

**Support sheet – What to do when someone dies**

**Key Elements**

**Family and friends**

• Offer comfort and support to those present at the death

• Allow time with the deceased or an alternative quiet room if preferred

• If the next of kin is not present they will need to be informed as soon as possible

• Have the next of kin left instructions on how and when they would like to be informed?

• Provide information to the next of kin on what to do next

**Informing others**

• Inform the GP who cared for the person or the Out of Hours service

• If this was an expected death the doctor will come to certify the death or a nurse will come to verify the death (a care home nurse may also be able to do this)

• The doctor will provide a medical certificate of cause of death plus information on how to register the death

**Expected death**

• In the case of an expected death, once the death has been verified the funeral director can be contacted and the deceased taken to the funeral home

• It would be helpful to know of any expressed wishes of the deceased and to be aware of any cultural or religious beliefs

**Unexpected death**

• If this was an unexpected death or a doctor did not see or treat the person for the condition from which they died within 28 days of death, contact the persons GP. The police must also be informed

• In the case of an unexpected death the coroner will be informed by the GP

• The GP will write on the formal notice that they have referred the death to the coroner

• A decision may then be made by the coroner to carry out a post mortem or inquest

• The Coroner will then make the decision to release the deceased to the funeral director

**Registration and certification**

• After a death certificate has been issued, registration of the death should be done within 5 days

• In the case of an unexpected death registration cannot take place until investigations by the coroner are completed

• After registration the registrar will issue a certificate for a burial which is to be given to the funeral director or an application for a cremation which is completed and given to the crematorium

**Associated links/documents**

What to do when someone dies: <https://www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies>