

Patient information

Bereavement information for Families and next of kin during the COVID-19 pandemic

Bereavement Services

We would like to extend our sincere condolences to you at this time and give our assurance that we will try to help you in any way that we can. This information has been prepared to guide you through some of the practical tasks which need to be tended to during the early days of your bereavement, as we acknowledge this can be a difficult and confusing time.

It is with regret that necessary changes have had to be made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you are unclear about any aspect of this information or matters relating to your bereavement.

How we can help

Following a death, there are certain formalities to be dealt with, please contact Bereavement Services the next working day after the death. We apologise if you are connected to a voicemail message, please be assured that we will respond to messages as soon as we can.

DAY	TIMES	CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS
Monday - Friday	9am – 4pm	01432 364166
Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays	Closed	07970 156077

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We will provide advice, support and assistance with:

Patient valuables and property

Due to COVID-19 we have had to introduce certain restrictions on how we handle certain items, including patient property, this is particularly dependant on the area within the hospital a patient may have stayed. We are also mindful of the restrictions in place for visitors to the hospital, and with this in mind Bereavement Services have been working with the Mortuary staff to ensure any property a patient may have had is given to the funeral directors, when they come to collect your loved one from the hospital.

The processing of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) and Registration of Death.

You will not be required to come to the hospital to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), this will be sent directly to the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths by the hospital Bereavement Services Team. Once the MCCD has been issued by the doctor we will contact you to confirm this has been done and advise you to contact the Registry Office who will arrange a telephone Registration appointment with you.

The Registrar will require the following information to formally register the death of the deceased:-

- The date and place of death
- The first name(s) and surname (and maiden name if applicable)
- The date and place of birth
- The occupation and the name and occupation of spouse or civil partner (if applicable)
- The usual address
- Whether the deceased was in receipt of a pension or allowance from public funds
- If the deceased was married or in a civil partnership, the date of birth of the surviving spouse or civil partner.

The Registrar will then be able to inform you about the current arrangements in place regarding obtaining the Certificate for Burial or Cremation.

‘Tell us Once’ is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go. When you have registered the death, the registrar will give you a unique reference number to access the ‘Tell us Once’ service online or by phone.

To use this service you will need the deceased’s:

- Date of birth
- Driving licence number
- Passport number
- Details of any benefits or entitlements the deceased was getting

- Details of any local council services they were getting
- Name and address of their Next of Kin
- Name, address and contact details of the person dealing with their estate, known as the 'executor'.
- You need permission from the Next of Kin or Executor or anyone who was claiming join benefits or entitlements before you give their details.

How to choose a funeral director

There are a few things you might like to consider when deciding which funeral director you would like to use, we advise researching services currently being provided during the COVID-19 pandemic, prices/quotes and previous customer reviews. During the COVID-19 pandemic Funeral Directors are also taking necessary precautions, however we do advise asking specific questions of any services they are not providing and changes that they have put in place as soon as you make contact, such as viewings.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about the patient care received at the hospital, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge of the ward or department manager in the first instance, as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve issues quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). The PALS Team offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital service and experiences. The PALS Team will liaise with the various departments in our hospital on your behalf, to resolve any problems.

How to contact PALS: - Telephone: 01432 372986 Email: pals@wvt.nhs.uk

Support and advice

Bereavement Advice Centre	0800 634 9494
Department for Work and Pensions	www.dwp.gov.uk
Hereford Crematorium Office	01432 383200
Probate and Inheritance Tax	0300 123 1072
Samaritans Herefordshire	01432 269000
Age UK	0800 008 6077
Cruse Herefordshire	01432 359 469

St Michaels Hospice recognises the difficulties faced by the community at this time and is offering COVID-19 Bereavement Support for those affected by the current pandemic.

Please contact: 01432 852627 or 01432 852649