

# Practical guide to help those who are bereaved

*Support for relatives and loved ones*



Nottingham Medical Examiner and Bereavement Service

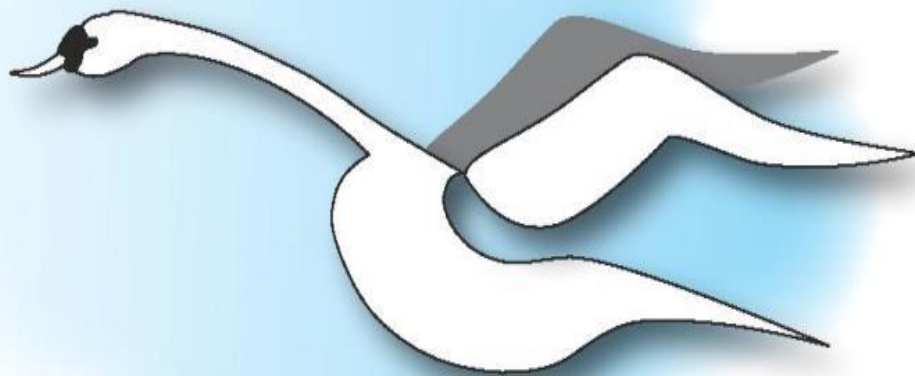
0115 9709113

## Our sincere condolences

If you have been given this leaflet, you have experienced the death of someone close to you. The loss of a relative or friend is understandably a difficult time. We would like to offer our sincere condolences to you and also help to reassure you that there is help available should you require it.

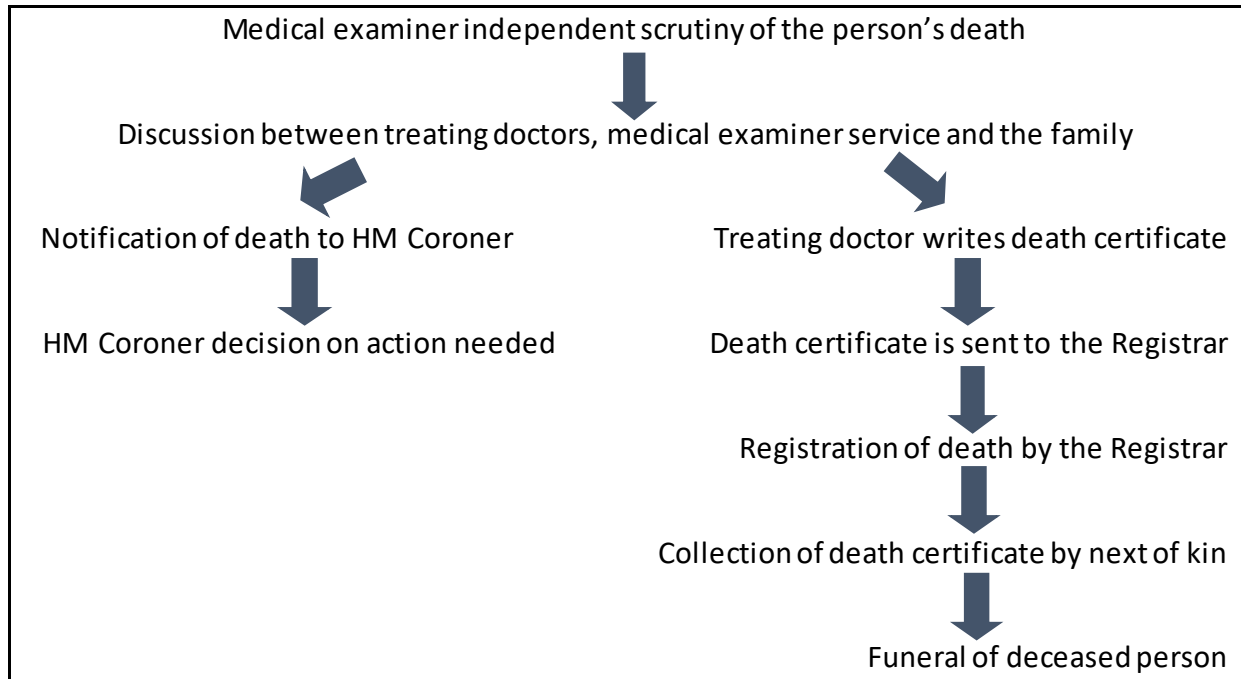
We hope this leaflet will help you understand what you can expect from the Nottingham Medical Examiner and Bereavement Service. We will help guide you through the arrangements that need to be made over the coming days and weeks. This leaflet provides you with information and advice on the steps to be taken immediately after a death. It also shares guidance on who can help, and where further information can be obtained. It explains practical procedures such as registering the person's death and arranging the funeral.

