

C248 Bereavement Leaflet COVID19	
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Bereavement during Covid 19 Pandemic May 2020

What to do next

You need to call the GP within normal working hours or 111 out of hours for a Doctor to certify your relatives death. If your relative has died in a community hospital or residential home staff will call a doctor for you. Please turn over for more information regarding the certification of death during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Choosing a funeral director

Once you have chosen a funeral director you need to call them and inform them your relative has died. You must let them know if the person had, or is suspected to have had Covid19. They will arrange a time to come to the house or place of death as soon as they are able to. There is no rush. You can spend as much time with the person who has died as you need.

Registering the death

The GP or Health care professional who has certified death will email over a death certificate to the registrar during the pandemic. You need to call and arrange a telephone appointment with your local registrar for the death to be registered rather than a face to face appointment.

Local Registry office.....

Disposal of medication

During the pandemic any remaining medication prescribed to the person needs to be placed in a plastic bag, labelled with their name and the date. This should then be taken to your local pharmacy after 1 week for disposal.

Self-isolation advice

If the person who died had confirmed or suspected Covid-19 anyone who had contact with them needs to self-isolate within their home for 2 weeks from when they had contact or symptoms started. Speak to 111 or your GP for advice if needed.

Funerals during the pandemic

You will still be able to have a funeral for your relative during the pandemic. Social distancing will need to be observed and numbers of people are limited at present. Funeral directors will be able to guide you through this process whilst doing their best to follow your wishes. There is further guidance on funerals on the next page.

Equipment

Please call Medequip on **01773 604426** to arrange collection of any equipment sent out from the health care professional.

Bereavement support

Grieving for your relative may be harder during this time. Family and friends often support each other and social distancing can make this a challenge.

Cruse bereavement have lots of useful information on their website and also have a bereavement support line 0808 808 1677

If you are struggling with your thoughts and feelings call your GP for further advice and support.

If you need any advice, support or have any questions, please contact a member of the health care team who looked after your relative.

Additional information regarding the certification of death during the Covid19 pandemic

A Medical Certificate of Cause of Death – MCCD must be completed by a doctor. In addition to other details required on the certificate, the doctor must provide to the best of their knowledge and belief a cause of death. The cause entered is a matter of clinical judgement, determined by weighing up the patient's recent and past medical history and the circumstances of their death.

When a doctor cannot reasonably give a likely cause of death the case must be submitted to the coroner for investigation which may include a post-mortem to establish a cause of death.

In order for a doctor to complete a MCCD without referral to the coroner, any doctor must have seen (including via video link) the patient in the 28 days before death, or alternatively in person after death.

If these conditions are met, then a doctor may complete a MCCD which is sent to the registrar who will record the death and complete the paperwork to allow burial or cremation.

If these conditions are not met but the doctor is satisfied regarding the likely cause of death, then a MCCD may still be issued but should be clearly marked to indicate that the person was seen neither in the 28 days before death or after death.

In such circumstances the case must be referred to the coroner. The coroner may then issue a form 100A sanctioning the completion of the registration process, or they may choose to order a post-mortem examination.

Guidance on funerals

The grieving process and related formal and informal rituals, through which the bereaved mourn the passing of loved ones, are important for the health and wellbeing of the bereaved. The following guidance aims to balance the needs of the bereaved to mourn appropriately, whilst minimising the spread of Covid-19 infection. It details where exceptions can be made to the stay at home guidance currently in place. These exceptions only apply to the circumstances

relating to the death of a member of the same household, a close family member or a friend.

Communities, organisations and individuals are strongly advised to take action to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19 infection among mourners who are gathered to pay their respects, with a particular focus on protecting people who are clinically vulnerable and more likely to develop severe illness.

These actions include:

- Restricting the number of mourners to be as low as possible to ensure a safe distance of at least 2 metres (6ft) can be maintained between individuals
- Alongside the Funeral Director, Chapel Attendant, and funeral staff only the following should attend:
 - Members of the person's household
 - Close family members or, if they are unable to attend, close friends
 - Attendance of a celebrant of choice, should the bereaved request this
- Mourners should also follow the advice on social distancing when travelling to and from the funeral gathering
- Mourners who are self-isolating for 14 days due to someone in their household being unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 but are not symptomatic themselves should be facilitated to attend the funeral in person should they wish to do so, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission
- Mourners who are clinically vulnerable or in a shielded group should also be facilitated to attend, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission

Any mourner who is showing Covid-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough or a high temperature) should not attend the funeral as they pose a risk to others; remote participation should be considered

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>