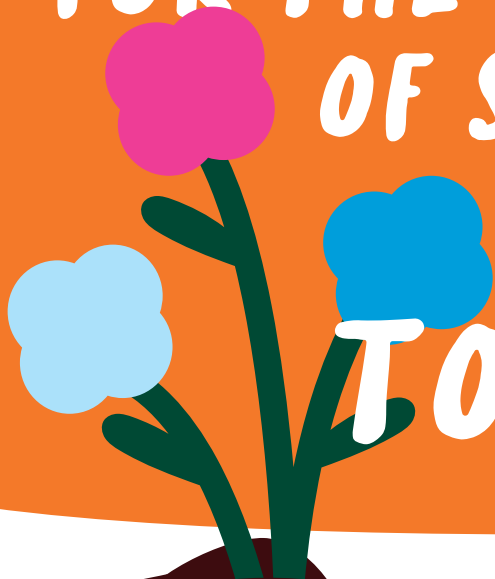


**COMMUNITY  
HOSPICE**

For the people of  
Greenwich & Bexley

# PREPARING FOR THE DEATH OF SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU



What you'll need  
to do and how we  
can support you

Preparing for the death of someone close to you is never going to be easy. And no matter how you're feeling, death comes with its own admin that you'd probably rather not have to do and certainly not at what can be an overwhelming and confusing time. **We're here to try and help make the process as easy as possible.**

This leaflet will give you practical information and advice on what you need to do after your loved one dies.



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# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

**We all react to death in our own way. Preparing for and going through bereavement is a very personal experience and the level and type of support you need will be unique to you.**

You might feel disbelief, guilt, anger, depression and even relief. However you react, your feelings are valid and how you find comfort is too.

The most important thing is that you look after yourself – it’s easy to overlook self-care when you’re caring for someone and it’s easy to continue to do so after they’ve died. Take the time to recognise your feelings and think about the support networks you have in place that can help you through this time. It could be friends who will sit and listen to you, neighbours who can pick up some of your day-to-day tasks or groups who can support your family. And don’t be afraid to take any offers of assistance – people will want to be there for you.

We’re also on hand to help you in whatever way we can. Our teams know you and the situation you’re in. We want to make sure you can focus on the time you have left with your loved one and make the process after death as manageable as possible.

## HOW WE CAN HELP:

- Practical advice and guidance
- Support groups and sessions
- Matching with a **Compassionate Neighbour**
- One-to-one counselling
- Support for children and young people
- Signposting to other services

We’re here for you and your loved ones. Find out more about how we can support you on our website or chat to a friendly member of our team on **020 8320 5837**.

If you can’t get through just leave a message and we’ll get back to you as soon as we can. And of course, you can always send us an email at [referrals.gbch@nhs.net](mailto:referrals.gbch@nhs.net)



# WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

We live in a vibrant and diverse community, and as such the way we all approach death differs according to our beliefs, spirituality and cultural customs. When your loved one dies we will do our best to make sure that all processes are carried out in accordance with their wishes.

The following information, while it might change slightly depending on your religious practices or requirements, will be true for everyone that dies under our care.

## TAKING THE TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

Saying goodbye is an important part of the grieving process. Whether your loved one has died at the hospice, the hospital, their own home or in a care home, our teams will try to make sure that you have the space to do goodbyes in your own time.

## GETTING A MEDICAL CAUSE OF DEATH CERTIFICATE

The medical cause of death certificate shows the cause of death and makes it possible for you to register the death of your loved one. It needs to be issued as quickly as possible.

In most cases, the document will be completed by a doctor. This will be a hospice doctor if they die at the hospice, your loved one's GP if they die at home or a hospital doctor if they die in the hospital. If your loved one dies at home, you should contact your GP as soon as you can.

Once the medical cause of death certificate has been completed, it will be sent directly to the medical examiner to approve.

## TALKING TO THE MEDICAL EXAMINER

The medical examiner's role is to independently review the cause of all deaths. If you're listed as next of kin for your loved one, the medical examiner will get in touch with you to talk through the death certificate – discussing the cause of death, the care your loved one received and answering any questions you have. They will then confirm the certificate and pass it on to the registrar.

## THE CORONER

Sometimes we, or the medical examiner, might refer a death to the coroner – this is routine for some diseases or if the cause of death is unknown. This is normally nothing to worry about, it just means the coroner needs to authorise the medical cause of death certificate. If this is the case for your loved one, one of our team will explain the process to you.