Everyone deals with the loss of a loved one differently. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Information relating to the effects of and dealing with grief can be explored with your own general practitioner.



## Practical procedures that need to take place after a person has died

The law states that there are a number of practical steps that need to take place after a person has died. These steps might include:



The law also states that certain types of death must be reported by a registered doctor to His Majesty's (HM) Coroner.

## What do I need to do?

*We will contact you, the Nottingham Medical Examiner and Bereavement Service*

We will need to contact you so that we can share with you and support you through the practical steps and procedures that need to take place when someone has died. We will telephone the relative and or friend helping to organise the deceased person's funeral and registration of death.

If you need to contact us after we have already spoken about any queries or questions, then please do not hesitate to contact us. Please use the telephone number 0115 9709113. Our office is open 1000 – 1600, Monday – Friday.

## Who is the medical examiner?

The law states that every death that occurs whether inside a hospital or outside of a hospital such as in a person's home undergoes an independent scrutiny by a medical examiner. Medical examiners are senior doctors (usually hospital consultants or General Practitioners) who provide an independent review of deaths. They have been trained in the legal and clinical elements of death certification processes. The medical examiner will only review deaths where they have not been involved in the deceased person's care. The medical examiner will look at the relevant medical records and discuss the causes of death with the treating doctor(s). The medical examiner will also advise when a patient's death must be reported to HM Coroner.

On hearing that someone has died, the medical examiner and bereavement service will undertake and complete their scrutiny. You are not required to organise the medical examiner scrutiny; this will automatically occur. Nonetheless, the medical examiner service will want to speak to you as the person's representative. This is to hear of any care concerns you and or the family wish to share, to know what the person's cause of death was and or to help answer any other questions you may have. The medical examiner service will also share with you that the death can now be registered or alternatively that the death has been reported to HM Coroner.

The process of the medical examiner scrutiny will be completed very quickly and will not introduce any delay in issuing the death certificate.

## Notification of death to HM Coroner

The law states that certain types of death must be reported by a registered doctor to HM Coroner. If a death is reported to HM Coroner, the process and documents you need to register the death may be different.

The Coroner will decide either:

- *the cause of death is clear;*
- *that a post-mortem is needed; and or*
- *to hold an Inquest.*

## If the cause of death is clear to HM Coroner

If the Coroner decides that the cause of death is clear then the treating doctor will write a death certificate. The death certificate completed is then sent to the Registrar for the

Registrar to register the death. The Coroner will issue a certificate to the Registrar stating that a post-mortem is not needed and that the death can be registered.

### If a post-mortem is required by HM Coroner

The Coroner may decide a post-mortem is needed to find out how the person died. This post-mortem is done in a hospital. The Coroner will release the body for a funeral once the Coroner and her team have completed the post-mortem examinations and no further examination is required. If the body is released with no Inquest, the Coroner will send a form called '100B' to the Registrar stating the cause of death.

### If HM Coroner holds an Inquest

A coroner must hold an inquest if:

- *the cause of death is still unknown;*
- *the person might have died a violent or unnatural death;*
- *the person might have died in prison or police custody*

Your Coroner's Officer will issue you with an 'interim fact of death certificate', which you can use to notify organisations of the death. You cannot register the death until involvement with HM Coroner is completed. Once the inquest is over, you can get the final death certificate from the Registrar.

### How do I get hold of the death certificate?

After the treating doctor has written the death certificate, the death certificate will be sent to the Registrar for Deaths. You will not need to collect the death certificate yourself from the GP surgery. The Registrar will contact you when they have received the completed death certificate. Once the death certificate has arrived at the Registrar's Office, the process of registering the death can begin. You will need to make an appointment with the Registrar in order to register the death. The Registrar will organise such an appointment when they contact you.

