

BEREAVEMENT GUIDE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE REGISTRATION SERVICE

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BEREAVEMENT

GUIDE

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How the Buckinghamshire Registration Service can help

It can be a difficult time when someone close to us dies. The feelings of loss, sadness, bewilderment and sometimes shock, can consume our thoughts and lives. It is also a time when there are so many things that need to be arranged, just when we feel least able to do so.

Buckinghamshire Registration Service has produced this guide to help you through this difficult time. It provides guidance, support and reassurance and will help you to access the information you will need to guide you through your bereavement.

Losing a loved one presents many challenges; we aim to provide an empathic, helpful and compassionate service to help you make the necessary decisions and arrangements when someone dies. It is really important to all of us within the Buckinghamshire Registration Service that you have the clearest information and guidance possible.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE REGISTRATION SERVICE

Buckinghamshire Register Office
Walton Street Offices
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1XF

Telephone: 01296 395000
email: registrars@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/registrars

The first steps

What you must do when someone dies

When someone dies you will need to inform a number of people and organisations and complete certain documents needed by law. If you are a relative or friend you can do some of these things yourself. Others will need to be done by the Executor or Administrator of the Estate. Plenty of support is available to help you through this difficult time.

What happens after a death

- A medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) is signed by a doctor who has seen the deceased during their lifetime. The doctor will send this to the Medical Examiner's Office for review.
- The Medical Examiner will contact the family or next of kin of the deceased to discuss the certificate, answer any questions and advise of next steps.
- The Medical Examiner will inform you when they have sent the medical certificate of cause of death to the registrars, and you can book an appointment with them to register the death.
- The death should be registered within 5 days of the date the MCCD is sent to the registrars. At the time of registering the death, you will also be enrolled onto the 'Tell Us Once' service; a system developed to save bereaved families some time and stress when notifying the relevant government and council departments (see page 6)
- Begin arrangements for the funeral – you should check the Will (if there is one) for any special requests. Information regarding choices is available in the section about funerals (see pages 11 to 14)
- Contact a Funeral Director if you intend to use one. Many people do use a Funeral Director, but this is not required by law.
- Tell the family doctor, if they are not already aware.

As early as possible

- Contact the Executor (if one has been appointed) as soon as you can to enable him/her to start the process of obtaining probate if necessary. The Executor is usually nominated in the Will
- If there is no Will, decide who will apply to administer the deceased's affairs and contact the Probate Registry to apply for 'letters of administration' if necessary.

Documents you will need in the first few days

You will need to gather together the following documents as soon as possible to enable the registration of the death and to start funeral arrangements.

ESSENTIAL:

- You will be contacted by the Medical Examiner who will have received the medical certificate of cause of death (MCCD) from the Doctor. Once the MCCD has been checked, the Medical Examiner will forward this to the registrar electronically. This will then allow the registration to take place.

USEFUL BUT NOT MANDATORY:

- Birth certificate
- Marriage/civil partnership certificate
- NHS number/NHS medical card
- Organ donor card (if appropriate)
- Passport of the deceased
- Driving licence of the deceased.

How do you register a death?

How and where you can register a death, and the information you will need to provide

A death must be registered within five days of the Registrar receiving the MCCD from the Medical Examiner. If that is not possible, you must inform the Register Office. The registration must take place in the District where the death occurred.

Registering a death will take approximately 30-40 minutes. In Buckinghamshire we operate an appointment system. You can book on-line at www.buckscc.gov.uk/registrars or telephone the contact centre on 01296 395000 for an appointment.

If a death is reported to the Coroner, the Coroner's Officers will tell you when you can register the death at the Register Office. If an Inquest is to be held, it will not be necessary for the next of kin to attend the Register Office to register the death. The Coroner's Officers will explain this process to you.

If it is difficult for you to get to the appropriate Register Office, you may visit your local office and make a 'death by declaration' registration. This death by declaration will, however, result in a delay in the issue of Death Certificates and documentation needed for the funeral arrangements because your local office can only take the information from you. They will then send the information to the Register Office in the District where the death occurred who will register the death and issue the relevant documentation. You should consider these delays when booking a date for the funeral.

If the death took place abroad, please see page 21 for further information.

Who can register a death?

The death can be registered by (in order of preference):

- A relative or partner of the deceased
- Someone present at the death
- An occupant of the nursing/residential home or an official from the hospital where the death took place
- The person making the arrangements with the Funeral Directors
- The person who found the body
- The person in charge of the body
- A personal representative of the deceased.

