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This leaflet is available in large print. Arrangements can also be made on request for it to be explained in your preferred language. Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: pals.office@rjah.nhs.uk

Feedback

Tell us what you think of our patient information leaflet. Please send your comments to the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) email: pals.office@rjah.nhs.uk

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Information for Relatives

Advice and Support Following a Death in Hospital



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Introduction

When someone dies there are many decisions and arrangements which have to be made. Unfortunately these often have to be made at a time of great personal distress. This leaflet is designed to help you deal with the immediate arrangements. If you wish to speak to a doctor or member of the nursing staff at any time, please do not hesitate to contact us, and ask for the ward where the death occurred (address and phone no on back page).

What happens at the hospital?

The ward nurse will arrange with you a convenient time for you to collect your relative's property and the medical certificate of cause of death. He/she can also let you see the body if you wish. If you would prefer not to return to the ward please inform the nurse who will arrange to meet you elsewhere in the hospital.

What happens when a death is reported to the Coroner?

In certain circumstances the doctor may need to report the death to the coroner. He/she may then be unable to give you the medical certificate of cause of death. When this happens the coroner will contact the next of kin. Unfortunately this causes a delay in the funeral arrangements. If you want advice or information about a death which has been reported to the coroner, contact the coroner's office:

H.M Coroner's Officer, West Mercia Constabulary, Police Headquarters
Clive Road, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury, SY2 5RW
Tel No: 01743 237445 (8.00 am - 4.00 pm Monday to Friday)

Cremation or burial?

You need to contact a funeral director. You can find them in Yellow Pages. They will be happy to discuss all the options with you and will take full responsibility for arranging the funeral on your behalf. If cremation is preferred, please notify the hospital as soon as possible so a Certificate of Cremation can be prepared. If the death is referred to the Coroner, he/she will give you one instead.

How do I register the death?

You should register the death within five days. If you are registering anywhere in Shropshire you should ring **0345 678 9016** between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday to make an appointment. You can register the death outside Shropshire but there may then be a slight delay in getting death certificates as they will have to be posted to you. You can also make appointments online at:
<http://forms.shropshire.gov.uk/registrars/selfservice/default.aspx>

You are qualified to register the death if:

- you are a relative, or
- you were present at death, or
- you are responsible for making the funeral arrangements

What information will the registrar need to register the death?

- The medical certificate of cause of death received at the hospital
- Date and place of death
- Usual address of the deceased and date and place of birth
- Full name (including maiden name if deceased is a married woman)
- Occupation (including name and occupation of husband if deceased is a married woman)
- If deceased was married, name and date of birth of surviving spouse

It may also be useful to take the following. It will help the registrar to help you take the next steps in sorting out the deceased's affairs:

- The medical card of the deceased
- The birth certificate of the deceased
- Pension book, or details of any state benefit or allowance the deceased was receiving

How do I get a death certificate?

The Registrar will give you a Certificate of Registration of Death. This is for Social Security purposes only to inform them of the death, and which may enable you to apply for a death grant. Read the information on the back of the certificate. If any of it applies, fill in the certificate and show it to your Social Security office. Copies of the death certificate may be needed for probate and pension or insurance claims. A small fee is charged and you may wish to ask for several copies straight away, as copies requested later may cost more. The Registrar will also give you a green form which authorises burial or cremation (Certification for burial or cremation). This needs to be given to your funeral director as soon as possible so that he can proceed with funeral arrangements.

Can the body be donated?

The deceased may have indicated in their will that they want their body to be donated for medical teaching and research. If so please contact Mr Dave Adams, laboratory manager, on **01691 404157**.

How can the hospital help me cope with death and bereavement?

The hospital can help in the following ways:

- The doctors and nurses who cared for your relative/friend are more than willing to discuss any matters which may be concerning you.
- A hospital chaplain is available to see you if you wish.
- The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can help point relatives to further support agencies and help with matters such as registration of death, return of belongings, etc.

If you wish to take advantage of any of these services please speak to the nurse in charge on the ward.

Where can I get further help?

Citizens Advice Bureau - for general help and advice: Oswestry and Border Citizens Advice Bureau, 16 Lower Brook Street, Oswestry. Tel No: 08444 991100

CRUSE - someone to talk to and for practical advice and support: Cruse Bereavement Care Line: 0844 4779400. Cruse in Shropshire Tel No: 0845 6066812 Cruse in Powys: 01686 610220

Sudden Death Support Association. An organisation to help relatives and close friends of people who die suddenly. Tel No: 01189 889797

Samaritans - 24 hours a day service for people in distress. Tel No: 0845 7909090

National Association of Bereavement Services. Puts people in touch with local bereavement services/counselling. Tel No: 0207 2471080

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) - financial help and advice regarding benefits. Tel No: 01743 266000 Website: www.dwp.gov.uk
Leaflet D49 'What to do after a death in England and Wales' is particularly helpful.