



**University Hospitals
Coventry and Warwickshire**
NHS Trust

Information and advice for bereaved families and friends



Please accept the sympathy of the hospital
staff in your recent bereavement

In order to avoid an unnecessary journey or delay, could you please telephone the Bereavement Services on 024 7696 5834, 024 7696 5838, 024 7696 5835 or 024 7696 5833 between 9.30am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

What this booklet is for

These notes are a reminder of the first formal steps you need to take.

Some of the notes apply in every case, some may not be so important to you, or will only apply in certain cases.

It can help to have everything written down, rather than trying to remember all the things you've been told.

Before you leave the hospital, the staff will give you appropriate information regarding what you need to do next.

What to do first

You probably do not want to think about practical arrangements at this time of sorrow, but some things have to be done. It is important that you contact a funeral director as soon as possible so they can start making arrangements on your behalf. You do not need to wait for the Medical Certificate for the Cause of Death.

We ask that you contact the Bereavement Office the next working day to start the paperwork process. You can contact the Bereavement Office on 024 7696 5834 / 5835 / 5838 / 5833 during office hours.

When you call, we will ask you for:

- Your full contact details as next of kin
- Whether there will be a cremation or burial
- The name of the funeral director you would like to use
- Some personal history for the deceased we may not always be able to obtain from the hospital notes
- Whether you have any concerns about the circumstances of your loved ones death, or any concerns regarding their recent care and treatment.

Please do not come into the hospital to collect the paperwork as this is now being managed over the phone.

We will arrange to complete the paperwork as quickly as possible, but it is a complex legal process that, on some occasions, can take several days. Please bear this in mind when making funeral arrangements. Your loved one cannot be released into the care of your appointed funeral director until this process has been completed.

If you need further help, in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

The Bereavement Office are available for help or advice by ☎ 024 7696 5834 / 5835 / 5838 / 5833 on Monday to Friday 9.30am - 4.00pm.

Please note that all calls will be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

The Hospital Chaplains are available to talk with you if required, and the Faith Centre is open at any hour. You can also contact the Hospital Chaplain on ☎ 024 7696 7515 or by switchboard on 024 7696 4000.

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

The Medical Cause of Death Certificate is a legal document and cannot be issued by any doctor – only by a doctor who knows the cause of death and was involved in the care of the deceased. Our Bereavement Team will arrange for this to be issued to you as quickly as possible, but it is a complex legal process. The Registry Office guidelines suggest that a death be registered within 5 days, but sometimes the process can take longer and can mean there can be an unavoidable wait for the certificate, please do not worry. Our Bereavement Team will endeavour to finalise the paperwork for you at the earliest opportunity. Please bear this in mind when making funeral arrangements as the deceased cannot be released into the care of your appointed funeral director until this process has been completed.

If the doctor is required to get approval of a cause of death from the Coroner, this can also cause a delay and in this scenario until the cause of death is approved by the Coroner, our bereavement services team will not have permission to issue the medical certificate.

The Medical Examiner

Medical Examiners have been introduced to acute trusts in England and Wales, and will be extended to the wider community from April 2021. Medical Examiners are senior doctors who provide independent scrutiny of deaths not taken/referred for Coroner investigation, and offer families and next of kin an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns. Our Medical Examiner/medical examiner's officer carry out an independent review of medical records, and speak with doctors completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. If Medical Examiners detect concerns or issues with care, they pass these on for further investigation for improvements to care and learning from deaths.

Once the Medical Examiner is satisfied, the Medical Cause of Death Certificate can be issued, the ME Office / Bereavement Services will telephone you to go through the documentation.

This review will be completed in a timely manner to avoid any unnecessary delays.

You can contact the Medical Examiners office on the following numbers:

02476 965645 / 02476 967203 / 02476 964793

Cremation Forms

In the case where a person is to be cremated, a cremation form is required and will have to be completed. This form will be sent to your funeral director by the Bereavement Office team.

