

Support after a death

Practical help when
someone dies

Getting the right information and help when someone dies is essential. This leaflet tells you what you need to do after a death. It doesn't go into detail, but explains where you can get more information and who to contact. Other organisations may also be able to help you.

Registering a death

When someone has died, one of the first things you'll need to do is register the death. In England and Wales you normally need to do this within five days (eight days in Scotland).

If the death was sudden or unexpected, police or medical staff may refer the matter to a coroner (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland). If a post-mortem or inquest is needed, the death can't be registered until you're given permission to do so.



www.direct.gov.uk/death
www.gro-scotland.gov.uk



or find your local registrar
in the phone book

What to do next

This can be a very difficult time, but it's important to tell everyone who needs to know. Your registrar may offer you a service that can help by letting other government departments know about the death on your behalf.

You'll also need to find the will (if there is one), and start arranging the funeral.

There's a useful checklist of who to tell and what you need to do at www.direct.gov.uk/death

Wills and inheritance

A will should make clear how a person would like their 'estate' (money and belongings) shared out. The 'executor' will sort this out. It should say who the executor is in the will. To find out more, visit www.direct.gov.uk/death and go to the 'Wills and probate' section. This section also explains what to do if there is no will.

Arranging a funeral

You can't hold the funeral until you have a certificate for burial or cremation. If the death is referred to the coroner (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland), this may delay when you can hold the funeral.

You should check if the person left written instructions or a will setting out what they wanted. If they didn't, it's up to the relatives and the executor to decide between a burial or cremation.

You can use the services of a funeral director, or organise the funeral yourself.

If you decide not to use a funeral director, contact the cemeteries and crematorium department of your local council for advice.



www.direct.gov.uk/death
www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

Financial support

Paying for the funeral

Always check how the costs of a funeral are going to be met. The person who has died may have made plans, such as:

- a life insurance policy
- funeral plan
- employer's pension scheme or personal pension scheme, or
- trade unions or provident clubs.

You may get a Funeral Payment if you or your partner get certain benefits. If the person who died was a war pensioner, you could also get help with the funeral costs.

To find out about a Funeral Payment, visit

www.direct.gov.uk/benefits

For help with funeral costs for a war pensioner, visit

www.veterans-uk.info

Bereavement benefits

If your husband, wife or civil partner has died, you may get bereavement benefits.



Find out more at

www.direct.gov.uk/bereavementbenefits

DWP Bereavement Service

By phoning the DWP Bereavement Service, you can complete a benefits check of what you may be eligible for and, if appropriate, they can take a claim for bereavement benefits or a Funeral Payment over the phone.



Phone **0845 606 0265**

Textphone **0845 606 0285**

The line is run by The Pension Service, but deals with calls about people of any age who have died.

We also have basic information leaflets covering:

- Support if you are ill or disabled
- Support for carers
- Support for parents and guardians
- Support if you're planning retirement
- Support if you are looking for work.

This information is available in other formats on request.

If you can't use the internet, you can phone for a more detailed leaflet.



Phone **0845 606 5065**
Textphone **0845 604 0210**

Call charges

Calls to 0845 numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 8p a minute with a 13p call set-up charge. You may pay more if you use another phone company or a mobile phone. Calls from mobile phones can cost up to 40p a minute, so check the cost of calls with your service provider. Charges were correct as of the date below.

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure the leaflet is correct as of the date below. Some of the information may be oversimplified or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law. We recommend that you get independent advice before making financial decisions based on this leaflet.

DWP aims to provide a high quality of service to all its customers. You can find out more in our customer charter at www.direct.gov.uk/dwpcharter

