

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

This is a deeply personal time when your loved one has died. His or her body will be cared for by the nursing staff just as carefully and respectfully as when he / she was alive and in accordance with any relevant religious customs.

The following information has been put together by Hospice staff to try and guide you through some of the decisions and arrangements which will need to be made.

*When my father died  
I never cried*

*When my plant looked sad*

*I thought – I know,*

*I'll ask my dad*

*And then I cried*

*(Anonymous)*

*“To weep is to make less  
the depth of grief”*

*(Shakespeare)*

What To Do First

1. Funeral arrangements can now be made. A Funeral Director can be contacted if you wish, who will advise you on the arrangements. You do not need to wait for a death certificate to be issued. A member of the clergy can be contacted as soon as you wish, if they are not already involved.

Choosing a Funeral Director - this is something you should consider carefully. Do not be afraid to tell the Funeral Director if you only have a limited amount of money for the funeral, etc.

2. The medical / death certificate needs to be collected from the Hospice along with your relative's personal effects. The Hospice will inform you when the certificate is available.

People to Be Informed:

- Landlord / Council – if property is rented.
- Employer, Trade Union, Pension Provider and Tax Office.
- Children's Teacher / School.
- Professional Advisors, e.g. Solicitor.
- Passport Office.
- Council Tax Office.
- Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (D.V.L.A.), Swansea, SA99 1AB.
- Insurers – Life, Health, House and Car, etc.
- Bank, Building Society, Post Office and Premium Bonds.
- Local Newsagent, Library, etc.

Check whether debits / payments are being made on: insurance policies, home loans, house, car, credit cards, rental / hire purchase agreements, etc. The remaining partner may have to change the name for household services: electricity, gas, telephone, TV licence, insurance policies, etc. You may also be entitled to various state benefits or allowances because your financial circumstances have changed. Your local Department of Works & Pension will be pleased to help you.

When you have Pension or Allowance books that need to be handed in to the Department of Works & Pension on the death of anyone close, it is not necessary to go and wait to see someone as it can be quite busy. At John Rideal House, Shambles Street, Barnsley they have a system for under 60 year olds where you can ring on 01226 777209 and make an appointment to see someone in privacy. For over 60 year olds you can ring on 0845 6060 265 and someone will take details and pass them to the Pensions Office, who will be pleased to arrange a home visit. Alternatively, you can visit a local “Drop in Centre” where they will be able to help you with any queries.

**Who Can Register the Death?**

- A relative of the deceased who was present at the death, or was in attendance during their illness.
- A relative residing or being in the district when the death occurred.
- A person present at the time of the death.
- The person dealing with the funeral arrangements (not the Funeral Director).

Things to take with you:

- Medical death certificate.
- Any forms given to you if the death has been referred to the Coroner.
- Birth certificate – if at hand.
- Medical card – if possible.

At the register office you will be issued with a copy of the Death Certificate. If you think you may need more than one copy to give to other parties, e.g. insurance companies, it would be better to obtain more copies at the same time. Some institutions will not accept photocopies of the Certificate. Normally one or two copies would be sufficient (there may be a charge).

**Who Do You Need to Inform?**

Many things will now require attention and there will be people who need to be informed. The following list will help and guide you, although not everyone or everything could possibly be mentioned. Equipment that has been borrowed needs to be returned to the District Nursing Services, Hospice or Hospital. (Also services and appointments need to be cancelled, e.g. local social services if meals on wheels, home help, day centre – if transport was used).

3. You will need to try to register the death within 5 days, if possible.
4. If you wish to see the deceased, you are able to do so at any time whilst they remain at the Hospice, but please telephone first.

**How To Register a Death**

The death must be registered at the local office of registration, which is the Town Hall, Barnsley. An appointment system is in operation. You will need to telephone the number below in order to make an appointment to register the death.

Telephone: 01226 773090 or 01226 773085

Opening Times: Monday to Friday  
9 am – 4 pm

The person who goes to the Register Office must be able to state accurately the following particulars:

- The full names of the deceased.
- Home address and marital status.
- The date and place of birth and death (town or village will do).
- Date of birth of surviving partner.

Other things you may be asked:

If male: His last occupation (even if retired).

If female: Was she married or widowed, maiden name and husband's full name and occupation. If unmarried, her occupation, if any.

Burial

Firstly, find out if a plot in a churchyard or cemetery has already been arranged. Check the will and any other papers which might inform you. If you want the burial to be in a churchyard, you can find out from the priest or minister about the plot and the right to burial there.

If it is a new grave, the cost of a headstone is extra to the funeral cost. If it is an existing grave, there will be a charge for re-opening the grave and for any extra inscription made on the headstone. The Funeral Director can arrange this and advise you as necessary.

Some people feel a burial is preferable as they have a grave to visit for remembering their loved ones. It is also somewhere to leave flowers on special occasions or for quiet thought / prayer, whether this be a cemetery or churchyard.

