



Health and  
Social Care

# When someone dies

Information, guidance and support for  
family and friends





Dedicated to those  
grieving the death of  
someone they love

## Introduction

We would like to offer our sincere sympathy to you and those important to you following your bereavement.

Death can happen at any time of life. Sometimes it is expected, because of illness or ageing; sometimes it happens suddenly without warning. You may find it difficult to attend to the many practical things that need to be done when experiencing the emotions that come with grief.

Talking with someone and sharing your feelings can help. For some people, relying on family and friends is the best way to cope. For others, speaking with someone outside their family circle, such as a support organisation, can help.

We hope that you find the information in this booklet useful and that it will, in some small way, help with the anxiety and distress you may be feeling at this difficult time.

### About this booklet

This booklet is designed to help you read the relevant sections as you need them. Don't feel that you need to read everything.

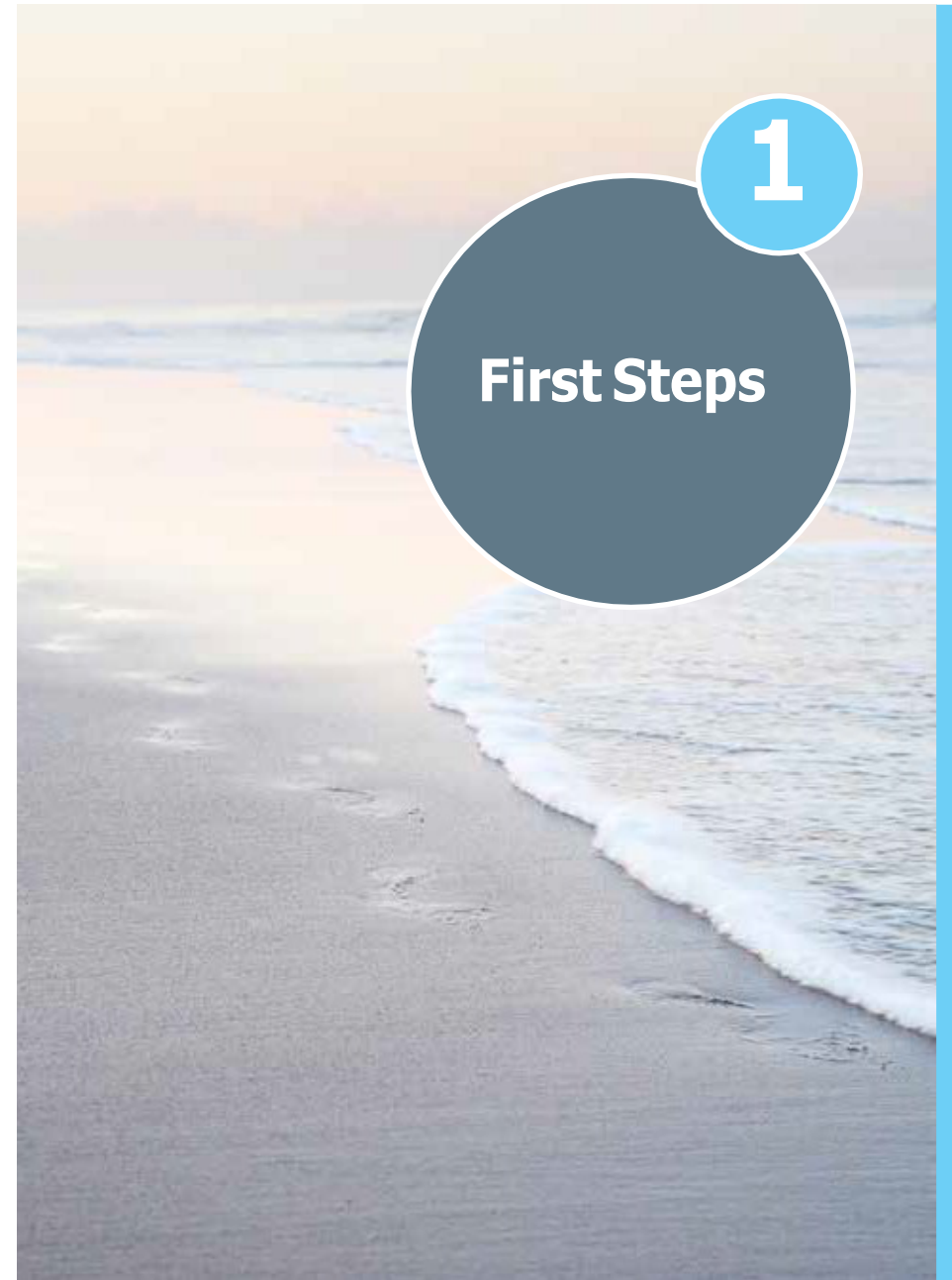
Some sections focus on how you may be feeling; others focus on the practical arrangements that you may have to organise. Details of organisations offering support are included towards the back of this guide along with space for your notes.