Most deaths are registered by a relative or partner of the deceased. If no relative or partner is available to register the death, the Registrar can accept the information from a person who falls into one of the other categories listed above.

A person is defined as being a partner of the deceased if the two of them (whether of different sexes or of the same sex) were living as partners in an enduring relationship at the time of the deceased person's death.

A personal representative of the deceased will be a person appointed by and acting on behalf of the deceased person's family (eg a solicitor).

"When I registered my mother's death, I was dealt with in a kind, sensitive and professional manner, which made the task easier to deal with"

What information you will need to give the Registrar about the deceased

- The date and place of death
- Their full name and any other names they are known by, or have been known by, including their maiden surname
- Their date and place of birth
- Their last occupation
- If the deceased was married, widowed or was in a civil partnership, the full name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner
- Their usual address
- The date of birth of a surviving spouse or civil partner
- Details of any public sector pension (eg. civil service, teacher or armed forces)
- The NHS number of the deceased.

What information you will need to give the Registrar about yourself as the person registering

- Your relationship to the deceased
- Your full name
- Your usual address.

What documents you will need when registering a death

When you go to register the death, it would also be helpful but not mandatory if you can take the deceased's:

- Birth certificate
- Marriage/civil partnership certificate
- NHS medical card
- Passport
- Driving Licence
- If the deceased was a widow or widower, the death certificate of their spouse.

What documents you will receive from the Registrar

After the information has been recorded, the Registrar will issue the necessary forms and certificates.

The Registrar will give you:

- As many certified Death Certificates as you need - there is a fee payable for these certificates. The certificates will be needed by the Executor or Administrator when sorting out the deceased person's affairs. In most cases where there is an account to be closed down or monies to be claimed, the company or organisation will need a certified copy and will not accept a photocopy. The majority of companies and organisations will return the certificates to you on request

- A Certificate for Burial or Cremation (called the 'Green Form'), giving permission for the body to be buried or for an application for cremation to be made. This can be sent electronically to the Funeral Director if you wish. If a post mortem has taken place, the Coroner's Office will issue the necessary forms often directly to the Funeral Director. You need permission from a Coroner to move a body for a funeral abroad. You will need to apply at least four days before you want the body to be removed.

"An excellent service which helped at a very sad and stressful time"

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Tell Us Once - and we will tell the rest

Tell Us Once (TUO) is a system developed to save bereaved families some time and stress when notifying the relevant government and council departments of the death. It really does enable people to pass on the required information once only and it is then disseminated to all of the departments that need to know.

At the time of registering the death, your Registrar will enrol you onto the Tell Us Once service. You then have 28 days in which to complete the necessary details online or to contact the TUO team by telephone - full up to date contact details for TUO and your unique Reference Number will also be provided in writing for you.

Information to have with you when you are ready to upload online or telephone the Tell Us Once team:

- Death Certificate information
- Deceased person's National Insurance Number
- National Insurance Number of the deceased person's surviving wife, husband or civil partner, or their date of birth
- Next of kin's name, address and telephone number
- Information about any benefits and services the deceased may have been receiving e.g. state pension, income support, housing benefit, library card etc.
- Name and address of the person dealing with the deceased's Estate (if this is different to the next of kin)
- Deceased's driving licence, or driving licence number if the licence is not available
- Deceased's passport, or passport number if passport is not available.

Further details about TUO can be found at www.gov.uk/tell-us-once

Who is informed?

- **Council Housing**
- **Housing Benefit**
- **Council Tax and Benefits Office**
- **Libraries**
- **Blue Badge Scheme**
- **Adult Social Care**
- **Children's Services**
- **Collection of payments for Council Services e.g. Assisted refuse/recycling**
- **Identity and Passport Service for Passport cancellation**
- **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency for Driving Licence cancellation**
- **Department for Work & Pensions for Pension, Disability and Carers Services**
- **Jobcentre Plus**
- **Overseas Health Team**
- **HM Revenue and Customs for Personal Taxation**
- **Public Sector and Armed Forces Pension Schemes**
- **NHS (England & Wales) Pensions**
- **Scottish Public Pensions**
- **My Civil Service' Pension**
- **Any Armed Forces Pension and/or Compensation Scheme administered by Veterans UK**
- **Local Government Pension Funds.**

If the death is referred to the Coroner

A doctor or Attending Practitioner has a duty to refer all deaths to the Coroner which appear to have occurred from unnatural causes, violence, accident or industrial disease. The police also refer cases. The Coroner may investigate and decide to order a post mortem, or in some cases, the Coroner may decide to hold an Inquest.

