

Because Every Conversation Matters

Talking openly about death, funeral wishes and future planning can provide comfort, clarity and peace of mind for those we care about.

Whether you're planning ahead or supporting someone through bereavement, having the right information can make difficult times a little easier.

Useful Contacts

Doncaster Funerals
01302 354651

Direct Cremation South Yorkshire
0345 0344 751

Doncaster Register Office
01302 735222

Cruse Bereavement Support
0808 808 1677

Samaritans
116 123

NHS 111
111

Our family caring for your family

When The Time Comes

— GUIDE —

A helpful guide for families
at a difficult time



**DONCASTER
FUNERALS**

Our family caring for your family



**DIRECT
CREMATION**

SOUTH-YORKSHIRE

Welcome

When someone dies, it can be difficult to know where to begin. The days that follow are often filled with emotions, questions, and practical arrangements that can feel overwhelming.

This guide has been created to help you understand the steps ahead, provide useful information, and offer reassurance at a time when you may need it most.

There is no right or wrong way to navigate bereavement, and there is no expectation that you will remember everything in these pages straight away. Simply take each day as it comes, focus on one step at a time, and reach out for support whenever you need it.

We hope this guide provides comfort, clarity, and practical help for you and your family.

Notes

We're Here For You

Losing someone close to you can be one of life's most difficult experiences, and it's important to remember that support is available when you need it.

Whether you are looking for practical guidance, information about funeral arrangements, or simply someone to answer your questions, we are here to help.

If there is anything in this guide that you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Even if you are not yet ready to make any arrangements, we are always happy to offer advice, reassurance, and support.

You do not have to navigate this journey alone.

What Happens First?

If the death occurs at home

Contact:

- The GP surgery/Palliative care team/District nurse
- NHS 111 if unsure what to do
- Emergency services if the death was unexpected

A healthcare professional will confirm the death and begin the necessary paperwork.

If the death occurs in hospital

The hospital bereavement team will guide you through the next steps and advise when documentation is ready

Depending on the circumstances, it can take a few days for the necessary paperwork to be completed. This is completely normal and your healthcare team or funeral director will keep you informed throughout the process

Understanding the Medical Examiner

The Medical Examiner system was introduced to provide an additional level of reassurance for families and to ensure all deaths are reviewed independently.

Their role is to:

- Review the cause of death
- Ensure records are accurate
- Answer questions families may have
- Identify cases that require referral to the Coroner

This process helps ensure transparency and gives families an opportunity to raise concerns.

Registering the Death

In England and Wales, a death should normally be registered within five days.

Once the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been completed and sent electronically to the Registrar, the Registry Office will usually contact the next of kin or informant directly to arrange an appointment to register the death. If you have not heard from them, you can contact the Registry Office yourself for advice.

Help and Support

Useful organisations:

- Cruse Bereavement Support
- NHS Bereavement Support
- Citizens Advice
- Local faith groups
- Local bereavement groups

If you are struggling, please speak to your GP or a healthcare professional.

Looking After Yourself

Grief is a natural response to loss, but it is experienced differently by everyone. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and no set timetable for how you should feel.

In the days, weeks, and months following a bereavement, you may experience a range of emotions, including:

- Shock or disbelief
- Sadness and loneliness
- Anger or frustration
- Guilt or regret
- Anxiety or worry
- Difficulty concentrating
- Relief, particularly after a long illness
- Acceptance over time

These feelings are all normal and can change from day to day. Some people find comfort in talking to family and friends, while others prefer quiet reflection or professional support.

Be patient and kind to yourself. Grief is a personal journey, and it is important to allow yourself the time and space you need to adjust to your loss.

If you are struggling to cope or would like additional support, there are organisations and services available that can help.

During the appointment, the Registrar will ask for information about the person who has died, including:

- Full name (and any previous names)
- Date and place of birth
- Home address
- Occupation (or former occupation if retired)
- Date and place of death

Before Your Appointment

If available, it can be helpful to have the following documents to hand:

- NHS number
- Birth certificate
- Marriage or civil partnership certificate
- Proof of address

Don't worry if you cannot locate all of these documents immediately, as the Registrar will guide you through the process.