Clothing and valuables

Please be advised that we will endeavour to give the property to you before you leave the ward. Alternatively, please contact the ward to arrange collection.

Can I come and pay my last respects?

Friends and relatives wishing to visit the mortuary to pay their last respects are advised that the hospital has limited facilities. You may find that going to the undertaker's chapel of rest is preferable.

Is a post mortem required?

Occasionally a doctor may ask for a hospital post mortem examination to be carried out in order to understand more clearly what happened, and to clarify the cause of death.

If the doctor wishes to carry out a post mortem, they must ask for your permission and explain fully what you are being asked for, before asking you to sign a consent form. If this should be the case, someone will talk to you about it, usually before you leave the hospital.

When the Coroner has to be involved

The other instance when a post mortem may be required is if the Coroner has had to be involved, for example when the death has happened unexpectedly, or the cause of death is unknown.

If the Coroner's Office is involved in the death, all questions should be directed to the Coroner's Office 024 7683 3345 until a decision is made.

Their job is to discover, amongst other things, exactly what caused the death and they have the power in law to order that a post mortem should be carried out. If this is the case, the Coroner or their Officer will get in touch with you directly. They will explain clearly to you what happens and why.

If you need to contact the Coroner's Office:

The address is:
The Register Office
Manor House Drive
Coventry
CV1 2ND

Telephone: 024 7683 3141

Registering the death

When the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been completed it will be scanned and sent to the Register Office for you. When this has been completed you will be contacted by the ME Office / Bereavement Services so you are aware that it has been sent. You will then need to contact the Register Office to make an appointment.

The address is:

The Register Office
Cheylesmore Manor House
Manor House Drive
(off New Union Street)
Coventry CV1 2ND
Telephone: 024 7683 3141

The Register Office is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays. **You will need to either log onto www.coventry.gov.uk/deaths-1/registering-death or telephone the Register Office to make an appointment.**

The Registrar will ask you the following details:

- Date and place of death
- Full name and surname of deceased
- Maiden name (if appropriate)
- Date and place of birth
- Occupation
- If the deceased was a married or widowed woman, the name and occupation of her husband
- Usual address
- Whether the deceased was in receipt of any pensions or allowances from public funds
- If married, the date of birth of the surviving spouse.

The following documents are helpful but please do **not worry if you cannot find them:**

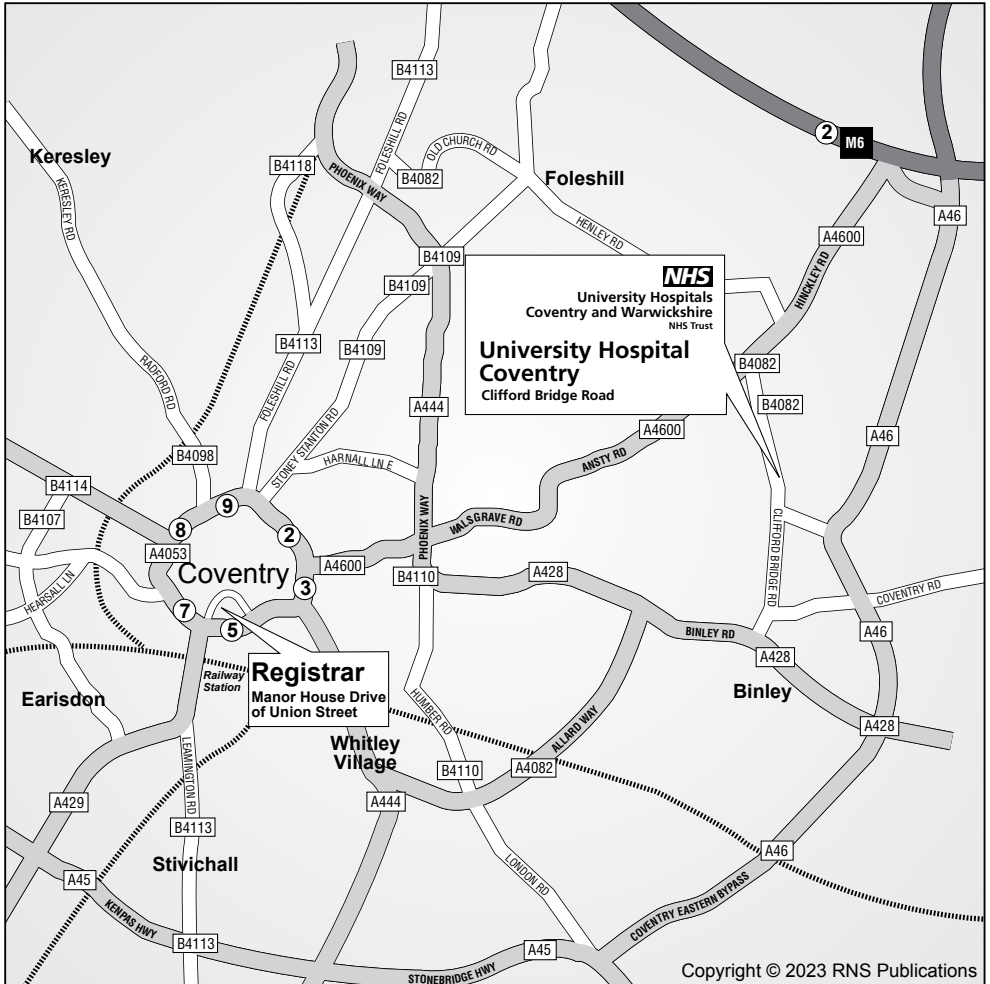
- Medical card
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate