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer who makes inquiries into deaths for instance where:

- the cause of death is unknown
- the deceased was not attended by a doctor in life
- the death was violent or unnatural or occurred under suspicious circumstances
- the death occurred during a surgical operation or failure to recover from an anaesthetic
- the death may be as a result of an accident (whenever it occurred)
- the death may be suicide
- the death was due to an industrial disease
- the death occurred during or shortly after police detention or prison custody.

Following the referral, the Coroner will decide if he has a duty to investigate.

If the Coroner decides that they have no duty to investigate they will issue a form called CN1A to the Attending Practitioner or a form called CN1B to the Medical Examiner to advise that the Coroner Is not going to investigate the death.

If the Coroner decides that there is a duty to investigate, enquiries will be undertaken which may include a postmortem examination. An Investigation will be opened pending the outcome of those enquiries. The Coroner will issue the funeral documentation to the family's nominated funeral director to allow funeral arrangements to proceed.

If a natural medical cause of death is determined following investigation, the Coroner will issue a form called CN2 to the Registrar which advises that the cause of death has become clear. This will allow the family to make an appointment to register the death with the Registrar. At the same time, the family will also be advised that the investigation has been concluded and a cause of death has been found.

If enquiries will take a lengthy period of time, the Coroner can issue a certificate to the next of kin which can assist with dealing with the deceased's estate whilst the investigation is ongoing. This is called an Interim Death Certificate.

If an unnatural medical cause of death is determined, the Coroner will open an Inquest.

An Inquest is an enquiry to establish who the deceased was and how, when and where they died. If you request it, the Coroner will explain the reasons for the procedures adopted in particular cases as long as the Coroner is satisfied that the person has a proper interest and a right to know.

On conclusion of the Inquest, the Coroner's Officers will provide the next of kin with information about how to obtain certified Death Certificates. There is a fee payable for these certificates.

For further information please refer to the booklet entitled 'Guide to Coroner Services' (available to view and download at: www.gov.uk) or contact the Buckinghamshire Coroner's Office on (01494) 475505.

"Good empathetic Registrar"

Inquests

What is an Inquest?

An Inquest is a public court hearing held by the Coroner to establish who died and how, when and where the death occurred. The purpose is to discover the facts of the death, not to apportion blame on any individual or organisation.

Why is there an Inquest?

An Inquest would be held if it was not possible to find out the cause of death, even if there was an investigation or a post mortem; if the death was unnatural; or the death occurred in state detention such as a prison. The Coroner would need to hold an Inquest to complete the investigation. If there are criminal proceeding, the Coroner will suspend the Inquest until after the criminal court proceedings have been concluded. It may then not be necessary to re-open the Inquest.

Opening an Inquest

The Coroner will open the Inquest as soon as possible where one is required. This hearing is normally very brief and the Coroner will then immediately adjourn the Inquest until a later date in order for all the necessary reports and documentation to be available.

What is a Pre-Inquest Review?

Occasionally, the Coroner will hold one or more hearings before the Inquest. These are known as Pre-Inquest Reviews. This would normally happen when Decisions need to be taken about the direction of the inquest or evidence to be procured.

Who Can Attend an Inquest?

Inquests are always held in public. A Coroner's Officer may be in attendance and relatives of the deceased will be invited to attend.

Witnesses who have been summoned by the Coroner to give evidence will also attend. Members of the public and the media are also allowed to attend.

What Happens at an Inquest?

The Coroner will introduce the Inquest, explaining who everyone is and what will be happening. The Coroner will then call and question the witnesses who have to give evidence either by swearing an oath or making a declaration. All witnesses who live in England or Wales must attend court if they have been summoned. It is an offence not to attend and the Coroner may issue a warrant enforcing them to attend or issue a fine for non-attendance.

Family members and other Interested Persons can ask the witnesses any questions they have after the Coroner has done so. A Interested Person could be a direct relative of the deceased, such as a spouse, siblings, children and parents. They could also be an Executor or an organisation who may have contributed to the death. They could be part of the medical profession who were involved with the deceased prior to the death.

The Coroner will read out any statements that are to be taken as documentary evidence. The Coroner will then summarise the evidence and pronounce the conclusion. Where there is a Jury, the Coroner will give them directions as to the range of conclusions which they can consider.

