

Practical Admin & Funeral Guidance After Suicide

In the days and weeks following a suicide loss, there are many practical steps that families face. This guide offers a gentle step-by-step approach to help reduce overwhelm while ensuring essentials are covered. Take it one section at a time, and lean on support from trusted friends, relatives, or professionals where possible.

1. Registering the Death

- Usually done at the local Register Office within 5 days (8 days in Scotland).
- If a coroner (England, Wales, NI) or procurator fiscal (Scotland) is involved, registration may be delayed.
- You will be given a death certificate, which is required for funeral planning and handling estates.

2. Coroners & Inquests

- A coroner (or procurator fiscal in Scotland) investigates deaths where the cause is unclear or appears unnatural.
- This may involve a post-mortem examination and later, an inquest or Fatal Accident Inquiry (Scotland).
- Families can attend, ask questions, and request support from organisations such as INQUEST (England & Wales).

3. Funeral Planning

- You do not need to wait for an inquest to hold a funeral, though the coroner may need to release the body first.
- Funerals can be religious, non-religious, or family-led. Funeral directors can guide you through choices.
- Faith-sensitive considerations: some religions require swift burial, which can be requested from the coroner.

4. Financial Help

- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) offers Bereavement Support Payments in certain circumstances.
- Funeral Expenses Payment (if on certain benefits) can help with costs in England, Wales, NI; in Scotland apply via the Funeral Support Payment scheme.
- Some employers or unions may also offer financial support for bereaved families.

5. Workplace & Admin Notifications

- Notify employers promptly to access any death-in-service benefits and compassionate leave entitlements.
- Contact banks, utility companies, and landlords/mortgage providers. A death certificate will be required.
- Use the government's 'Tell Us Once' service (England, Wales, Scotland) to update multiple departments at once.

6. Social Media & Digital Accounts

- Accounts can often be memorialised or closed. Each platform has a process (proof of death usually required).
- Trusted friends/family may help in managing messages or removing accounts if painful to manage.

This is a lot to process. Take things step by step, ask for help when needed, and remember that support services exist to guide you through both the practical and emotional aftermath.