Death Certificates

You may require several certified copies of the death certificate when dealing with organisations such as:

- Banks and building societies
- Insurance providers
- Pension providers
- Solicitors and probate services
- Investment or savings accounts

Choosing a Funeral Director

Many people don't realise they are free to choose whichever funeral director they feel most comfortable with.

You are under no obligation to use a particular company, and hospitals, hospices, care homes, or other organisations cannot make this decision for you.

Take your time, ask questions, and choose a funeral director who listens to your wishes and provides the support you need.

Funeral Choices

There is no right or wrong way to say goodbye. Every family is different, and the type of funeral you choose should reflect the wishes, values, and circumstances of your loved one.

Direct Cremation

A direct cremation is a simple cremation that takes place without a funeral service or attendees present. Many families choose this option when they prefer a private farewell or wish to hold a separate celebration of life at a later date.

Cremation with Service

A cremation with a service allows family and friends to gather together to remember, celebrate, and pay tribute to a loved one before the cremation takes place. Services can be traditional, religious, non-religious, or completely personalised.

Probate and Finances

After someone dies, there may be financial and legal matters that need to be dealt with. This can include accessing bank accounts, managing investments, selling property, and distributing assets in accordance with a Will.

In some circumstances, you may need to apply for Probate. Probate is the legal authority that allows a person to administer someone's estate after they have died. Whether Probate is required will depend on factors such as the value of the estate and how assets were owned.

You may need Probate before:

- Selling a property
- Accessing certain bank accounts or savings
- Managing investments
- Distributing assets to beneficiaries

Every estate is different, and not all require Probate. If you are unsure whether Probate is needed, your bank, solicitor, or a probate specialist will be able to provide guidance.

If you require additional support, organisations such as Citizens Advice can offer free and impartial information on financial and legal matters following a bereavement.

Practical Matters

You may also need to:

- ☐ Locate the Will
- ☐ Secure the property
- ☐ Gather important documents
- ☐ Redirect post
- ☐ Check insurance policies
- ☐ Arrange care for pets
- ☐ Return borrowed equipment

While some matters may need immediate attention, many practical tasks can wait a few days. Focus on what is most important and accept help from family and friends where possible.

Burial

A burial provides a permanent place of remembrance where family and friends can visit and reflect. Services can take place in a cemetery, churchyard, or natural burial ground and can be tailored to reflect individual wishes, beliefs, and traditions.

Personalising a Funeral

Every funeral is unique. Families may choose special music, readings, flowers, photographs, donations to charity, or personal tributes that reflect the life and personality of their loved one

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I spend time with my loved one before the funeral?

In most circumstances, yes. Arrangements can usually be made for family and friends to spend time with their loved one in a calm and private setting. We will discuss the options available to you and help make any necessary arrangements.

How soon can the funeral take place?

The timing of a funeral depends on several factors, including the completion of paperwork, availability of venues, and family preferences. Most funerals take place within one to three weeks of the death, although this can vary.

Can we make the funeral personal?

Yes. A funeral can be tailored to reflect the life, personality, beliefs, and interests of your loved one. Families often choose meaningful music, readings, photographs, flowers, clothing, or personal tributes to create a unique and memorable farewell.

Can we have a service if we choose direct cremation?

Yes. Some families choose to hold a separate service, celebration of life, or gathering before or after a direct cremation. This allows loved ones to come together and pay their respects in a way that feels right for them.

Do I have to decide everything straight away?

No. While some practical decisions will need to be made, many choices can be discussed and considered over time. We will guide you through each step and help you make arrangements at a pace that feels comfortable for you.

Who Needs To Be Told?

Use this checklist:

- ☐ Family and friends
- ☐ Employer
- ☐ Banks and building societies
- ☐ Utility providers
- ☐ Pension providers
- ☐ Insurance companies
- ☐ GP and healthcare providers
- ☐ Clubs and memberships

Tell Us Once Service

The Tell Us Once service allows you to report a death to most government organisations in one go.

The service can notify:

- HMRC
- Council Tax
- DVLA
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Passport Office
- DVLA
- Local Council Services

The Registrar will explain whether this service is available when you register the death. If you don't use this service, you will need to contact all these individually.