A member of the Coroners Court Support Service may also be present to provide the family and witnesses with support throughout. This service is a charity run organisation of volunteers, providing emotional and practical support to families and witnesses during what can be a very upsetting and distressing time.

Inquest Conclusions

At the end of the Inquest, the Coroner will come to a conclusion. This will include determining who died, where they died, when they died and how they died. The death will usually be recorded as accident, misadventure, natural causes, industrial disease, suicide, open or narrative.

Will the Inquest be reported by the Press?

As it is a public hearing, journalists may attend the Inquest and report on what has taken place. Anything read out at the Inquest may be reported on. The Coroner's Office will not release any information to the Press which has not already been made public through the Inquest. If you have any concern about what has been published by the Press you can seek advice from the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) by telephoning 0300 123 2220.

What if Future Deaths may be Prevented?

Sometimes at an Inquest evidence will show that something could be done to prevent other deaths. Should this be the case, the Coroner will inform the Inquest of this and they will write a report to the relevant organisation or person to take action. A copy of this report will also be sent to the Properly Interested Persons. The organisation or person must respond to the report within 56 days. The Coroner must send the report and the response to the Chief Coroner.

How do I get a Death Certificate after an Inquest?

The Coroner's Officer will give any relatives of the deceased who attend the Inquest, a form to complete and send to the Registration Service. This form is an application for a death certificate and there is a fee for these. If the relatives are not in attendance they will be written to informing them of the conclusion of the Inquest and explaining how they can apply for death certificates if they wish to.

There is no need for a relative to attend the Register Office after an Inquest to register the death.

The Buckinghamshire Coroner's Service is at

29 Windsor End,
Beaconsfield HP9 2JJ

Telephone: 01494 475505

Registering a Stillbirth

When a child is stillborn, a doctor or midwife will issue a Medical Certificate of Stillbirth. This certificate is required at the stillbirth registration appointment and is often sent directly to the Registrars by the midwifery team.

A stillbirth is legally defined as a child born after the 24th week of pregnancy that did not, at any time after being born, breathe or show any other sign of life.

Every stillbirth in England and Wales must be registered in the district in which it takes place, within 42 days.

It is primarily the parents' responsibility to register the stillbirth. Please be assured that our staff will be sensitive to your needs and do their utmost to minimise distress.

Who can register a stillbirth?

- The mother
- The father, if he was married to the mother at the time of the stillbirth
- If the parents are not married, the mother and father must attend the appointment together if the father's name is to be included in the Register
- A person present at the stillbirth.

What the Registrar will ask you

The Registrar will ask you for the Medical Certificate of Stillbirth. You will also be asked for:

- the date and place of stillbirth
- the name that you have chosen for your baby
- the parents' full names and any other names they are known by or have been known by; their date and place of birth
- the occupation and the home address for each parent
- date of marriage, if applicable.

What certificates will be issued?

A certificate of registration will be issued, free of charge to the person who registers the stillbirth.

After a stillbirth has been registered, full certificates may be purchased at the time of the registration or at any time afterwards by the mother or the father (the father's details would need to be recorded in the register for him to be able to obtain a certificate).

Any application for a certificate from someone who is not the mother or father should be sent to the General Register Office, Certificate Production, PO Box 2, Southport PR8 2JD, giving full details of the purpose for which the certificate is required.

Further useful information and support

Sands Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity
Tel. 0808 164 3332
www.sands.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK
Tel. 0800 02 888 40
www.childbereavementuk.org

The Funeral

How do you arrange the funeral?

The main legal requirements in England and Wales are:

- The death has to be certified by a doctor and sent to the Medical Examiner for review, unless there is Coroner involvement
- The death is registered with a Registrar of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnership within 5 days from the date the Registrar receives the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death from the Medical Examiner
- The body should either be cremated or buried
- There is no legal requirement to have any kind of funeral ceremony at all.

Documents you will need before you can arrange a funeral

The Funeral Director, Crematorium or Cemetery Office will need the following forms:

BURIAL

- Green Form for Burial (Form 9) from the Register Office - or Order for Burial if the Coroner was involved.

CREMATION

- Application for Cremation (Form 1) signed by the next of kin or Executor
- Green Form for Cremation (Form 9) from the Register Office, or Order for Cremation (Form 6) if the Coroner was involved
- Medical form 4 (completed by the doctor(s) who dealt with the deceased).

Usually, the Funeral Director will receive some of these forms direct from the Registrar or Coroner.

The Registrar can send the Green Form direct to the Funeral Director on your behalf if you wish.

