

What happens now?

... making arrangements
following a death

A decorative background pattern of stained glass in shades of blue and white, featuring floral and geometric motifs.

We wish to extend our sympathy and condolences to you at this sad time.

The staff at NGH realise that following a bereavement relatives/next of kin can be faced with a number of practical matters that need to be dealt with, these can be bewildering and stressful.

The information in this booklet is designed to guide you through some of the practical arrangements that have to be made.

We hope you find it of help.

CONTENTS

The Hospital Bereavement Service	1-2
Contacting the Funeral Director	3
Paying for a funeral	3
Seeing the deceased in hospital	4
Property and personal effects	4
The death certificate	5
Deaths on Critical Care Units, A & B	6
Sudden deaths in the A&E Department	6
When the coroner is involved	7
Post Mortem Examinations	8
Coroner's post mortem	8
Hospital post mortem	8
Repatriation	9
Cremation	9
How to register a death	10-11
Location map for Registration Office	12
A few words of advice	13
Some do's and don'ts of grief	13-14
Useful local and national contacts	15-16
Useful websites	17
Disclaimer	18
Bereavement Service Feedback	19

THE HOSPITAL BEREAVEMENT SERVICE (LOCATED AT THE EVELYN CENTRE*)

**see location map on page 12:*

Open 9.00am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) / Bereavement Service can provide advice about taking the next steps and the practical arrangements that follow a death in the hospital. There is a dedicated Bereavement Officer within PALS who is available if you experience any difficulties or would like advice. Please telephone **(01604) 523489** or **(01604) 523454**. Many issues can be dealt with over the telephone, or you may prefer to make an appointment to see a member of the PALS / Bereavement team.

Child and Adolescent Bereavement Service (CABS)

Children and Adolescents experience the death of someone close in much the same way as adults. However children do experience the passage of time differently and may seem to overcome grief quickly. It is important that the grief of a child or adolescent is not overlooked. Wherever possible they should be included in the funeral arrangements. The Child and Adolescent Bereavement Service is able to offer help to families/children and adolescents (up to the age of 18 years), and can offer one-to-one counselling. The service can be contacted on (01604) 545131.

Hospital Chaplains

You may wish to speak to a chaplain/priest or other faith representative following the death of a loved one. The Hospital Chaplains represent all the main Christian Churches and there is always a hospital chaplain available. The Chaplains are also able to make contact with other faith representatives and will be happy to do that on your behalf if you wish. The Chaplains can be contacted directly on **(01604) 545773** or via main switchboard on **(01604) 634700**.

The Health Partnership Team

The Health Partnership Team provides an assessment of need of adult patients who are in hospital which includes guidance and support for bereaved carers. A bereavement can sometimes mean practical and social difficulties as well. The Health Partnership Team on **(01604 545360)** could advise or direct you for help if you are a carer, need benefit or housing advice.

Organ and Tissue Donation

It is often possible to donate tissue after death. For example, corneas can restore the gift of sight for two people and heart valves can save the lives of adults who need heart valve replacements and children born with heart defects. Over 7, 000 people in the UK are waiting for organ transplants which will save or dramatically improve their lives.

If, at any time you would like to consider any of the above please speak to the medical/nursing staff or the bereavement officer who can arrange for someone to provide you with further information.

Contact NBS Tissue Services: **0800 4320559** directly.
Lines open 24 hours a day.

CONTACTING THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR

If you have not already done so, the most important thing to do, as soon as possible, is to contact a funeral director.

The funeral director will take full responsibility for arranging the funeral on your behalf, and can guide you through the various practical concerns you may have.

The funeral director will also be responsible for arranging and collecting any other paperwork that may be required such as cremation forms, which they will request from the hospital.

PAYING FOR A FUNERAL

The cost of a funeral can vary a lot. Before making any arrangements you should check how the funeral will be paid for. The deceased may have contributed to a scheme or policy. They may have savings, a prepaid funeral plan or life insurance policies.

It is a good idea to contact more than one Funeral Director to get an idea of the cost of a funeral. Do not be afraid to discuss ways of reducing costs with the Funeral Director

You might be able to seek financial help if you are receiving benefits such as Income Support, Family Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

Please contact the Department of Work and Pensions, **Bereavement Telephony Service on 0845 60 60 265** for advice.

SEEING THE DECEASED IN HOSPITAL

If you wish, you may see the person who has died, before they are taken to the funeral director's chapel of rest.

