

What are the practical things that need doing when someone dies?

There are a number of things that will need to be done in the days following a death. It can be a very busy and stressful time - accept any help from family and friends and try to share the load.

Registering the death

- When someone dies at home a doctor must be called to sign a medical certificate. If the death has been sudden, the doctor will have to talk to the police who will report it to the coroner. A post-mortem examination may be arranged.
- When someone dies in hospital (or hospice), the doctor will give you a medical certificate, you must take it to the Register Office and register the death within five days. The registrar will issue a death certificate and notification of disposal, which should be given to the funeral director. Ask for a few copies of the death certificate. You may need these for pension and insurance purposes.

Organising the funeral

- If the person who has died did not leave a pre-paid funeral plan - a funeral director can be chosen before or after you have registered the death. He or she will advise on the procedures for the funeral. Most people obtain a name from a google search, telephone directory or by word of mouth.
- Organising a funeral can be extremely expensive - just when you may be facing a reduced income or financial change. Choose a funeral director carefully. Look for a director who gives costs upfront on their website (or ask for a leaflet) and do not feel any pressure when you meet the director to opt for expensive options. Creating personal touches that celebrate your loved one's life (such as displaying photos and mementos and writing a special tribute) can be another way of honouring them instead. It can also be cheaper to organise the catering and flowers yourself.
- Carefully consider whether you want to see the body of your loved one before the funeral. Some people feel this will be too distressing and decide to remember them in happier times - but can regret this later on. Follow your own feelings. There is no right or wrong thing to do, but do think it through.
- It is worth knowing that there is no legal requirement to hold a funeral - holding a memorial service later or a private ceremony to scatter ashes could be other options.

Useful websites:

- **Leeds City Council** has more local information about death and funerals. www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Death.aspx
- **Humanists UK** website has information about non-religious or humanist funerals. <https://humanism.org.uk/ceremonies/non-religious-funerals/>
- **The Good Funeral Guide** is a not-for-profit information resource for funeral advice which is independent of the funeral industry. www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk/

Contacting the tax office and local Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

Information about using the 'Tell us once' service can be found on the Gov.UK website at www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-onc

If you are not able to use the 'Tell us once' service, you will need to contact:

- Your local Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to arrange pension and other entitlements. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions
The Directgov website provides information about benefit entitlement, such as whether you can claim a funeral payment or widow's payment, for example. www.gov.uk
- Inform the tax office about your change in circumstance. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/bereavement-and-deceased-estate

Sorting out any money or property left by the person who died

If there is a will, the executors will make sure it is carried out. Contact the solicitor. If there is no will, contact the Probate Registry for an application to administer the 'estate'. Your local [Citizens Advice](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) can help you if you are not sure. www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Find out more on:

- **Gov.uk** www.gov.uk/after-a-death
- **Lasting Post** website which gives independent advice about what to do when someone dies www.lastingpost.com
- **National Bereavement Service** website can guide you through the practical side of bereavement from arranging a funeral to dealing with the legal and financial issues that need to take place. They have a team of trained bereavement experts on hand to talk to you about your situation and help with any questions or queries you have. Call 0800 0246 121. <http://lbforum.org.uk/services/national-bereavement-service/>

The Bereavement Register - if your loved one has died recently the Register can help reduce the amount of direct mail sent to their address, stopping painful daily reminders. www.thebereavementregister.org.uk/