Detailed planning of the funeral

The key decisions that need to be made for the funeral are listed below. If you are using a Funeral Director they will help you with all of this.

- Where the body should rest before the funeral
- Time and place of the funeral (though this can only be finalised once the order for burial/cremation has been issued)
- Type of service (civil or religious), who will conduct it and those who will contribute to it
- How much to spend on the funeral
- Whether to have flowers, or instead donate money to a chosen charity
- Sending out invitations
- Placing a notice in the newspapers.

Taking the deceased's wishes into account

Remember to check the deceased's Will or other written instructions for special wishes about their funeral or what should happen to their body. However, the Executor does not have to follow the instructions about the funeral left in the Will.

If there are no clear wishes, it is generally the Executor or nearest relative who decides whether the body is to be cremated or buried.

The Funeral
(continued)

There are many different types of funeral and it is useful to remember that:

- You do not have to have a funeral ceremony in a licensed building, crematorium or place of worship - it can even be in your own home

- You can choose a ceremony that reflects any religious beliefs or multi-cultural traditions. No one has to 'deliver' a ceremony. You can choose a religious, civil or humanist ceremony or the family can deliver and co-ordinate the event themselves - there are no set rules

- If you organise a personalised ceremony with lots of music and readings, it's as well to check with the Chapel or Crematorium Manager if you would like to use their premises as you may need to book a double time slot

- You do not have to employ a Funeral Director to co-ordinate your plans, although many people do, as it takes away some of the stress and anxiety at this time

- There are many Woodland and environmentally friendly Burial Sites being created, that offer an alternative resting place for loved ones. It is often a condition of use that the body is not embalmed, as they do not want any chemicals destroying the local habitat

- A burial can be on private land as long as you have the permission of the land owner and there is nothing in the deeds restricting the use of the property in this way. Before considering this option, please do check with your local Planning Office, plus the Environmental Health Department. Further information and advice are available from a charity called The Natural Death Centre. www.naturaldeath.org.uk

Some simple ways in which you can personalise a funeral service

- Think about the music - you do not have to choose classical, religious or traditional styles unless you prefer them. Most funeral venues can now download any music of your choice which you can then incorporate throughout the funeral service. Discuss your choices with family and the person you have chosen to conduct the funeral ceremony

- Think about individual contributions - you might want to include a reading, a poem or a favourite story. Plan a running order that will provide you with the kind of ceremony you want

- Consider using personal items as part of the ceremony. These will help to reflect the person who has died and make the ceremony more special. For example, a special throw to drape over the coffin or a photograph of the person

- You could have photographs of the person on the Order of Ceremony which people could then take away as a memento, or give everyone a small Card of Remembrance of the deceased person

- Many funerals are now geared to be a celebration of the deceased's life, rather than the more traditional mourning of their loss. This has led to numerous companies who can provide personalised coffin drapes, doves or butterflies for release, funeral balloons and even firework displays to scatter a loved one's ashes. The choices these days are endless.

The ceremony should reflect the wishes of you, your family and friends. You can decide on the details of the ceremony to make sure this happens.

High Wycombe
891 London Road
Tel: 01494 472572

Beaconsfield
32 Gregories Road
Tel: 01494 685000

Head Office
Flackwell Heath
24 White Pit Lane
Tel: 01494 952288

Marlow
21-23 Little Marlow Road
Tel: 01628 898866

Gerrards Cross
38 Oak End Way
Tel: 01753 891892

Farnham Common
4 The Broadway
Tel: 01753 535556

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The Funeral
(continued)

Using a Funeral Director

Many people choose to use a professional Funeral Director. They can help streamline the whole process, through a very upsetting and sometimes stressful time. Personal recommendations may be available from family and friends who have already used their services. Most Funeral Directors belong to one of the following organisations:

- National Association of Funeral Directors www.nafd.org.uk
- National Federation of Funeral Directors www.nffd.co.uk
- Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors www.saif.org.uk

How will you pay for the funeral?

Funeral Costs

If you arrange a funeral you are responsible for paying the bill, so check where the money will come from and if there will be enough. Funeral costs may be paid in different ways including:

- From the Estate of the deceased
- The deceased may have been paying into a funeral scheme or have a prepaid funeral plan - you will need to check paperwork to see if a plan exists
- Money from a life insurance policy or pension scheme
- The deceased's bank or building society may agree to release funds to pay for funeral costs
- You, or the Executor, may need to pay and then recover the money from the Estate later. In certain cases help may be available from State funds.

