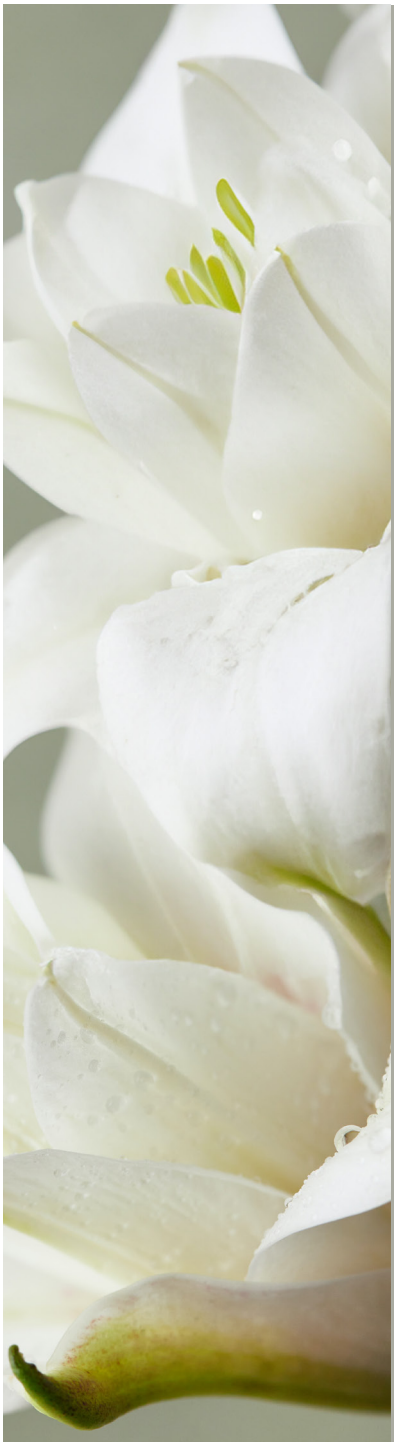


EST 1837

Royal Borough
Registrars

Bereavement Guide

Navigating the complexities that arise after the loss of a loved one can prove challenging. Let us alleviate the burden of legal formalities during this difficult time.

"Very helpful in the application for probate in respect of my late mother's estate. Advice is timely and has enabled matters to proceed smoothly and without delay. All very reassuring at a difficult time."

- D. Greenwood (Client of Parfitt Cresswell, November 2023)

Dealing with the legal aspects following the passing of a loved one can add unnecessary stress to an already distressing situation. However, with our expert legal assistance, you can shift your focus to what truly matters for you and your family, knowing that we are handling your legal needs with care and proficiency.

Our team of experienced probate specialists are dedicated to settling and administrating estates in a sensitive and understanding manner. We assess the necessity of obtaining a Grant of Probate or Letters of Administration, manage Inland Revenue forms, conduct estate valuations, and facilitate the collection and distribution of the estate. Additionally, we provide valuable tax planning advice to ensure the efficient transfer of the estate to beneficiaries.

Let us support you during this challenging time, allowing you the space to prioritise your emotional well-being and that of your family while we manage the legal intricacies with expertise and compassion.

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Contents

4 What to do when someone dies
5 Where to start
7 Registering a death
8 Medical Examiner Involvement and Who Can Register
8 What information will I need to give to the registrar
10 Register a death by declaration
11 Involvement with the Coroner
13 Tell us once service
16 Arranging the funeral
18 Deaths abroad
20 The estate
22 What to do next

What to do when someone dies

It can be a difficult time when someone close to us dies. The feelings of loss, sadness, and sometimes shock, can be overwhelming. 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.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Registration Service has produced this booklet to inform and guide you through the arrangements and practical tasks that are ahead. Losing a loved one presents many challenges; we will always do our best to provide an empathetic, professional and compassionate service and to always respond to you quickly.



Where to start

You will need to inform a number of people and organisations and complete certain legal documents. 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. One of the first things to do is register the death. More information can be found on the next page. This must be done in the district in which the person died but can also in extentuating circumstances be done in a different register office 'by declaration' (please see page 10).

In order to be ready to register a death, the registrar will require the doctor or hospital to have issued a medical cause of death certificate **(MCCD) which will be sent directly to the Register Office by the Medical Examiner.**

As well as registering the death, there are other things you may need to do at this stage:

- Choosing a funeral director and starting to make funeral arrangements (checking if the deceased had a funeral plan or requests regarding this)
- Contacting the executors of the will to enable the probate process to be started if necessary
- Deciding who will manage the affairs if there is no will or executors

Registering A Death

Registering a death

When someone dies, the death needs to be registered at the Register Office in the district in which the death occurred. Deaths should be registered within 5 days of the register office receiving the medical cause of death certificate from the Medical Examiner.