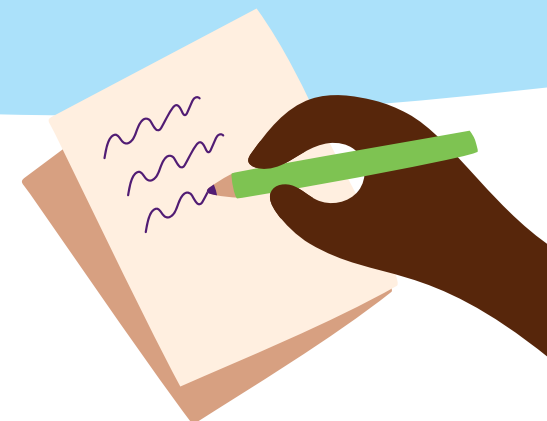
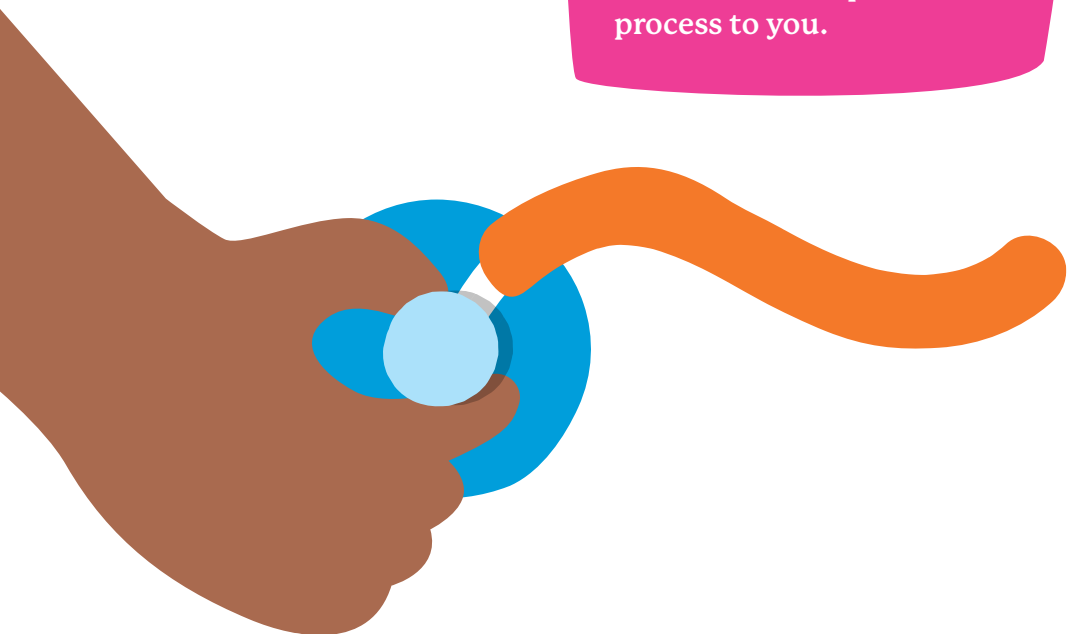
## REGISTERING THE DEATH

Deaths must be registered within five days by a relative, someone who was present at the death, or the person making funeral arrangements with the funeral directors. This should be done at the registry office that's local to where your loved one died. The registrars should get in touch with you on receipt of the medical certificate, but you can also make an appointment with them.

When registering your loved one's death you will need the following information:

- Their full name (and any names previously used)
- Their date and place of birth
- Their marital status, plus the name and address of their spouse or civil partner (if applicable)
- Their last address
- Their occupation
- Their National Insurance (NI) number and NI number of any surviving spouse or civil partner

Once the registrar has everything they need, they will issue you with a death certificate and a green certificate for burial or cremation.



# LETTING PEOPLE KNOW

When your loved one dies you might find that you still get post or calls coming through for them – this can be upsetting and frustrating. To avoid this happening as far as possible, you'll need to tell various people and organisations that they've died. This is a task a friend or family member could help you with.

You might not need to notify everyone on this list but hopefully it's a helpful reference point for you.

## ☐ **'Tell Us Once' service**

A free government service that notifies the following services in one go:

- State Pension
- Personal Taxation
- Council Tax
- Passport
- Driving Licence
- Blue Badge
- Electoral Register

You will need to register the person's death before using this service; the Registrar will then give you a unique reference number.