Funeral costs for the same services may vary considerably from one Funeral Director to another. It is therefore best to get more than one quote to compare costs and services. You should ask the Funeral Director for a written quotation detailing these fees.

Financial Help

If you are finding it difficult to pay for a funeral that you have to arrange, you may be able to get some financial help.

Bereavement Support Payment

You may be able to get Bereavement Support Payment depending on when your husband, wife or civil partner died.

If your husband, wife or civil partner died before 6 April 2017 you may still be able to get other financial help. Please visit www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment

Please note you can't claim Bereavement Support Payment if you are in prison. You must claim within 3 months of your husband, wife or civil partner's death to get the full amount. You can claim up to 21 months after but your payments will be less. Parents who suffer the loss of a child under the age of 18 will be entitled to two weeks' statutory paid leave from work.

Bereavement Service helpline:
Telephone: 0800 731 0469
Monday to Friday, 8am to 7.30pm

What choices do you have for the funeral?

A funeral can be either by cremation or burial in England and Wales

Sometimes the choices in arranging a funeral are more limited due to a person's chosen religion or belief. However, apart from that you can organise the funeral yourself and personalise it, in a way that suits you. In some cases the deceased has planned the funeral details in advance, or at least let their wishes be known, which can be a great help.

After The Funeral

Following a cremation, if you wish to collect the ashes (sometimes referred to as the remains) of your loved one, you can do so within 48 hours or you can arrange for them to be scattered or placed in a Memorial for you. Each Crematorium will be able to advise you of the various options they provide.

If you chose to collect the ashes yourself there is no right or wrong way for their disposal, it is all about personal choice and timing. The ashes can be kept at home; buried; scattered at a favourite spot or at sea; made into a glass ornament; shared out amongst family members; made into jewellery or dispersed into the atmosphere by fireworks.

In England you do not need a licence to scatter ashes at sea, but do please check if visiting other countries. Some popular beauty spots are now banning the scattering of ashes as the use is causing environmental problems, so do check first.

Some families create an informal ceremony around the actual 'scattering' event, even if the final plans for a resting place aren't decided on until a considerable time after the funeral.

If your loved one has been buried you may decide on a fitting Memorial to mark the grave. Most Cemeteries do have regulations on the size and style they allow, so it is probably a good idea to check any restrictions before you proceed.

Due to safety regulations most Cemeteries will ensure that work can only be carried out by a Stone or Memorial Mason who can provide qualifications and also guarantee the stability of their work. Graves are often only leased for a period of time (circa 50 years) so please check for full details with your chosen Cemetery.

Cremation

At present there are three crematoriums used by Residents of Buckinghamshire. These are:

Crematoriums

BIERTON CREMATORIUM
Cane End Lane,
Bierton
Aylesbury
HP22 5BH
Tel: 01296 350019
www.biertoncrematorium.co.uk

CHILTERN CREMATORIUM
Whieldon Lane,
Amersham
HP7 0ND
Tel: 01494 724263
www.chilternscrematorium.co.uk

(both managed by The Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee).

AYLESBURY VALE CREMATORIUM
Watermead,
Aylesbury
HP19 0FU
Tel: 01296 468300
www.aylesburyvalecrem.co.uk
(managed by Westerleigh Group)

This is also a Crematorium at Milton Keynes:

CROWNHILL CREMATORIUM
Dansteed Way,
Crownhill
Milton Keynes
MK8 0AH
Tel: 01908 568112
www.milton-keynes .gov.uk

(managed by Milton Keynes Council).

Aylesbury Vale
CREMATORIUM





We provide exceptional care in a beautiful setting so that families can remember, mourn and celebrate the lives of their loved ones in a way that is uniquely personal.

- Beautifully situated within a natural and peaceful setting, on the edge of Watermead Lake, boarding the River Thame
- 60 minutes of chapel use providing a 40 minute long service
- Light, open and comfortable chapel, finished in natural material, which can be decorated and accessorised to meet your wishes
- Helpful team to ensure everything runs smoothly on the day, leaving the details to us
- Beautiful Gardens of Remembrance where you can return to time and time again to remember your loved one
- State-of-the-art media centre for uniquely personal tributes and service streaming

Our facilities at a glance:

- 100 Chapel Seating Capacity
- 30 Chapel Standing Capacity
- 40 Waiting Room Seats
- 75 Standard Car Parking Spaces
- Disabled Access
- 2 Accessible Toilets
- Dogs Allowed on a Lead
- Hearing Loop in Chapel
- Video Webcast of Service
- Assured Quality of Care
- Scattering of Ashes
- Memorial Options Available

Aylesbury Vale Crematorium, Watermead, Aylesbury, HP19 0FU
t: 01296 468300 **e:** aylesburyvale@westerleighgroup.co.uk
fb: www.facebook.com/AylesburyValeCrematorium
www.aylesburyvalecrem.co.uk

westerleigh GROUP

The Estate

How do you sort out the Estate of the deceased?