Please telephone the bereavement service and they can make arrangements on your behalf. Alternatively, you can contact the mortuary direct between 8.30am - 4.30pm Monday - Friday, and 8.00am - 12 noon on Saturday. Please note that under normal circumstances viewing is not possible at night or during the weekend. The mortuary staff can be contacted on **(01604) 545014**.

PROPERTY AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

Patients' property and valuables, not already collected at the time of death, will be sent to The Patient Finance and Property Office for safekeeping **or**, if there are a few outstanding items, may be sent to the Evelyn Centre to be collected at the same time as the Death Certificate (Medical Certificate for the Cause of Death) by the next of kin or Executor of the Will.

NB. A letter of consent from the next of kin or power of attorney and identification will be required if collecting belongings on their behalf.

The Patient Finance and Property Office is open: 9.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday and can be contacted on **(01604) 545779**.

THE DEATH CERTIFICATE (MEDICAL CERTIFICATE FOR THE CAUSE OF DEATH)

- **It is important to make arrangements with the Bereavement Service with regard to the collection of the death certificate, as individual circumstances need to be taken into account and may affect when the certificate is ready.**

**In the first instance, please telephone:
(01604) 523489 or (01604) 523454
(However, if the death occurred on Critical Care Unit
or in A&E, please see pages 6 and 7)**

We endeavour to issue the death certificate as soon as possible so that the person who has died can be released from our care at the hospital into the care of the funeral directors.

It may be possible to issue the certificate at the time of the person's death. However, sometimes there are reasons why this may be delayed:-

- One of the patient's own team of doctors need to complete the certificate and they may not be able to do so immediately.
- Bank holidays and weekends may further delay when the certificate will be ready for collection.
- The doctors may need to discuss the patient's case with HM Coroner, this is routine if the patient has been in hospital less than 24 hours, has undergone recent surgery or has suffered a recent fracture. Generally, after speaking with the Coroner, the doctor can proceed with issuing the death certificate.

DEATHS ON CRITICAL CARE UNITS, A & B

Patient deaths that have occurred on the Critical Care Unit (CCU) are generally managed by the medical and nursing staff of the unit itself, as this is where they have been receiving specialist care. We would advise you to liaise with CCU in the first instance who will be able to provide you with information with regards to when the death certificate can be collected or whether the death has been referred to the Coroner (please see *“When the Coroner is involved”* on page 7).

CCU can be contacted directly - Unit A (01604) 545542 or Unit B (01604) 545544

The Bereavement Service (Evelyn Centre) can be contacted for any additional advice and support on (01604) 523489 or (01604) 523454.

SUDDEN DEATHS IN THE A&E DEPARTMENT

Often, when a patient dies in the Accident & Emergency Department (A&E), their death is unexpected. In most cases, the hospital has to inform the Coroner. The doctor referring the death will seek guidance as to whether or not they can issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. If not, the Coroner may ask the GP (family doctor) to complete the certificate, or they may wish to investigate the death further. **Please read the section on “When the Coroner is involved” on page 7.**

If you have any questions, please ring the Bereavement Service on (01604) 523489 or (01604) 523454, 9.00am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday or Out of Hours, the A&E department can be contacted on (01604) 545610.

When the Coroner is involved

In some situations, including sudden or unexpected death, the Coroner will have to be informed. When this happens, the Certificate showing the cause of death cannot be issued until the Coroner is satisfied as to why the patient died. This process may cause a short delay. Sometimes, in order to achieve a cause of death, the Coroner may order a post-mortem examination.

Following a post mortem and when the cause of death is established, the Coroner will inform the family of the cause of death and provide the Registrar directly with the information in order that the family can register the death and make arrangements for the funeral to take place. In these cases, there is **no paperwork** for the family to collect from the hospital or the Coroner's office. During the time when a post-mortem is to be performed, the Coroner's Officer will keep in close contact with the family or next of kin to keep them up to date.

If the family doctor had seen the patient recently, it is sometimes possible for the family doctor to sign the certificate. If this is the case the Coroner's Officer will inform you. The Coroner's Officers are responsible for helping you through this process. They can be contacted through the Northamptonshire Police as follows: Tel. **101**, if calling within the county of Northamptonshire, otherwise please telephone **03000 111 222** and request the Northampton Coroner's office.