[gov.uk/tell-us-once](http://gov.uk/tell-us-once)  
**0800 085 7308**

## ☐ **Banks, building societies or mortgage provider**

Have a look at the Death Notification Service, many banks are signed up to this and it means you can notify a number of organisations at once.  
[deathnotificationsservice.co.uk](http://deathnotificationsservice.co.uk)

## ☐ **Solicitor**

A solicitor or the Citizen's Advice Bureau can help with any legal issues or questions. They will also be able to advise you if you need to apply for a Grant of Probate – if there is a will – or for Letters of Administration – if there isn't a will.

## ☐ **Credit card, store card, loan and savings account providers, premium bonds**

## ☐ **Employer or previous employer**

Check if there is any salary or pension due.

## ☐ **Doctor, Hospital(s), Dentist, Optician, Podiatrist**

## ☐ **Social Services**

Cancel any home care, day centre services or private carers.

## ☐ **Schools and teachers**

School staff will be able to support a child or young person better if they know about a death.

## ☐ **Digital accounts**

The Digital Legacy Association has useful advice on how to manage your loved one's digital accounts.  
[digitallegacyassociation.org/for-the-public](http://digitallegacyassociation.org/for-the-public)

## ☐ **Insurance companies, including house and motor insurance**

Check if your loved one's insurance companies are signed up to the Death Notification Service  
[deathnotificationsservice.co.uk](http://deathnotificationsservice.co.uk)

## ☐ **Mobile phone provider, telephone company, TV subscriptions, internet provider**

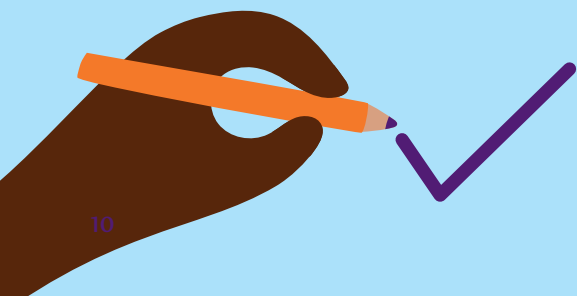
## ☐ **Royal Mail redirection or suppression service**

## ☐ **Council Housing Office, Landlord or Housing Association**

## ☐ **Child Support Agency**

## ☐ **UK Border Agency**

## ☐ **Libraries, subscription services, clubs**



# ARRANGING A FUNERAL

Organising a funeral can seem overwhelming at an already emotional time – especially if your loved one hasn't died yet. However, doing some planning can make the whole process easier.

## MAKE A PLAN

If you can, talking to your loved one about what they'd like for their funeral and what they want to happen to their body will help take some of the pressure off big decisions. Things it's worth thinking about include:

- The venue
- The celebrant – faith specific or non-religious
- Readings and eulogy
- Music
- Burial or cremation
- Flowers or donations
- A wake or reception
- Clothes they'd like to wear
- The type of coffin

If you don't have the opportunity to speak with them, or they don't want to talk about it, we recommend talking to other family members or close friends who can help you make these choices.

## CHOOSE A FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Using a funeral director is not a legal requirement, but most people find their expert advice and support makes organising a funeral an easier process – and it gives you the reassurance your loved one is being looked after.

### What does a funeral director do?

A good funeral director will help you through the funeral process, explaining the choices available to you and helping you with the funeral planning – from the big things like choosing a celebrant and venue to the smaller things like printing orders of service, and organising flowers.

Your funeral director will also organise the collection of your loved one from where they died. They'll take care of them while all the funeral arrangements are sorted and until you're ready to bury them or take their ashes home.

You can find details of funeral directors at [funeral-directory.co.uk](http://funeral-directory.co.uk) or [saif.org.uk](http://saif.org.uk). If you're interested in organising the funeral yourself there is helpful information at [naturaldeath.org.uk](http://naturaldeath.org.uk)





## COVER YOUR COSTS

We all want to give our loved ones the send off they deserve, but it's important you consider what's affordable when organising their funeral.

- **Get an estimate of costs from the funeral director**
- **Check whether your loved one has a pre-paid funeral plan**
- **Find out if your loved one has put money aside – most banks will agree to release money to pay for a funeral before other matters are settled**
- **See if you're entitled to a Funeral Expenses Payment**

### What is Funeral Expenses Payment?

You may be eligible for a Funeral Expenses Payment if there isn't enough money to cover necessary costs for organising a funeral, like cremation and burial fees. You can also get up to £1,000 for any other funeral expenses like funeral director fees, flowers and the coffin.