There are some quotes from people who have been bereaved and who have experienced something of what you may be going through.

Your family, friends or colleagues may also find it helpful to read this guide to help them understand how they can support you.

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## First Steps

### When someone dies

When someone dies a doctor, or in some cases a nurse, will confirm that the person has died. If the death has been sudden or not due to natural causes, the doctor will notify the coroner.

### Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) will be completed by a doctor when the deceased died of natural causes and the doctor can state the cause of death. The Independent Medical Examiner will then contact the doctor and on occasion, the next of kin, to discuss the cause of death recorded on the MCCD.

### Burial

The deceased's next of kin will usually contact a funeral director for further assistance with regard to arrangements for burial.

### Cremation

If cremation has been chosen the doctor should be informed as soon as possible as an additional form will be required. The funeral director will also offer further assistance with arrangements.

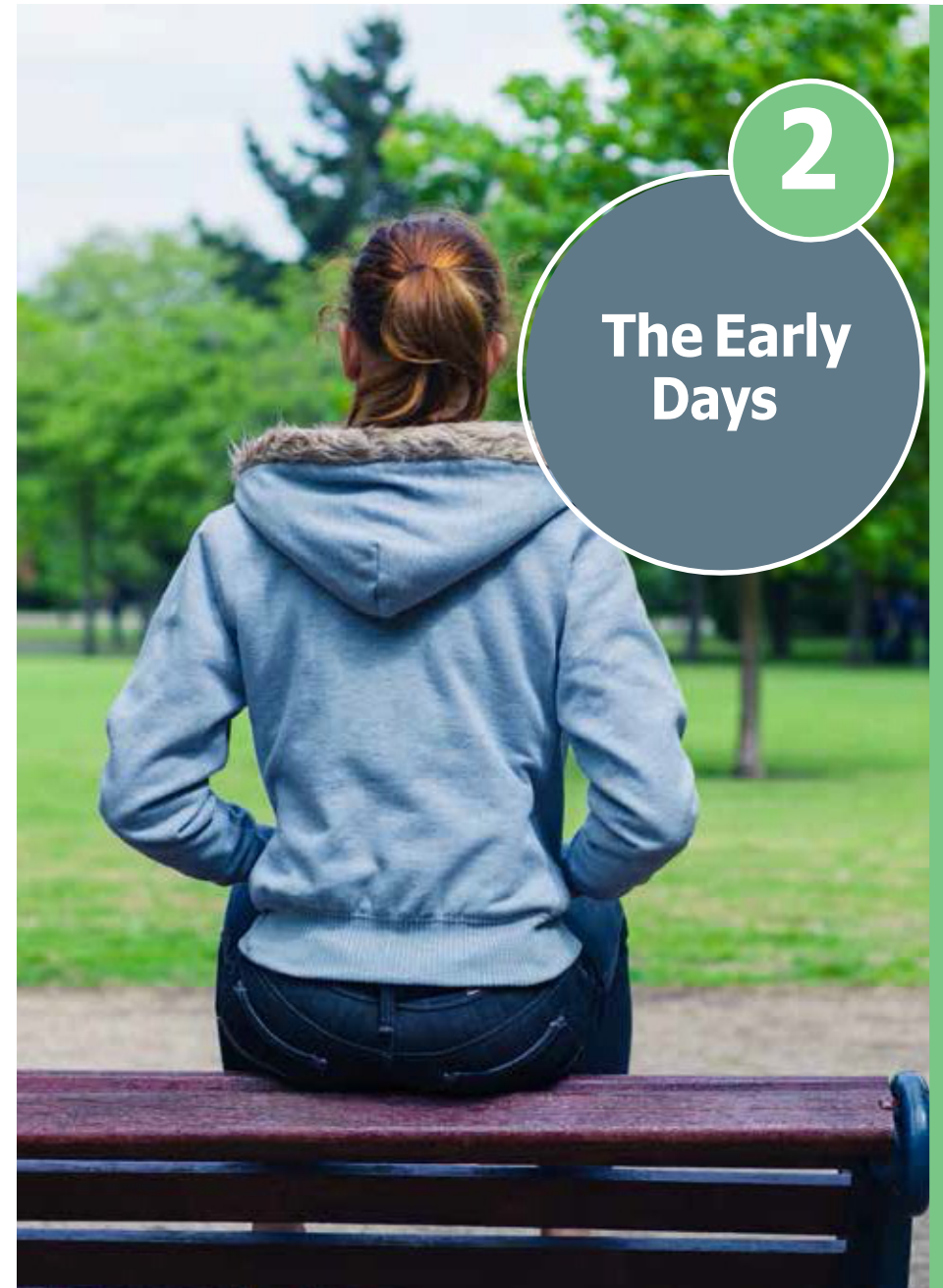
### Release of the deceased person

If your loved one died in hospital, their body will be released once the MCCD has been completed. This may take some time, as legally it can only be completed by a doctor who has seen and treated the deceased in the 28 days before their death. You should only make provisional funeral arrangements after the MCCD has been completed.