If the death took place a significant distance away and it is difficult for you to get to the appropriate registration office, you may ask to arrange an appointment at your local register office and declare the necessary information. Please see pg 10 for more details.

To register a death that occurred in RBWM, the first step to take is to complete the pre-registration information form, via our website: go to www.rbwm.gov.uk/registrars then choose 'Register a death'.

If you have any difficulty using the internet or online services, please call us on 01628 796422 and leave a clear message – we will call you back – alternatively, please email us: registrar@rbwm.gov.uk to request the pre-registration information in an email format.

To register the death we will need:

- The medical cause of death certificate from the Medical Examiner
- Your pre-registration form or your contact details
  We will then contact you straightaway to arrange an appointment to register the death

Who can register a death?

Medical Examiner involvement

The doctor, hospital or hospice must send the cause of death paperwork to the Medical Examiner for approval.

After this has been agreed on, the Medical Examiner's team will contact the next-of-kin to confirm cause of death and that the death can now be registered.

The register office are then automatically sent the cause of death certificate and we will contact the next-of-kin to arrange an appointment to register.

Deaths are usually registered by a relative, but if this is not possible, or there are no relatives, the following could register the death:

- Someone present at the death
- The person making the funeral arrangements
- An occupant of the nursing/residential home/official from the hospital where the death took place

What information will I need to give the registrar?

About the deceased

- Date and place of death
- Full name and details of any other names they are known as, or previous names
- Maiden name, if the deceased had been married
- Date and place of their birth (town and county or foreign country)
- Occupation – we will still need to know this even if they are now retired
- Full name and occupation of spouse or civil partner, where the deceased was married, in a civil partnership or widowed
- Usual home address

About the person registering the death

- Your full name
- Your current address
- Your relationship to the deceased

Documents issued by the Registrar

- A Certificate for Burial or Cremation (known as the "green form") - this gives permission for a burial/cremation to take place – we will email this directly to your chosen funeral director

- Death certificates - you will be able to buy as many death certificates as you need, using a credit or debit card. These are needed by the executor or administrator when sorting out the deceased person's affairs and need to be originals not photocopies. Many institutions will return the certificate to you once they have dealt with the request

- Tell Us Once: a reference number to use the Government's Tell Us Once service to notify multiple government organisations in one go (see more information on page 14)



Register a death by declaration

If the death took place a long way from where the person registering lives and they are not able to attend the appropriate register office, they can ask their local register office to do a ‘declaration’. This means the local register office take the information and forward it to the register office in the district where the death took place. The receiving register office will then register the death there and then contact you to make arrangements for the purchase and dispatch of the certificates.

Please be aware that registration by declaration may result in a delay in the receipt of the document needed for the burial/cremation as well as death certificates, so please bear this in mind when making any arrangements.

Involvement with the Coroner

A death may be referred to the Coroner by a doctor or the Medical Examiner if:

- The cause of death is unknown
- The death was sudden or unexplained
- The death was violent or unnatural
- The death occurred during an operation or before the person came out of anaesthetic
- The medical certificate suggests the death may have been caused by an industrial disease

The coroner will then decide either:

- The cause of death is clear - in this case the coroner signs a medical certificate and send it to the registrar to allow the registration
- To conduct a post-mortem, a medical examination to find out how the person died

You can’t object to a coroner’s post-mortem – but if you’ve asked the coroner must tell you (and the person’s GP) when and where the examination will take place.
After the post-mortem the coroner will release the body for a funeral and send a form (a form 100B) to the Registrar stating

the cause of death and allow the registration. If the body is to be cremated, the Coroner will issue a certificate of cremation directly to the undertaker.

- To hold an inquest – this will be held if the cause of death is still unknown or if the person possibly died a violent or unnatural death, or died in prison or police custody.

An inquest can take weeks or months to be concluded, and as the death can't be registered until after this, but the coroner can issue an 'interim death certificate' to prove that the person has died. This will allow the estate and personal affairs to be dealt with.

After the inquest concludes, the coroner is responsible for sending the relevant paperwork to the Registrar to complete the death registration process. You will not need to attend. Final death certificates are then available to be purchased from the register office.

In all cases the coroner will liaise with the family/person making the arrangements.

Tell Us Once Service

Tell Us Once Service

Telling Government/the Local Authority organisations that someone has died

When someone dies you usually have to inform many different government and local authority departments of the death so that they can update their records. The 'Tell Us Once' Service notifies many different departments on your behalf and gives you a written letter and checklist of which departments have already been informed of the death.