If for whatever reason you have not heard from the Registrar, then we would advise you to contact the Registrar directly. You will need to know whether you need the City Registrar's Office or the County Registrar's Office. The medical examiner and bereavement service will advise you during their contact whether you need the City Registrar's Office or the County Registrar's Office. The City Registrar's Office number is 0115 841 5554. The Country Registrar's Office number is 0300 500 8080. The Registrar's Office is open 0900 – 1630 Monday to Friday.

The Registrar will then be able to register the death following this appointment. You'll get a 'certificate for a burial' often referred to as a 'Green Form' to give to the funeral director. If you elect to have a cremation, an application for cremation will also need to be completed. This 'Application for Cremation' can be completed at your chosen funeral directors.

Whenever possible, the death should be registered within 5 working days (unless there is involvement of HM Coroner) and in the district where the death occurred.

### Who can register the death with the Registrar?

The person's death can be registered by:

- *a relative;*
- *someone who was with the person when they died;*
- *the occupier of the premises where the death occurred if they knew of it happening;*
- *someone who is arranging the funeral such as the relative, friend and or legal representative (but not the funeral director);*
- *an official from the hospital;*
- *an executor of the will.*

### What information will the Registrar require to register the death?

You will be interviewed in private by a registrar and asked personal questions about the person who has died. You will be asked to provide the following:

- *the date of death;*
- *where they died;*
- *their full name;*
- *their date of birth;*
- *where they were born;*
- *their occupation;*
- *their last address;*
- *whether they were receiving a state pension or any other state benefit;*
- *if married, their spouse's date of birth.*

If the person who has died was a married woman, the registrar will also need to know:

- *the maiden surname;*
- *their husband's (or late husband's) name and occupation.*

Once the death has been registered you will be issued with a 'Form 9 (Authority for Disposal)', the 'Green Form'. This is for the funeral director and is issued free of charge. You will also be given an unique reference number which you should keep safe.

### What is the cost of registering a death?

There is no charge for registering a death, but you may need certified copies of the death certificate for the following:

- *bank and building society accounts;*
- *insurance companies;*
- *probate or letters of administration;*
- *solicitor;*
- *stocks and shares;*
- *premium bonds;*
- *private/works pension.*

There is a fee of £11 for each certificate issued. Because death certificates are protected under crown copyright, they should not be photocopied. Therefore you may need to buy extra certificates at a later date.

### 'Tell Us Once' service

When someone dies, there can often be a number of government departments and agencies to notify. For example, a passport or driving licence may need to be cancelled, or benefits stopped. The 'Tell Us Once' service is designed to make things simpler for you, by helping you give this information to the government only once.

### If I take part in 'Tell Us Once', what government departments and organisations will be told about the death?

'Tell Us Once' can notify the following departments after you have registered a death:

- *Adult Social Services;*
- *Attendance Allowance;*
- *Blue Badge parking permit;*
- *Child Benefit;*
- *Child Tax Credit;*

- *Children's services;*
- *Council housing;*
- *Council tax;*
- *Council Tax Benefit;*
- *Disability Living Allowance;*
- *Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency;*
- *Employment Support Allowance;*
- *Housing Benefit;*
- *Income Support;*
- *Job Jobseeker's Allowance;*
- *Library services;*
- *Overseas Health Team;*
- *Owed payments to the Council;*
- *Passport Service;*
- *Personal taxation;*
- *Tax help for older people;*
- *War Pensions scheme;*
- *Working Tax Credit.*

Where applicable, 'Tell Us Once' will pass details to these departments on your behalf. The departments you choose to notify will contact you directly if they need any more information to process your change in circumstances.

Following the registration of the death, the registrar will set up the deceased's details on the 'Tell Us Once' national database. This usually takes around five minutes at the end of the registration. Your registrar will then provide you with a unique 'Tell Us Once' reference number.

Please access the 'Tell Us Once' service online via GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death> after the registration of the death has taken place.



## Nottingham Medical Examiner and Bereavement Service Feedback

We would like to ask you if you would consider participating in an evaluation of our medical examiner and bereavement service.

Your feedback will help us to continue to improve our service that we provide for bereaved families.

Please scan this QR code which will take you to the evaluation page. Alternatively, go directly to our website <https://www.nuh.nhs.uk/bereavement-services/>



You can then follow the prompts on the screen. Your answers will be treated as strictly confidential. This is an anonymous form, so please do not add the deceased's name and or your own details.

If you wish to discuss your experience with a member of the medical examiner and bereavement team then please do not hesitate to telephone us using our number 0115 9709113.