The Registrar will then give you

- A green form to take to the Funeral Directors

Most people will also require one or more copies of the formal registration of death in order to notify any banks, building societies, insurance, and pension funds, of the death. These can be requested at this time for a small fee.

Location of Registrar (Coventry)



Beginning the funeral arrangements

If you have any worries at all about the cost of the funeral, please ask for advice **before** making arrangements. The Bereavement Services Department at the hospital, the hospital Social Worker, the Funeral Directors or your own Benefit Office will be able to advise you.

If you are unsure about anything, or need someone to talk to please do not hesitate to ring the hospital on

Coventry 024 7696 4000

and ask to speak to:

- Ward Staff or
- The Hospital Chaplain or
- The Bereavement Services Department on 024 7696 5835, 024 7696 5838 or 024 7696 5834

You may also find the following website helpful:
www.gov.uk/after-a-death

Wills and estates, costs and expenses

It is important to seek a solicitor's advice over any question about a Will, or about the estate of the person who has died.

It is also vital to make sure the Department of Social Security, together with any insurance companies, banks and building societies, know what has happened.

The Registrar will give advice on notifying them, and can issue extra copies of the registration of death for a small fee.

Funeral payments

A funeral payment is a payment to help people on a low income with the essential costs of a funeral. You do not have to repay a funeral payment, although it can be recovered from the estate of the person who has died.

Who can claim a funeral payment

You can claim a funeral payment if you or your partner is getting one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Housing benefit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, if your award includes a child, disabled child or severely disabled child element
- Working Tax Credit including an extra amount for disability
- Universal Credit.

Your capital (for example, savings) doesn't affect a funeral payment. For further details on how to claim through the DWP, please refer to page 13.

Responsibility for the funeral

You will not get a funeral payment just because you are paying for a funeral. The Jobcentre Plus office, or Social Security Agency office in Northern Ireland, has to accept that it is reasonable for you to be responsible for the funeral costs and that there is no one else who should be paying for it. If you are claiming funeral costs for your child who has died or if you are the partner of the person who has died, you can be paid a funeral payment as long as you meet the benefit conditions.

If you are a close relative, family member or a friend of the person who has died, you may be able to get a funeral payment, but it will depend whether there are other relatives alive who are not on benefits. If there is someone closer or equally close to the person who has died who is not on benefit, you cannot usually get a funeral payment. In this situation, Jobcentre Plus will also consider whether it is reasonable for you to accept responsibility for the funeral expenses.