Talk to one of our social workers if you want to find out more about the Funeral Expenses Payment or visit [gov.uk/funeral-payments](http://gov.uk/funeral-payments).





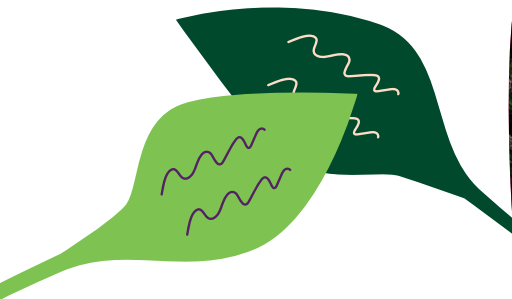
# WAYS YOU CAN REMEMBER

When the time comes, finding ways to remember and honour your loved one can play a big role in the grieving process – how you choose to do this is up to you.

Some people find that remembering with us is a great comfort. If you think this might be right for you here are some ways you can.

## MEMORY TREE

Our memory tree, in the hospice grounds, is made of leaves inscribed in memory of people who have died in our care. You can dedicate a leaf to your loved one and their name will be added to the tree for a year, or longer if you choose. The leaf will be yours to keep when it comes down.



It provided me with a sense of peace to see her name etched among the leaves, surrounded by the names of others who had been touched by the hospice's care.



Setting up a timeless tribute has been a source of comfort – somewhere we can go to reflect on the wonderful life he had, and we had together.

## FUNERAL DONATIONS

Having a collection at your loved one's funeral can be a comforting way for people to show their love and express their condolences for your loss. If you choose to do this in support of the hospice we can provide collection envelopes to make it easier for you.

## A TIMELESS TRIBUTE

You can create a timeless tribute page to remember your loved one. An online platform, it's somewhere family and friends can share memories, photos and videos to celebrate their life.

If you want to you can also use a timeless tribute page to fundraise for the hospice, maybe in lieu of flowers, or in celebration of birthdays or anniversaries.

There are many other ways you can remember your loved one with us, whether you're ready to do it straight away or want to do it down the line. You can find more information on our website, or chat to a member of our fundraising team on 020 8320 5785 or at [team@gbch.org.uk](mailto:team@gbch.org.uk).

# WE'RE A CHARITY

Which means our hospice is only able to run thanks to donations from our incredible community. It costs over £12 million a year to run our hospice services, and you help us raise about £7 million of that. From our hundreds of volunteers, to local businesses, community groups and individual supporters – thank you to everyone who helps us care for anyone who needs it, in Greenwich and Bexley.

There are lots of ways you can support our work – one-off donations, fundraising, playing our hospice lottery or leaving a gift to us in your will.

Visit [communityhospice.org.uk//support-us](https://communityhospice.org.uk/support-us) to find out more.



## TELL US ABOUT YOUR TIME WITH US

Your experience matters to us and we want to make sure that we always give you the best care possible. It's really helpful for us to hear about your experience so we can continue to improve the quality of our care for the future.

### HOW TO FEEDBACK

- Visit the iWantGreatCare website at [gbchospice.iwgc.net](https://gbchospice.iwgc.net) and choose the team that has supported you from the list
- Click on “Your feedback matters to us” on our website [communityhospice.org.uk](https://communityhospice.org.uk)

Your response will be anonymous but if there is anything you want to discuss with us directly please talk to one of our clinical team or email us directly at [feedback@gbch.org.uk](mailto:feedback@gbch.org.uk).

**Feedback will not impact any care you receive from us in the future.**







**We provide free end of life care to anyone living with a terminal illness in Greenwich and Bexley. Our goal is to help everyone we care for to approach death in the way that suits their values, beliefs and lifestyle.**

So whether that's through pain management, care at home, rehab and wellbeing services or end of life care at the hospice, we're on hand to help them, their loved ones and carers with support, holistic care and advice at any time of day or night.

**If it would be helpful to have this leaflet in a different format or language, please email us.**

**Community Hospice  
a: 185 Bostall Hill, London SE2 0GB  
t: 020 8312 2244 | e: [info@gbch.org.uk](mailto:info@gbch.org.uk)  
w: [communityhospice.org.uk](http://communityhospice.org.uk)**