When a person dies somebody has to sort out his or her Estate. Their Estate includes their money, property and the possessions they have left. If you are the person doing this you collect in all the money, pay any debts and share out the Estate to those people entitled to it.

You can engage a Solicitor to sort out the Estate for you. Do ask friends for recommendations and when you contact companies do ask about their fees and charges, as these can differ significantly. In many cases, even where there is a property involved, it is possible to complete all of the necessary forms yourself and the Probate Office are very helpful throughout the process.

Applying for Probate

To sort out someone's Estate you may need to apply for probate. Probate is the process of officially proving that a Will is valid. If the deceased has left a Will the Probate Office will give you a 'grant of probate.' If there is no Will then 'letters of administration' will be issued. Your local Probate Registry will send you the necessary forms with detailed notes and guidance on what you need to do.

You can find more information on the Probate Service at www.gov.uk/applying-for-probate or by telephoning their helpline on 0300 123 1072.

What does a grant of probate or letter of administration allow you to do?

A 'grant of probate' or 'letters of administration' are legal documents allowing the person(s) named in it to collect and distribute the Estate of the deceased. You can show it to organisations that hold these assets, such as banks or building societies.

Is a grant of probate needed in all cases?

Not always. Probate is not usually needed to release assets held jointly with another person, for example where a home is held in joint names and is passing by survivorship to the other joint owner; or a joint bank or building society account is held.

In these cases production of a Death Certificate may be enough for the monies to be transferred to the joint holder.

Certain institutions may release monies without a grant being produced if the amount held by the deceased was small. You will need to apply to the institutions to see if they will release monies without a grant. Staff at Probate Registries will offer procedural guidance on how to obtain a grant but cannot provide legal advice.

What do you do if there is no Will?

If someone dies without making a Will, they are said to have died 'Intestate.' If this happens the law sets out who should deal with the deceased's affairs and who should inherit their Estate. Assets held in joint names usually pass automatically to the other joint owner.

Dealing with an Estate when there is no Will can be complicated and take a long time in very complex cases. For further information please visit: www.gov.uk/inherits-someone-dies-without-will

Coping with Bereavement

The death of a loved one can be devastating. However, bereavement can affect people in many different ways and various emotions can kick in at differing times throughout the grieving process. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Powerful emotions can overtake daily life and come on suddenly from an unexpected memory or innocent remark.

To begin with you may feel shock or numbness or simply feel that you are in a daze. There can be overwhelming sadness with lots of crying and the inability to feel in control. You can get angry at the situation, the illness or accident that took them from you, or even at your loved one for leaving you. Guilt is another feeling that can become entwined with all of the others. Guilt for feeling angry, guilt for something you said or didn't say, even guilt for not being able to prevent your loved one dying.

All of these feelings are perfectly natural and normal. None of these negative thoughts and feelings make you a bad person - it is just nature's way of helping you sort out your feelings and the situation in your own time and your own way.

It is also natural throughout this period to feel very tired or even exhausted. You can become distracted and forgetful during this period too, as your mind is overloaded with grief from your bereavement.

It is recognised by doctors that there are four main stages of bereavement:

- Accepting that your loss is real
- Experiencing the pain of grief
- Adjusting to life without the person who has died
- Moving on (putting less emotional energy into grieving and channelling it into something else - or even better, something new).

Not everyone moves from one phase smoothly into the next and there is no set timescale for feelings to become less intense. It is a gradual process.

Sometimes even when people feel ready to move on it can feel really daunting to get back into the community, especially so, if you have lost a partner of many years and used to do nearly everything together. It can be difficult too, if you have spent a long time as a Carer with hardly any free time to follow your own hobbies or interests.

There are many clubs, organisations and volunteering opportunities that will welcome you throughout Buckinghamshire, so do use your local paper, community boards or the internet to explore the varied options.

Telephoning the leader of the group first is a good idea, as you can find out the general format and also know that someone will be expecting you at your first meeting.