What costs can be met

A funeral payment will not cover all the costs of a funeral. A funeral payment can include:

- the costs of a new burial plot or the costs of cremation
- the cost of transporting the body for the return journey between the funeral home or place of rest and the place where the person died. But only if this journey is over 50 miles.
- the cost of transporting the coffin and one car of mourners to the funeral
- the cost of getting documents to release the assets of the person who has died.

A funeral payment can also include up to £700 for other expenses, such as; director's fees, flowers or extra religious requirements.

When to claim a funeral payment

You can claim a funeral payment from the date of death up to 3 months after the date of the funeral, even if you have already paid the funeral bill.

You can claim by:

- phoning the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Bereavement Service. They can take a claim for a funeral payment and bereavement benefits over the phone. They can also do a benefit check to see if the next of kin is entitled to any other benefits as a result of the death
- contacting your local Jobcentre Plus office for a claim form SF200
- downloading an SF200 claim form from the GOV.UK website at www.gov.uk.

If you are refused a funeral payment

If you are refused a funeral payment or think your award is lower than it should be, you can challenge the decision. You should do this within one month of the decision.

For more information about funeral payments from the Social Fund, go to the GOV.UK website at: www.gov.uk.

For more information about challenging a decision, see problems with benefits and tax credits.

If you are not happy with a funeral payment decision you can also consult an experienced adviser, for example, at a Citizens Advice Bureau.

Further advice and support

There are many people, in the hospital and outside, who can give careful advice and sensitive support, not only now but as time goes on.

You may already have met the Hospital Chaplain or a Hospital Social Worker; and they will be able to meet you again, now or later, if there is anything you need or something you are worried about.

If you want to get in touch with them, or with someone else you have met here at the hospital, ring and ask for the Chaplain, the Social Worker, or the Ward Sister or Charge Nurse where the person who died was a patient.

At each point over the next few days there will be people who are able to provide support and advice, including the Funeral Director, the person conducting the funeral, and your own family doctor, as well as the people mentioned in this booklet.

In addition to the help they can give, they will also have contact with other groups and organisations such as “Cruse”, “Age UK”, and other support and counselling agencies, who may be helpful to you either now or in the future.

Bereavement Points

Through our Compassionate Communities team, we run Bereavement Points at community venues in Coventry and Rugby, and we can help signpost you to other groups we are aware of in Warwickshire.

Our Bereavement Points are free support groups where you can meet and talk openly with other people living in grief. We have trained staff and volunteers to support these groups. Anyone over the age of 18 can attend.

You can scan the QR code below to see the upcoming dates and location for the Bereavement Points. Alternatively, you can contact us with any queries on:



compassionatecw@uhcw.nhs.uk

Phone: 07500 782 658

If you have children or young people under 18 who are grieving and need some support, please contact local charity Guy's Gift who specialise in this area.

Guy's Gift contact details are:

Phone: 0845 467 3035

Email: info@guysgift.co.uk

Web: www.guysgift.co.uk

Stopping Junk Mail to the recently deceased

If someone you know has died, the amount of unwanted marketing post being sent to them can be greatly reduced which helps to stop painful daily reminders.

By registering with the free service **www.stopmail.co.uk** the names and addresses of the deceased are removed from mailing lists, stopping most advertising mail within as little as six weeks. If you cannot access the internet you can call 0808 168 9607, where you will be asked for very simple information that will take only a few minutes to complete. Alternatively, ask the bereavement team for a leaflet that can be returned in the post.

This free of charge service provided by the Bereavement Support Network will actively reduce the unwanted marketing mail but also can help reduce the likelihood of identity theft following the death of someone close. The information is not used for any other purpose and you only have to complete this once. Additionally to Stop Mail a comparable service can also be accessed from the Bereavement Register or Deceased Preference Service if you would prefer to use them.