Cremation

No-one can be cremated until the cause of death has been identified. There will be certain forms you will be required to sign. The cost of the cremation is governed by the local authority.

If it is the wish of the deceased to be cremated, it is possible to have interment of ashes into a family grave. The Funeral Director can arrange this and advise you as necessary.

Post-Mortem

Where cause of death is uncertain, a post-mortem may be required. If an industrial claim is being made, a post-mortem is a definite requirement. Until this has been performed, neither a burial or cremation can take place.

During grief you may experience some or all of the following responses:

Manifestations of normal griefFeelings

Shock:	Present in normal grieving, but especially in the case of sudden death.
Numbness:	Often in the early grieving. Probably occurs because of overwhelming number of feelings.
Relief:	Particularly after a long or painful illness.
Anger:	A confusing feeling; may be due to frustration that nothing could be done.
Helplessness:	Relates closely with anxiety, often in early stage of loss.
Anxiety:	Can range from a sense of insecurity, to a strong panic attack.
Guilt / Self Reproach:	Either over something that happened or that was neglected. In time you will come to realise that this is irrational.
Sadness:	Most common feeling, not necessarily shown by crying.

Solicitors, wills and legal matters

You should ascertain if the deceased has made a will and consult the solicitor who holds it in order to carry out the deceased's wishes. The will should disclose the funeral wishes and the name of the executors or the persons legally entitled to deal with the estate of the deceased. The solicitor will help you with the administration of the estate and any questions relating to taxation that may arise. A solicitor can also help if there is no will or the terms of the will are no longer appropriate.

If you think you may be eligible for legal aid, discuss it with the solicitor or contact the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Law Society, Public Library, Police Station or a Court for advice.

Help from your Doctor

Everybody reacts differently to bereavement and whilst most people will cope without medical attention, sometimes people do run into difficulties such as prolonged sleeplessness or depression. Your family doctor is there to help you (and may be able to prescribe something appropriate). He may put you in touch with a counsellor or give advice on bereavement support groups in your area. Bereavement can turn your world upside down and is one of the most painful experiences you will have.

Grief

The grief process can vary from person to person. There is no time limit on how long you may grieve for, but normal grieving can last for up to two years or more. Many people worry whether their feelings are normal.

It is important to contact the Funeral Director of your choice as soon as possible. He will explain everything you need to know clearly and find out your special requests.

If you wish, a service may be held at your own church before the committal takes place at the crematorium.

It is important to state clearly what you would like to do with the cremated remains.

The options are:

Ashes to be scattered in the garden of remembrance, buried or scattered in a favourite spot, or at sea.

They may be placed in a churchyard, taken to the cemetery and placed with other family members, or you may want to keep them yourself.

If you have not made a decision about any of the above, you must also inform the Funeral Director of this before the cremation.

A funeral outside the United Kingdom

Only the Coroner can give permission for a funeral to take place outside the United Kingdom. This has to be obtained at least four days (at the Coroner's discretion) before the body is to be moved, so that he can carry out any necessary enquiries. You will be given a removal noticed, part of which is sent to the Registrar. Permission must be obtained in every case.

Yearning / Pining: A normal response. This may diminish in time.

Loneliness: Frequently expressed by those who have lost a spouse or partner and who were used to a close day-by-day relationship.

Fatigue: A measure of mood disturbance. May be experienced as apathy or listlessness.

Emancipation: A positive feeling. A normal response to changed status.  
(e.g Relief, Freedom)

### Physical sensations

- Hollowness in the stomach / knot in stomach.
- Tightness in the chest.
- Tightness in the throat / lump in throat / dry throat.
- Over-sensitivity.
- A sense of de-personalisation: "I walk down the street and nothing seems real".
- Breathlessness / feeling short of breath.
- Weakness in the muscles.
- Lack of energy.
- Dry mouth.

### Thought patterns

Disbelief: Often the first thought. Dream-like sensation.

Confusion: Lack of order to thoughts. Difficulty in concentrating.

6. A need for on-going support and caring of another person who understands grief.

7. A need for someone with whom you can be yourself.

8. A need to establish a new schedule and new traditions.

We realise this is a lot of information to take in at this difficult time for you. If you or your family need any further help or advice, please feel free to contact a member of the Hospice staff.

If anyone requires help with Bereavement Support outside of the Barnsley area, please contact the Bereavement Co-ordinator at the Hospice, who may be able to facilitate this.

Sighing:	Also related to physical sensation of breathlessness.
Restless over-activity:	You may feel the need to keep active.
Crying:	Tears relieve emotional stress. It is thought that crying may be a correction of chemical imbalance in the body.

Collecting or keeping physical reminders:	Gives security against fear of losing memories of deceased.
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All of these feelings are normal and you must not be afraid to make your needs known, so that the healing process can take place.