POST MORTEM EXAMINATIONS (ALSO KNOWN AS AUTOPSIES)

Coroner's post-mortem

A Coroner's post-mortem examination is performed by an independent pathologist, who has been instructed by the Coroner to establish the cause of death. This type of post-mortem is a legal requirement and will not need the bereaved family's consent. The next of kin cannot prevent a Coroner's post-mortem, even if it conflicts with the family's faith-tradition.

Hospital post-mortem

A doctor may ask relatives for a hospital post-mortem, if they feel that additional information can be gained. This post-mortem is not compulsory and relatives have the right to refuse.

If the relatives agree, a doctor will explain to them, in detail, what a hospital post-mortem entails, and will require written consent.

REPATRIATION

If you wish to repatriate the body (move the body to another country), it is vital that you discuss this with the Registrar at the Town Hall and also a Funeral Director, as various additional papers have to be issued. Most commonly, a “Free from Infection” (FFI) document has to be issued by the hospital, and an “Out of England” Order must be issued by the Coroner, which has to be paid for.

CREMATION

The Bereavement Administrator may ask you if you are planning a burial or cremation service. If a cremation is chosen, then cremation papers will need to be issued. The hospital will arrange for the appropriate medical staff to complete the necessary forms, which the Funeral Director will arrange to collect from the hospital. The fees for cremation papers will be included in the funeral bill.

HOW TO REGISTER A DEATH

Once you have obtained a certificate showing the cause of death, an appointment should be made to register the death. The County Council's preferred method of booking an appointment is on the internet at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/registration. Alternatively you can telephone using the contact number below.

The certificate should then be taken to the Registration Office in Northampton or, if more convenient, to one of the other six Registration Offices within Northamptonshire. (If a Coroner's post-mortem has been undertaken, please advise the Registration Office when you ring to make an appointment.)

Northamptonshire Register Office

Northamptonshire	(by appointment only) Monday - Friday
Central Library*	9.00am to 5.00pm
Abington Street	Tel:- 0300 126 1000 (option 3)
Northampton	(for Northamptonshire)
NN1 2BA	lines open 8:00am to 6:00pm

* See location map shown on page 12

The Registrar will ask you a few details about the patient, as follows:

- Full name of the deceased, which includes maiden name for married women
- Date and place of death
- Date and place of birth
- Last known address of the deceased
- Occupation
- If married, the full name, date of birth and occupation of spouse (surviving or deceased).

The whole process should take approximately 30 minutes and the Registrar will provide you with the following documents:

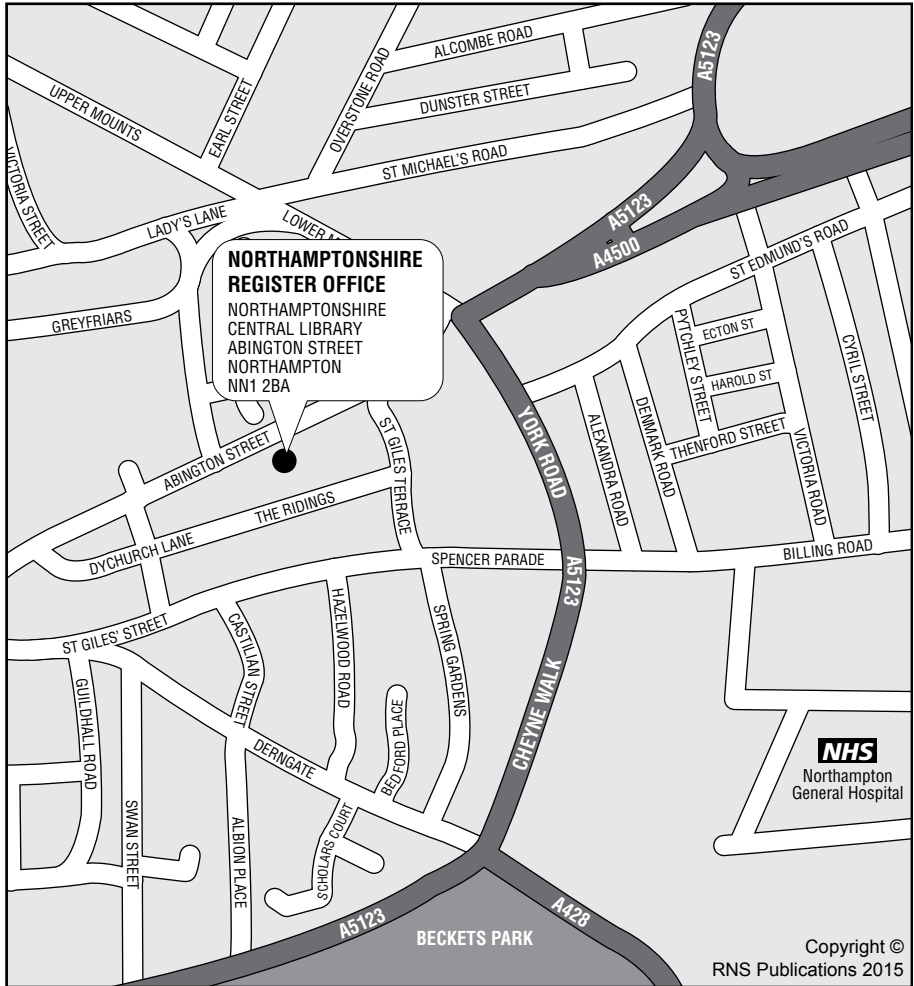
- A Certificate of Burial or Cremation (Form 14 - green form), to be given to the Funeral Director
- A Certificate of Registration of Death (Form BD8 - white form) to be sent to the Department of Work and Pensions
- Government booklet entitled 'What to do after a death in England and Wales' which is a detailed guide on what you must do and the help you can get in respect to the various issues that arise following a death.
- Information regarding the Tell Us Once Service, offered by Northamptonshire County Council, which will allow you to inform local and central government ONCE of a bereavement. More about this service can be found on the following website www.gov.uk/tell-us-once