How to use the service

At the end of your appointment, the registrar will log the details of the death on the Tell Us Once system. We will provide you with a unique reference number and an instructions of how to complete the process online or by phone with the Department of Work and Pensions.

Who will be notified?

Local Councils

- Housing Benefit Office
- Council Tax
- Collection of payment for council services
- Libraries
- Electoral services
- Blue Badges
- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Concessionary Travel
- Council Housing

Department for Work and Pensions

- Pensions and Benefits

HM Revenue & Customs

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit & Working Tax Credit
- Personal Taxation

HM Passport Office

- Passport

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

- Driving licence
- Registered Keeper of a Vehicle

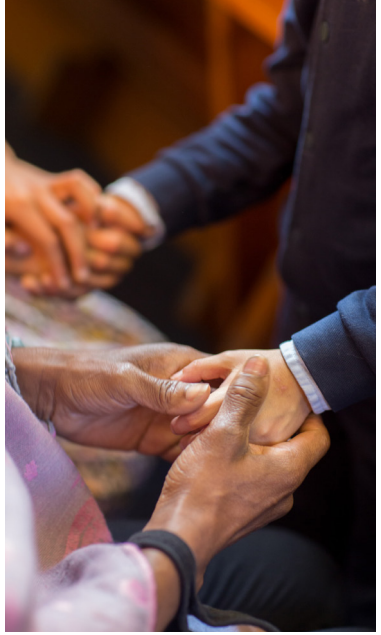
Ministry of Defence, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

- War Pensions Scheme
- Veterans UK (Vet UK)

My Civil Service Pensions (My CSP)

- Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
- NHS Pensions (NHS)
- Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA)

This list is subject to change. For more information visit: www.gov.uk/tell-us-once (Department for Work and Pensions).



Arranging the Funeral

A funeral can be an occasion to celebrate someone's life and to say goodbye. You can arrange this yourself, or use a funeral director for your arrangements. Make sure you check if the deceased had a funeral plan or any specific wishes regarding the funeral or what will happen to their body.

Funeral Directors

Most people choose to use a funeral director to guide them through the arrangements. Make sure you choose one who is a member of the National Association of Funeral Directors or the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors.

Costs for the Funeral

Be aware that funerals can be expensive. So remember to check where the money for the funeral will come from before making any arrangements. Costs can also vary between different funeral directors. The deceased may have a prepaid funeral plan. However, the funeral can also be paid for in their estate to cover the cost of the funeral, or the person organising the funeral, or friends or family may pay. If you are having difficulty paying for the funeral you are arranging, you may be eligible for financial help towards the costs. This depends on your relationship to the deceased, your financial means and the value of the deceased's estate.

More information can be found at www.gov.uk/funeral-payments



Deaths Abroad

When a person dies abroad the death must be registered with the relevant authority in that country. In many countries you can also register the death with the UK authorities over there for an additional fee, although this is not compulsory. Visit www.gov.uk/register-a-death for further information.

Bringing ashes home

When leaving a country with human ashes you will usually need to show the death certificate and the certificate of cremation. Each country has specific rules when departing with human ashes and there may be additional requirements. Contact the relevant authorities in the country where the person died to find out what you need to do. It would also be advisable to contact your travel company for clarification on their policies. You should not have a person cremated abroad if you want a Coroner to conduct an Inquest into their death.

Bringing the body home

To bring a body home you must have a certified English translation of the death certificate (if applicable) and permission to remove the body, issued by the Coroner (or equivalent) in the country where the person died. You must tell the Coroner in England or Wales if the death was violent or unnatural. Once the body is back in England or Wales you will need to notify the Register Office in the district in which the burial or cremation will take place, for them to issue the relevant paperwork.

Taking a body abroad

Anyone wanting to move a body out of England or Wales must have permission from the Coroner, usually in the area where the death happened.

Your funeral director will advise you of this process and will complete the request to the Coroner , with a notice of intention to remove the body our of England/Wales form. Unless an inquest is underway, they will also require the death certificate so the first stage is to ensure the death is registered.

The Estate

Probate, Property and Possessions

How do you sort out the estate of the deceased?

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

You can do this yourself or you can engage a solicitor to do this for you. You may already have a solicitor your family uses. If not, you will need to choose one. Ask friends for recommendations and, when you contact them, remember to check their fees and charges.

How do you apply for probate?