This is a personal time to heal from your loss. Do not be afraid to voice your needs and to seek ways to fill them.

The following is a list of commonly stated needs:

1. A need to tell and remember things about loved one and the experience of his / her death.
2. A need to cry at unexpected times.
3. A need to come face to face with pain and hurt, in order to heal.
4. A need to withdraw or retreat periodically.
5. A need to move through grief in your own time and way.

Pre-occupation:	You may feel obsessed with thoughts of the deceased.
Sense of presence:	You may feel the deceased is still present. Some find this comforting rather than distressing.
Hallucinations:	You may see or hear things that are not there. This will pass, normally within a few weeks of the loss.

### Behavioural patterns

Sleeping disturbance:	Usually in the early stages of loss. Either difficulty going to sleep, or waking early in the morning.
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Appetite disturbance:	Can show as either under-eating or over-eating.
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Absent mindedness:	Follows an important loss and will correct itself.
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Social withdrawal:	Often people prefer to be on their own for a time. You will want company in due course.
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Dreams of deceased:	Normal dreams, distressing dreams, or nightmares.
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Avoiding reminders:	Putting away and bringing out later – quite normal, but quick disposal of belongings is unhealthy and can cause regret and complicated grief reaction.
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Searching / calling out:	You may find yourself looking or calling out for the deceased, even silently. This is quite normal.
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Bereavement Services for Children

We are aware bereavement is a difficult time for you, which is why children sometimes feel alone and isolated. We are able to offer advice, support and some booklets to help families at this time.

Preparation before bereavement is invaluable and children are able to cope much better if we are honest and open with them. Protecting them only prolongs the “hurt”. Including them in all steps along the way is really important and also afterwards, seeing the deceased person, planning and taking part in the funeral are all ways to help them begin their grieving.

**HELPING CHILDREN THROUGH BEREAVEMENT**

Be open and honest with them, “reality is far more easy to manage than fantasy”.

Try not to use phrases like “he’s gone to sleep” or “we lost Gran”, as these can be confused with every day occurrences and may lead to fears about going to sleep.

Use straight-forward words like dead and dying. With young children try to link it with the death of a pet, if possible.

Give them the choice as to whether they see the dead person.

Give them the choice as to whether they go to the funeral or not – explaining what will happen first, that it is a special time to say goodbye. We have a separate information sheet that has been written to help you think about your children and the funeral, why they should have the chance to go and how to answer some of their questions.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Barnsley Hospice 01226 244244

Ask switchboard for appropriate department: Bereavement, Counselling, Social Worker, Nurse in Charge, Fundraising.

Star Bereavement Support Service 01924 213900

Age Concern 01226 285607

Citizens Advice Bureau 01226 206492

Samaritans 01226 202222/3

Barnsley Bereavement Support Service 01226 200565

Dial-A-Ride 01226 779321

Free Phone Benefits Agency 0800 882200

Macmillan Nurses  
(Community & Hospital) 01226 730000

FSU – Supporting Children in  
Bereavement Project 01226 289933

**‘STAR BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE**

Barnsley Hospice are part of a service that offers bereavement support for children and young people. Star Days / Children and Young Peoples’ Workshops are an opportunity for share, in a safe place, with other young people who have also experienced a bereavement. These consist of a full day (a Saturday) and a follow-on evening 4 to 5 weeks later, for ages 5 – 11 years and 11 – 16 years. Ask the Hospice staff for further information.

**A MEMORY BOX**

This is a safe place to keep significant things connected to the person who has died.

It can be shared with others or kept for private memories and can support the process of remembering.

It can be decorated on the outside and examples of things to put in are: birthday cards, photos, letters, favourite perfume, a favourite CD, pair of spectacles, jewellery, a lock of hair or a scarf, anything that holds important memories.

Children are more resilient than we give them credit for and often deal with bereavement a lot better than adults do. Please do not hesitate if you feel we can be of any help to you.

**PLEASE DON’T FEEL THAT YOU ARE ALONE IN DEALING  
WITH YOUR BEREAVEMENT.**

**WE ARE HERE TO HELP.**

01226 244244

Be prepared to listen to a child’s thoughts, beliefs and fears, taking into consideration any faith or beliefs of the family.

Information will need to be repeated several times on different occasions.

Tell them where the dead person is or will go. They may need help to realise where the body has gone.

Make it clear the body of the person who has died is no longer working and they do not feel any pain.

Do not be afraid to cry in front of children, this will let them know it is OK to cry – they will probably give you a hug.

Reassure them nothing they did caused the death.

Comfort them, be there for them and give them a hug.

**REMEMBERING**

Do not stop talking about the person who has died. Children will probably still talk about them, ask questions about them. Encourage this, but do not force it.

Look at photographs and remember things they did together.

Let the children have a photograph or personal item, a piece of jewellery, clothing or their walking stick, or they may ask for an item which is special to them.