For a small charge the registrar can issue you with as many copies of the Death Certificate that you may require for insurance companies, banks and building societies, etc., as photocopies are generally not acceptable.

Please Note: An appointment to register the death should not be made prior to notification from the Hospital Bereavement Service that a death certificate has been issued.

For further information about the registration service please visit www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/registration

LOCATION MAP FOR REGISTRATION OFFICE



A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

It is not possible to say exactly what everyone will experience in his or her grief and in his or her sense of loss. Each of us will experience our grief in a unique way, and no two people are entirely alike. Individuals from different cultures will have different ways of mourning and of supporting each other. However, on the other hand, there are several experiences in grief, which are common to everybody.

Emotional feelings such as shock, a sense of disbelief, anxiety, depression, guilt, anger, and an overall feeling of numbness may all be common. Often these are accompanied by physical symptoms of grief such as breathlessness, disturbed sleep patterns, difficulty in swallowing; if these symptoms persist do contact your local doctor who will be glad to help.

Some do's and don'ts of grief

Do express your feelings as much as possible.

Do talk through what has happened and what you are feeling with someone you can trust (e.g. a close member of family, a friend or support group).

Do keep in contact with friends and family. Remember that most people will be happy to be asked to help. However, often people may feel awkward and embarrassed about offering help.

Do choose a funeral director that you like and trust.

Do contact any of the voluntary and support organisations listed in this booklet if you need someone to talk to.

Don't hide your feelings; try to bring out into the open what you maybe feeling.

Don't rush into having the funeral right away unless it is the practice or culture or religious tradition.

Don't make any major life changes whilst you are still grieving. Give yourself time and space to think about any such changes, and discuss them with others.

Don't neglect yourself! Try to eat well and get plenty of rest.

Don't let others rush you into anything before you are ready. But remember that sometimes you may not know when you are ready for something unless you give it a try.

It can take months, even years, to fully grieve the loss of a loved one; and remember our grief is an experience through which we will begin to live life anew.

USEFUL LOCAL AND NATIONAL CONTACTS

Adult Social Care Team

Northampton

For all enquiries regarding adult social care

Northamptonshire County Council

0300 126 1000 (option 2)

Age UK (encompassing Age Concern and Help the Aged)

Providing practical and emotional support for the elderly and advice following bereavement.

Age Concern Northamptonshire
Monday - Friday 9am - 12pm

0845 677 2220

Age UK National: **0800 169 65 65**

www.ageuk.org.uk

Bereavement Advice Centre

Providing practical advice on all aspects of what to do when someone dies.

Freephone: **0800 634 9494**

www.bereavementadvice.org

Bereavement Telephony Service (Dept of Work and Pensions)

Providing advice on benefit entitlement and assistance.