To sort out someone's estate, you may need to apply for probate. The Probate Office will give you a grant of probate if the person left a will, or will grant letters of administration if there isn't a will. Your local Probate Registry will send you the forms you need with notes and guidance on what you have to do. For more information please visit: www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance. If you cannot access the internet the Digital Support helpline is 03300 160051

Further help

If you have any difficulty in dealing with the deceased's estate or guardianship of their children, you should get advice from a solicitor or the Citizen's Advice Bureau as soon as possible.
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau telephone number: 0808 223 1133

What To Do Next

Who To Notify

Pensions / Social Security Benefits /Tax Credits

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)*
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)*
- Veterans UK*
- Civil Service Pension*
- NHS Pension*
- Teachers Pension *
- Police Pension*
- Armed Forces Pension*
- Private Pensions

Houses and household bills

- Local Council*
- Utilities – gas, electric, water, telephone etc
- Phone provider (landline)
- Internet/TV provider

Money/Finance

- Solicitor
- Employer
- Credit Card/Loan Providers
- Bank and Building Societies
- Investments/Shares/Premium Bonds
- Insurances (life, home, medical)
- Mortgage Provider
- Letting Agent/Landlord/lady

Health Services

- Doctors/Hospital/Private Health Care Provider
- Blue Disabled Parking Badge*

Transport and travel

- Passport Office*
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)*
- Car insurance – this will need changing as you will not be legally insured to drive if the policy is in the deceased's name
- Concessionary Travel*

Personal items

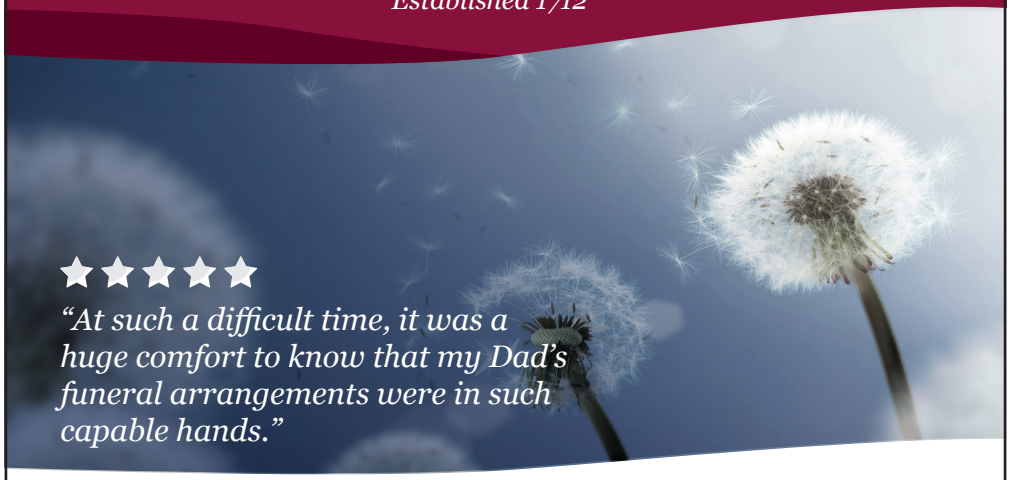
- Store Cards & Loyalty Cards
- TV Licence
- Royal Mail – arrange redirection of mail
- The Bereavement Advice Centre – to use their 'junk mail cancellation service'
- Email account providers
- Social Media Sites
- Monthly Subscriptions – TV/fim streaming, magazine/newspaper, etc.
- Clubs/Social Groups
- Library* and return books
- Church/Place of Worship

*covered by the Tell Us Once service, if used

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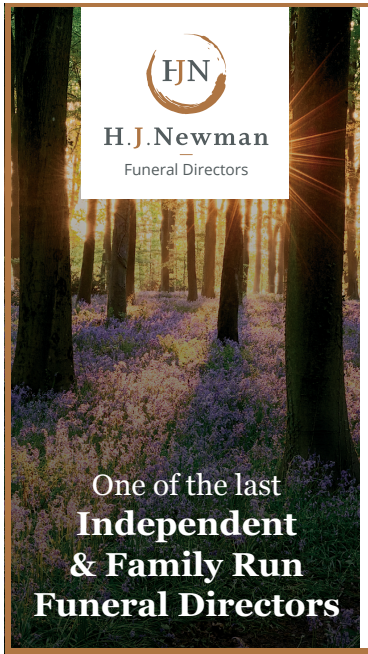
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You can refer yourself to our bereavement services using our online referral form at **thameshospice.org.uk/make-a-referral** or by calling us on **01753 847300**, or please speak with your GP.

Our services are free and confidential.

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The Register Office

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Email: registrar@rbwm.gov.uk

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ENGLEFIELD GREEN:	32 St Judes Road	01784 433692
LANGLEY:	3 Clayton Parade, High Street	01753 780077
SUNNINGDALE:	7 Broomhall Buildings, Chobham Road	01344 537032
WINDSOR:	47 St Leonards Road	01753 831400

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