

In Times of Bereavement

We understand that when the death of a loved one occurs it can be extremely distressing and upsetting. We want to ensure that all our patients and their families feel well cared for and that any care undertaken by us at this time is done in a professional and sympathetic manner.

We want to ensure that family members are aware of our practices' procedures when death occurs and it will signpost you to further information that you will need to know. As a Medical Practice we are obliged by law to follow certain procedures in a set way, other procedures are carried out as to what we think is best practice.

There are several websites that will explain in more detail about how to register a death and will give advice about what to do in the event of death. The following link is to governmental guidelines on the subject: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/death> .

In the main we will be more involved if the death of a patient occurs in the home; one of the main responsibilities a GP will have, as well as caring for the family of the deceased patient, is to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death – MCCD (more commonly known as the death certificate). You will need to obtain a death certificate to be able to register a death.

Guidelines in event of a death occurring at home:

1. Telephone the practice (you may need to use the 'out of hours' or on-call doctor). If this is the case they will inform the practice, during the next normal working session, about the death. If a visit is appropriate then a home visit will be arranged with you.
2. Contact a funeral director.
3. Arrange to collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (usually from the surgery). After reporting the death leave at least 72 hours before contacting the Practice to enquire about the certificate. The certificate, after 72 hours, should be ready at reception for you to pick up. It is important that you do not make an appointment with the registrar's office to register the death UNTIL you have the MCCD. There are a number of rules that we have to legally abide by and therefore cannot always produce a death certificate as promptly as the family or funeral directors wish. We want you to know that we work hard to fill in the MCCD as soon as possible to avoid any unnecessary delay. In some cases a doctor is unable to provide a MCCD and the death will need to be reported to a coroner. If this is the case you will be informed and the reason will be given at the time.
4. Once you have the MCCD, make an appointment with the Registrar Office. It is recommended that deaths be registered within 5 days. On attending the appointment you will need the MCCD and the deceased's and Birth Certificate, if available.
5. The registrar's office will give you several certificates and your funeral directors should explain what to do with them next. You may also want to obtain more copies of the death certificate for bank, probate etc. (a fee will be payable for each copy).

If the Death Occurs at Hospital

1. Contact a funeral director to inform them their services are required.
2. Collect the MCCD from the hospital then follow steps 4 and 5 above.

In the event of a cremation, the funeral directors will usually liaise with the surgery regarding any forms that will need to be obtained.

If you have recently suffered a bereavement and need to talk to someone, please note that any of the doctors or nurses will be happy to see you and if necessary guide you to bereavement services in the local area that you might find comforting and helpful. For any further information or questions please do not hesitate to ask one of our reception team.