Sensory Team**
  + Currently there is very little equipment which needs to be returned. However, if you have any, just return it to the local adult services area office and this will then be sent to the technicians department.  
    Or contact Technicians Service  
    Tel: 01489 559477  
    Tel: 01489 570278 (deaf or Hard of Hearing helpline – not 24/7)  
    email: [ot.technicians@hants.gov.uk](mailto:ot.technicians@hants.gov.uk)
* **For equipment supplied by other organisations**
  + **From the British Red Cross - C**ontact the Hampshire branch Tel: 01962 877 732 for details of how to arrange collection of unwanted equipment. Wheelchairs loaned from the [Red Cross](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equipment-for-home/equipment-returns.htm#red-cross) should be returned directly to them.
  + **From the National Health Services (NHS) -** If your wheelchair has been supplied by the NHS, you will need to contact your local [NHS Wheelchair Service](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/social-care-services/Pages/nhs-wheelchair-services.aspx) for repair or return.
  + **Privately purchased –**
    - Wheelchairs - for privately purchased wheelchairs please contact your supplier.
    - Stairlifts - if the stair lift was purchased via a Disabled Facilities Grant then the lift is your property and you can sell or do with it as you please.

Taken from: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equipment-for-home/equipment-returns.htm

**Tell us Once service (DWP)**

<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once>

* Most local councils run a service called Tell Us Once - it lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go. Your [local registrar](https://www.gov.uk/register-offices) will tell you about using Tell Us Once and give you a unique reference number to access the service [online](https://death-tellusonce.direct.gov.uk/death/enrich/recover) or by telephone. You may be able to use it at the time you register the death.
* Where do you find your local registrar? In the telephone book under Registration of Births Marriages and Deaths (Romsey move)
* You’ll need to take with you the deceased’s:
* date of birth
* National Insurance number
* driving licence number
* passport number
* details of any benefits or entitlements they were getting, eg State Pension
* details of any local council services they were getting, eg Blue Badge
* name and address of their next of kin
* name, address and contact details of the person or company dealing with their estate (property, belongings and money), known as their ‘executor’ or ‘administrator’
* You need permission from the next of kin, the executor, the administrator or anyone who was claiming joint benefits or entitlements with the deceased before you give their details. Tell Us Once will notify:
* HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) - to [deal with tax and cancel benefits](https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/tax-and-benefits)
* Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) - to [cancel benefits](https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/tax-and-benefits), eg income support
* Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) - to [cancel a driving licence](https://www.gov.uk/tell-dvla-about-bereavement)
* Passport Office - to [cancel a passport](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-with-a-passport-when-the-passport-holder-has-died)
* The [local council](https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council) - to cancel housing benefit, council tax benefit, a Blue Badge, inform council housing services and remove the person from the electoral register
* public sector or armed forces pension schemes - to stop pension payments

There’s a [different process](https://www.gov.uk/update-property-records-someone-dies) to update property records if the person who died owns land or property see below.

### If Tell Us Once isn’t available

### You’ll have to let the relevant organisations know about the death yourself if

* your local register office doesn’t offer the Tell Us Once service
* you choose not to use it.
* the person died abroad in [a country where Tell Us Once isn’t available](https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/death-abroad)

The Tell Us Once service isn’t available in Northern Ireland or some local authorities including Portsmouth

## Banks and other financial organisations

Contact the person’s bank or mortgage, pension or insurance providers to close or change the details of their accounts

# Update property records when someone dies

How you update the property records when someone dies depends on whether they were the joint or sole owner of a property.

[Check the property records](https://www.gov.uk/search-property-information-land-registry) if you don’t know:

* who owns a property
* whether it’s owned jointly or solely

## When a joint owner dies

When a joint owner of a property dies, fill in [form DJP](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deceased-joint-proprietor-djp) to remove their name from the register.

Send the completed form to the [Land Registry](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-registry-address-for-applications#standard-addresses), along with an official copy of the death certificate.

## When a sole owner dies

When the sole owner of a property has died, the property is normally transferred to either:

* the person inheriting the property (known as ‘the beneficiary’)
* a third party, eg someone buying the property

### If you transfer to a beneficiary

To transfer a property to a beneficiary, download and fill in these forms:

* ‘[Change the register](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/change-the-register-ap1)’ (sometimes known as form AP1)
* ‘[Whole of registered title: assent](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-of-registered-title-assent-as1)’ (sometimes known as form AS1)

You must also send:

* the original or an official copy of the grant of probate or letters of administration
* the [Stamp Duty Land Tax](https://www.gov.uk/stamp-duty-land-tax) certificate or self-certificate for the property (if appropriate)
* a fee - check the [fee calculator](http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/professional/fees/fees-calculator)

Send the completed forms and supporting documents to the [Land Registry](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/land-registry-address-for-applications#standard-addresses).

### If you sell the property to a third party

You need to:

* [transfer the ownership](https://www.gov.uk/registering-land-or-property-with-land-registry/transfer-ownership-of-your-property) of the property
* provide the buyer with an official copy of the probate or letters of administration