**What you need to know after a death**

**If someone dies in hospital**

If someone dies in hospital, the hospital staff will contact the next of kin, or a family member/friend that the deceased person named before they died.

The hospital will keep the body in the mortuary until someone, such as the executor or a family member arranges for them to be taken away.

**If someone dies somewhere else**

If you expected the person’s death you should contact the doctor who cared for them during their illness. If the doctor can confirm the cause of death they will send the death certificate to the Medical Examiners, who ensure that the death has been accurately recorded and will identify any issues that may require coroner involvement.

If you did not expect the persons death you should contact the person’s GP (if you know who it is), or their nearest relative. You must also tell the police who can help you locate their family doctor or relative if needed.

If the person is an inpatient with Martlets, they will sign the death certificate and cremation form. If they are not currently residing in hospice or classed as an inpatient, the GP will create the certificate and send it to the Medical Examiners, as above.

**If the cause of death is unclear**

If the cause of death is not clear, the coroner will receive a report regarding the death, typically this happens if the death was unnatural, violent, or happened in custody. The coroner may decide they need to investigate the death which may include a post-mortem and an inquest. In these cases, the coroner will be the only person who can confirm the cause of death.

If you would like advice or information about a death that you have reported you can contact the coroner’s office using the details below:

Register Office

Brighton Town Hall

Bartholomew Square

Brighton

BN1 1JA

01273 292 016 option 1

**Post-mortems**

A post-mortem examination is a medical examination of the body after a death meant to find out more about the cause of death. The coroner does not need permission to do this, but you are entitled to have a doctor represent you. If you ask for this, the coroner will tell you when and where the post-mortem will be.

The coroner must tell you (if you are the person’s next of kin) if any organs or tissue need to be kept after the post mortem has been done. They will then ask what you would like to do with the organs or tissue, once their tests have been completed.

**Inquests**

An inquest is the formal part of the process carried out towards the end of investigation. This is where evidence of the circumstances of a death are considered, sometimes with a jury. It is up to the coroner to decide how to organise the inquest in a way which is best for everyone, including the relatives of the person who has died. Normally you don’t need to be legally represented at an inquest, as this is not a trial, meaning there is no prosecution or defence. Witnesses are not expected to present legal arguments and an inquest is not to assign blame to anyone for the death. When the inquest is finalised the coroner will send a certificate of the death to the registrars.

**The death certificate**

When we receive a notification of death we will check to see if the patient was seen by a GP at Park Crescent within the last 28 days.

If they are not currently residing in hospice or classed as an inpatient, the GP will create and send the certificate to the medical examiners.

The death certificate can only be signed by the last GP to see them, therefore it may need to wait until they are next working at the Practice.

If they have not been seen by a GP in the previous 28 days, it will need to be referred to the coroner to provide us with the cause of death in order to complete the death certificate.

When the certificate has been completed and agreed by the medical examiner, they will send this to the Registration Office along with next of kin details.

**Arranging the Funeral**

Do not make final funeral arrangements until you are sure that you do not have to report the death to the coroner. This may affect the date when the funeral can be held.

Find out if there is a will, as this may give details of what the person wanted for their funeral arrangements.

If you arrange for a funeral, you are responsible for paying the bill. So check first where the money will come from and if there will be enough to cover all the costs.

There are some laws about what to do after someone has died. Their death needs to be registered and the body needs to be properly taken care of by either burial or cremation.

If you need to arrange a burial or funeral service in line with a particular religion, you can get advice from a minister of that religion or from the religious organisation that the person who died belonged to.

**Bereavement Support**

**National Bereavement Service**

Every bereavement is different and there are different processes dependent on your circumstances. See the National Bereavement Service for support with your emotional, or legal needs. They offer a helpline, online chat and a contact form.

Call 0800 0246 121 to start the support process

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

Cruse Bereavement Care offers free advice to anyone who has been affected by death. They offer a helpline, online communication using CruseChat and offer daily tips for support on social media.

Call 0808 808 1677 to talk to someone today.

**Winston's Wish**

Winston's Wish is a service to support children struggling with bereavement. They have a freephone number, online chat, email service and offer support in schools. You can also find lots of information and resources on their website.

Call on 08088 020 021

Email on [ask@winstonswish.org](mailto:ask@winstonswish.org)

**Sands**

Sands offer support to those affected by pregnancy loss and the death of a baby. They have a helpline, email service and an app which has information regarding local support groups and resources.

Call on 0808 164 3332

Email on [helpline@sands.org.uk](mailto:helpline@sands.org.uk)

**Martlets**

Martlets offer support to friends and family of patients who have received care from the Martlets Team including hospice and community care.

Call 01273 273 400 and ask to speak to the Patient and Family support Administrator

Email [bereavement@martlets.org.uk](mailto:bereavement@martlets.org.uk)

**The Compassionate Friends**

The Compassionate Friends offers volunteer support to parents and siblings. They offer a helpline, email support, retreats, grief companions and information packs to support you.

Call on 0345 123 2304

Email [helpline@tcf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk)