

We are so very sorry for the loss of your relative or friend. The time after a bereavement can be distressing and difficult, and even more so under the current circumstances. The staff at North Bristol NHS Trust offer their sincere condolences to you.

The purpose of this document is to help you through the next steps of the bereavement process, which have been updated as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Following the death of your loved one, you may have already contacted the Bereavement Team. If not, you can do so using the contact details below:

Phone: 0117 414 0180 (0181 / 0182)

Email: NorthBristolBereavementServices@nbt.nhs.uk

Registration of death

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Act of March 2020 has changed the process around the registration of deaths. Currently deaths can only be registered via a telephone appointment with a Registrar from Bristol City Council. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Act also requires that all deaths must now be registered with the Local Authority in the area where the death took place.

After your initial conversation with the Bereavement Team, they will contact you again once the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death has been completed by a doctor, scanned and securely sent by email to the Registrar. The following process will then occur:

1. You should then phone the registration call centre on 0117 922 2800 and provide your name, contact number and the name of the person whose death you are registering.
2. The registrar will call you back to complete the registration within 48 hours.
3. Please arrange a funeral director before the Registrar calls you to register the death. This will enable the Registrar to forward the relevant documents to your chosen funeral director.
4. You will need the following information available for the telephone registration appointment:
 - Date of birth of the deceased
 - Last known address
 - Last known Occupation
 - Place of Birth
 - Marital status – Wife/Husband/Civil partner's details
5. Death certificates can be purchased from the Registrar for £11 each (there is no charge for death certificates for those aged under 18). The Registrar will tell you how this can be done in the current situation. These will be needed for sorting out the person's affairs with the bank, insurance, private pensions etc.

Registration of death (cont'd)

6. When the death is registered the following forms will be generated:
- A certificate for Burial or Cremation (the 'Green' form). The Registrar will send this directly to the funeral director you have nominated. This certificate is free of charge and is required by the funeral director as soon as possible, as it gives permission for the person who has died to be buried or cremated. During the outbreak of coronavirus, this also gives permission to the hospital mortuary staff for the body to be released to the funeral director.
 - A certificate for the Department of Work and Pensions Benefit (form BD8) - you may need to fill this out and return it if the person was getting a State Pension or benefits. This will be posted to you.

When a death is reported to the Coroner

In some circumstances, the hospital doctor is legally required to discuss the death with the coroner. The Bereavement Team will inform you if this is the case and explain what this means and what happens next.

Viewing of your loved one

We regret that due to the restrictions in place during the coronavirus outbreak, viewing your loved one's body within the hospital mortuary will not be possible.

Making funeral arrangements

Information for local funeral directors can be found in the following places:

National Association of Funeral Directors

Telephone: 0845 230 1343

www.nafd.org.uk

Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors

Telephone: 0845 230 6777

www.saif.org.uk

Unfortunately, and in view of the pandemic and the government restrictions which include social distancing, the only funeral options available are a graveside service or short service at the crematorium. The funeral directors will talk with you about the arrangements.

Whilst attendance and the ceremony that often forms a part of the funeral is currently restricted, it may be beneficial for you to plan a future memorial service to enable the wider group of family and friends to remember your loved one.

Please do contact the Spiritual and Pastoral Care team if you would like any further help or advice on 0117 414 3700 or email the.chaplaincy@nbt.nhs.uk.

These processes may change depending on the impact that the coronavirus outbreak has. We will update our information as quickly as possible. The Registrars will also advise you and take action as required.

Collection of belongings

The belongings of your relative or friend will be respectfully cared for. They will be cleaned, placed into bags and kept in secure storage. The bereavement team will be in contact to provide a date and time for you to collect belongings.

Please note that those collecting the belongings must fulfil the following criteria:

- Not have received a 'shielding' letter advising them to remain at home.
- Is not required to self-isolate because they live in a household where someone has had symptoms of Coronavirus in the last 14 days.
- Is not displaying any symptoms of Coronavirus.

The belongings can be collected by the next of kin or any designated representative identified by the next of kin. The name of the person making the collection should be provided to the bereavement team. The collector is required to bring some form of personal identification with them to help ensure the belongings are returned to the right person.

Where to find help and support

Many feelings can occur at this time; for example numbness, disbelief, exhaustion, relief, sadness and anger. Under these extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic you may feel emotions more acutely. Grieving in isolation can be one of the hardest aspects of the current situation.

Do reach out to others however you can – online, via telephone, letters and videos. If difficult feelings persist or you feel you are not coping then seek help.

Further information and bereavement support can be found in the following places.

Information from authorities

www.gov.uk/after-a-death/

www.bristol.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages/bereavementsupport

Age UK: What to do when someone dies

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/legal-issues/what-to-do-when-someone-dies/

Cruse Bereavement Care

Phone: 0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org/get-help/coronavirus-dealing/bereavement-and-grief

The Good Grief Trust

www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

Winston's Wish

Phone: 0808 802 0021

www.winstonswish.org

Grief Chat

Phone: 0152 478 2910

www.griefchat.co.uk

Child Bereavement Network

Directory of support for children:

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/find-help-near-you.aspx

Supporting bereaved children during the outbreak:

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/covid-19.aspx

The Loss Foundation: cancer bereavement support

www.thelossfoundation.org/our-response-to-coronavirus/

Sands: stillbirth and neonatal death charity

www.sands.org.uk

Sue Ryder

www.community.sueryder.org

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

www.uksobs.org

Support after Murder & Manslaughter

www.samm.org.uk

Support at North Bristol NHS Trust

The time ahead may be a difficult one for you. If you have any questions please do contact a member of the Spiritual and Pastoral Care Team.

Phone: 0117 414 3700 (please do leave a message if no one answers immediately)

Email: the.chaplaincy@nbt.nhs.uk

If you have any concerns about the care of your relative or friend who has died, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service. Please email or call and leave a message, and someone will get back to you within the next working day.

Phone: 0117 414 4569

Email: pals@nbt.nhs.uk

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