National Tel: **0845 60 60 265**

www.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

Volunteer run and Government funded bureau offering advice and guidance on a whole variety of issues including bereavement.

Northamptonshire/Countrywide Advice line: **0344 488 9629**

Websites for Northamptonshire:

www.centralnorthamptonshirecab.org.uk

www.daventrycab.org.uk

National Website:

www.adviceguide.org.uk

CRUSE (Bereavement Care)

For people bereaved in any way, whatever their age, nationality of beliefs.

National Tel: **0844 477 9400**

Northamptonshire: **07772 428532**

www.cruse.org.uk

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

**Jewish Bereavement
Counselling Service**

Counselling and support for people
from the Jewish Community

Tel: 0208 951 3881

www.jbcs.org.uk

London Friend

Supporting the Lesbian, gay,
bisexual and transgender (LGBT)
Community

LGBT Bereavement helpline

Tel: 020 7837 3337

**Monday, Tuesday and
Wednesday 19.30 - 21.30**

www.londonfriend.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

For practical support and advice

Macmillan Support Line

0808 808 00 00

www.macmillan.org.uk

Marie Curie Cancer Care

For practical support and advice

Contact Supporter Services

0800 716 146

www.mariecurie.org.uk

MIND

National leading mental health
charity supporting individuals in
times of bereavement.

National Tel: **0300 123 3393**

Northampton **(01604) 634 310**

Wellingborough **(01933) 223 591**

www.mind.org.uk

The Samaritans

Support and help for those in
despair whatever reason.

Local: **(01604) 637637**

National/Helpline: **116 123**

www.samaritans.org

The Silver Line

Helpline for older people offering
free, confidential information,
friendship and advice.

National Tel: **0800 470 8090**

Open 24 hours

www.thesilverline.org.uk

WAY Widowed and Young

Self-help social and support
network for people widowed under
the age of 50.

Local: **0300 012 4929**

www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

Useful Websites

Direct Gov

www.gov.uk

Government site offering help and support with the practical and emotional aspects of death and bereavement

British Association for Counselling

www.bacp.co.uk

Provides information about local counselling organisations and individual counsellors who are accredited members.

NHS Blood and Transplant

www.organdonation.nhs.uk

For families interested in organ and tissue donation

Counselling Directory

www.counselling-directory.org.uk

A comprehensive database of UK counsellors, with information of their training and experience. A free confidential service

Inquest

www.inquest.org.uk

Charitable service providing advice to bereaved families regarding inquests.

Stop Junk Mail

www.stopmail.co.uk

Help in removing the names and addresses of people who have died from databases/ mailing lists and reduce the likelihood of identity theft.

The Natural Death Centre

www.naturaldeath.org.uk

Providing support and information on 'green' funerals and burials

Victim Support

www.victimsupport.org.uk

For the relatives of the victims of homicide, road accidents, sudden or unnatural deaths, or for people who are the victims of crime.

Way On

www.way-on.co.uk

Local self-help group for widows and widowers in their 50s and 60s

Way Up

www.way-up.co.uk

Self-help group and support network for people widowed in their 50's and 60's.

Your Funeral Choice

www.yourfuneralchoice.com

Free, independent, unbiased information on funeral director costs - simply type in your post code.

The information contained within this booklet has been prepared by NGH PALS/Bereavement Centre and contains general advice only, which we hope will be useful. NGH does not accept any liability from its use. We aim to ensure that this information is as up to date and accurate as possible, but please be aware that certain areas (such as contact details) are subject to change from time to time.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, companies, products, services or publications in this information booklet does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by NGH.

We appreciate this may be a difficult time for you but we would be grateful if you could please share with us how you felt about the service offered by the Bereavement team at Northampton General Hospital, if you had access to it, following the loss of your loved one. Completing and returning the short questionnaire below will help us to monitor and improve the service we provide in order to ensure it meets the needs of bereaved families, friends and carers.

Bereavement Service Feedback

Did you have any contact with the Bereavement Service? YES NO

Did you find the Bereavement Service staff courteous and helpful? YES NO

Did you find the “What Happens Now?” booklet useful? YES NO

We welcome any comments or suggestions:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for completing the above questionnaire and returning it to:

<p>For Office Use Only</p> <p>Date Received:</p> <p>.....</p>
--

Bereavement Officer
PALS / Bereavement Service
The Evelyn Centre
Northampton General Hospital
NHS Trust
Cliftonville
Northampton NN1 5BD