Useful organisations

Age UK Coventry

Alvyn Smith House,
7 Warwick Row
Coventry CV1 1EX
Telephone: **024 7623 1999**
[www.ageuk.org.uk/
coventryandwarwickshire](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/coventryandwarwickshire)

Carers UK

(Formerly Carers National Association)
20 Great Dover Street,
London SE1 4LX
Telephone: 0808 808 7777
www.carersuk.org

Cruse Bereavement Care (Coventry)

For bereavement counselling
Telephone: **024 7667 0714**

Cruse - Bereavement Care (National)

One Victoria Villas, Richmond, TW9 2GW
Telephone: **0808 808 1677**
www.cruse.org.uk
Young People's Freephone
National Helpline: **0808 808 1677**

Compassionate Friends

Hours: 10am - 4pm, 7pm - 10pm everyday
Kilburn Grange, Priory Park Road
London NW6 7UJ
Telephone: **0345 123 2304** (helpline)
www.tcf.org.uk

Miscarriage Association

2 Otters Holt
Wakefield WF4 3QE
Telephone: **01924 200 799**
www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

National Association of Victim Support Schemes

Ground Floor, Building 3
Eastern Business Park,
Wern Fawr Lane, Old St. Mellons,
Cardiff CF3 5EA
Telephone: **0808 168 9111**
www.victimsupport.org.uk

National Probate & Inheritance Tax Helpline

Telephone: **0300 123 1072**

Samaritans

Telephone: **116 123**
www.samaritans.org

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society

10-18 Union Street, London, SE1 1SZ
Telephone: **0808 164 3332**
www.sands.org.uk

Terence Higgins Trust

439 Caledonian Road,
London N7 9BG
Telephone: **0808 802 1221**
www.tht.org.uk

The Laura Centre

Coventry & Warwickshire
C/O 4-6 Tower Street, Leicester LE1 6WS
Telephone: **0116 254 4341**

The Lullaby Trust

10-18 Union Street, London, SE1 1SZ
Telephone: **0808 802 6868**
www.lullabytrust.org.uk



Request for entry into the Patient Book of Remembrance

Please complete the following and return to the Faith Centre, West Wing, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire with your £5.00 donation. Cheques/PO must be made payable to UHCW Trust Charity.

Entries will be entered in the Book of Remembrance in the order they are received. They will consist of the full name of the person, their date of birth and date of death. No other details can be included. Entries will be accepted for anyone who was a patient in University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire.

Block capitals please

Details for inclusion. Please include name, date of birth and date of death. (Write dates as follows: xx/xx/xxxx)

.....
.....

Your details (or person requesting entry)

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

Telephone

PLEASE RETURN TO:

**The Department of Spiritual Care
The Faith Centre, West Wing
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust
Clifford Bridge Road
COVENTRY CV2 2DX**

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PALS: Patient Advice and Liaison Service

What is PALS?

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a free and confidential service for patients, their families, carers and friends. They are there to respond to concerns about any aspect of your care or Trust services and aim to resolve any problems as quickly and as easily as possible.

What PALS can do:

- We listen to your comments, compliments, and suggestions about hospital services
- We provide confidential advice and support to resolve problems and difficulties
- We liaise with clinics and wards on your behalf
- We offer information on how to make a complaint

Raising concerns will not affect the care or treatment that you, or the person you care for, is given.

Patients can ask a friend or relative to speak on their behalf, but we must have the permission of the patient before we can discuss any personal circumstances with anyone else.

PALS aims to resolve your concerns within five working days, but some issues may take longer to deal with, and we will let you know if this is the case.

How to contact PALS

Write to:

Patient Advice and Liaison Service
University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust
Clifford Bridge Road
Coventry CV2 2DX

Email:

feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk. Start your subject line with **FAO: PALS**

In person:

- At the PALS Centre at University Hospital Coventry.
- By request at main reception at the Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby.

Call us:

Freephone **0800 028 4203**
Monday to Friday: 8:00am - 8:00pm
Saturday: 12:00pm - 5:30pm
Sunday: 1:00pm - 5:30pm
(24 hour voicemail available)

Trust Website: www.uhcw.nhs.uk