If this seems like too big a step, your local Library is a wonderful place to make new friends and find like-minded people.

Bereavement Help & Support

There are many organisations that will be pleased to provide help and support following your bereavement. Here are a few, but for a specific need, the internet or your local Library will be able to help you locate more.

AGE UK
Advice for senior citizens, carers and friends.
Tel: 01296 431911
www.ageuk.org.uk/buckinghamshire

CHILD DEATH HELPLINE
We're here to listen - A freephone service for all those affacted by the death of a child.
Tel: 0800 282 986
www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

CHILD BEREAVEMENT HELP
Help for children, young people, parents and families when a child grieves or when a child dies.
Tel: 0800 02 888 40
www.childbereavementuk.org

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
Support for bereaved parents and their families after a child dies.
Helpline: 0345 123 2304
www.tcf.org.uk

CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE
'Somewhere to turn, when someone dies.'
Helpline: 0808 808 1677
www.crusebucks.org.uk

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT
Providing information, support and practical advice.
Tel: 0808 808 00 00
www.macmillan.org.uk

OASIS BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP
Support Group open to anyone who has been bereaved in the last 12 months.
Tel: 01628 533004
www.ccfh.org.uk

ROAD PEACE
The UK's national charity for road crash victims, provides support to those bereaved or injured in a road crash.
Tel: 0845 4500 355
www.roadpeace.org

THE SAMARITANS
Confidential and emotions support helpline for anyone in crisis.
Tel: 116 123
www.samaritans.org

SSAFA FORCES HELP
Giving support for our armed forces, veterans and their families.
Tel: 0800 731 4880
www.ssafa.org.uk

When someone dies abroad

When someone dies abroad, the steps taken to investigate their death vary from country to country. Sometimes there can be delays in repatriating a deceased person back to the United Kingdom.

When remains are repatriated, their death will always be notified to the Senior Coroner for the area where the deceased will be buried or cremated. The Coroner has to be satisfied who the deceased is, the cause of their death and if their death could be subject to a Coroner's Inquest.

The Funeral Director who has been appointed to deal with the funeral will notify the appropriate Coroner to advise that someone has been repatriated.
The Coroner will ask to see what papers accompanied the deceased and ascertain if a cause of death has been given by the authorities abroad.

Identification

The Coroner will also ask if the deceased has been formally identified in this country and if so, ask for a statement to confirm this. If the deceased has not been identified, the Coroner's Officer will make suitable arrangements to do this.

Circumstances

The Coroner's Officer may make further enquiries with the family to establish the circumstances leading to the death as well as liaising with the deceased's GP in this country to establish the medical background.

Post Mortem Examination

A post mortem examination may be required in the country where the deceased has died to determine the cause of death. If a post mortem examination is performed abroad, there may not be a need for a post mortem examination to be performed in the UK. However, this is the decision of the local Coroner investigating.

Depending on what examinations/ treatments have been performed abroad, this may have limitations on any subsequent post mortem examination.

Natural Cause of Death

The Coroner is likely to open an investigation to conduct his enquiries. The Coroner will issue the funeral documentation to the family's nominated funeral director to allow funeral arrangements to proceed. Upon conclusion of the investigation confirming a natural medical cause of death a Notice of Discontinuance will be sent to the family. This means the Coroner has completed his investigations. If the deceased body is for burial then the Registrar's Office can issue a 'Certificate of No Liability' to the Funeral Director.

The Registrar will need to see a Death Certificate from the country in which the deceased died and a translation of the Death Certificate if it is not in English.

Unnatural Cause of Death

If the cause of death is one of unnatural causes or unascertained, the Coroner will proceed to open and list the case for an Inquest. An Inquest is a formal hearing to confirm who the deceased was, how, when and where they died. Depending on the circumstances of the death and where the death occurred, reports for the Inquest may be limited in detail. On some occasions, the local UK police may be able to assist by providing support, or families may wish to instruct legal representation to guide them through the process. Whether the deceased is to be buried or cremated, the Coroner will issue the appropriate document to allow the funeral to take place.

The Inquest must be opened to allow the deceased to be formally released, although the Inquest need not be concluded to allow the funeral to occur. Further information about registering a death abroad can be found at www.gov.uk/register-a-death

Buckinghamshire Register Office,
Walton Street Offices,
Walton Street, Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire HP20 1XF

Beaconsfield Old Town Registration Office
29 Windsor End,
Beaconsfield,
Buckinghamshire HP9 2JJ

01296 395000
registrars@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/registrars

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