### Registering the death

Once the completed MCCD has been received by the Registrar's Office, they will phone the next of kin to register the death and issue the Death Certificate. This will allow arrangements to be made for the funeral, except when the matter has been referred to the coroner.\*

\* For further information regarding what happens when the coroner is notified, see page 9



## The Early Days

When someone dies, many decisions and arrangements need to be made. Dealing with the practicalities can feel overwhelming. It is important to take some time to gather your thoughts, to cry or to talk. You might find it helpful to seek support from another family member or someone outside the family whom you trust.

Your funeral director or faith representative can help you plan the funeral.

If healthcare staff or your funeral director need to be made aware of any specific religious or cultural requirements in caring for your loved one after death, do let them know as soon as possible.

### District Nurse Involvement as Palliative Care Key Worker

If a District Nurse has been involved in the care of your loved one as their Palliative Care Keyworker, they will be informed about the death. They will then contact you to arrange a follow up bereavement visit and offer further support/information as required. They will remove any nursing records, nursing supplies, inform other services and advise you about the safe return of unused medication to your local pharmacy.

### Burial Arrangements

If the death occurred at the weekend or over a bank holiday, or if the coroner is involved, this may delay issue of the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD). You can only make provisional funeral arrangements once the MCCD is issued or the coroner permits. A funeral director can provide further assistance with the arrangements.

## Cremation

If you are considering cremation please inform your nurse, doctor and funeral director, so the relevant documentation can be completed. A second doctor will need to confirm the cause of death and complete part of the cremation form. There is an additional cost for completing cremation forms. Your funeral director can deal with these arrangements for you. The two crematoriums in Northern Ireland are Roselawn Crematorium in Belfast and Antrim and Newtownabbey Crematorium. More information can be found at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/arranging-funeral>

### Organ and Tissue Donation

Your loved one may have expressed a wish to donate their organs. There can be reasons why this is not possible and why it hasn't been discussed with you, such as a medical condition, the cause of death or the place in which the death occurred. However, tissue donation may be suggested. It may be possible to donate tissue such as corneas (parts of the eye) and heart valves, to help others with certain medical conditions. If you wish to speak to someone about tissue donation, please tell a member of nursing staff before leaving the hospital.

### The Coroner

Under certain circumstances a death is referred to the coroner.

We understand that this may add to your distress and can cause additional anxiety. It may also delay funeral arrangements. We hope that the information here will explain why this is necessary and some of the processes that are followed.

It is the coroner's role to establish the cause of death - the 'how, when and where' - of any sudden, unexpected or unnatural death.

If a doctor cannot certify the death, then the coroner will either certify it or investigate to establish the cause of death. This may include ordering a post-mortem examination, obtaining witness statements and medical records or holding an inquest. The death cannot be registered until the coroner gives permission.

### Coroner's Post-mortem Examination

If a coroner's post-mortem (PM) examination is required, the coroner will ask the police to assist with gathering information about the death. This will usually include speaking to you, as the family of the deceased, to anyone who was caring for the deceased and to anyone who was there when the death happened. A member of the family will be asked to formally identify the body. The police may ask you to do this at the place where the death happened or at the hospital mortuary; you will need to do this before the post-mortem examination is carried out. The coroner does not need permission from the next of kin for a coroner's post-mortem examination.

The coroner's liaison officers are people who work for the coroner to help bereaved families when a post-mortem examination has been ordered. They will contact you and explain the processes and stages in the coroner's investigation. They will also provide a 'Certificate of Evidence of Death' to assist with financial matters.

### Consented Hospital Post-mortem Examination

On occasions, a hospital doctor may ask you for permission to carry out a hospital post-mortem (PM) examination. This can help identify the nature and extent of the disease that your loved one died from and increase medical knowledge about it.

It is the next of kin's decision whether or not to give consent (permission) for this. If you wish to consider it, the doctor will explain what is involved and answer any questions you have. However, a hospital post-mortem is not compulsory, and you can refuse.

### Your Loved One's Belongings

When people die in a place other than their own home, they will usually have personal items with them. Nursing staff can assist you to gather your loved one's belongings. If there are things which you do not wish to take home and keep, nursing staff can arrange for their disposal. Coming back to collect personal belongings can be a difficult experience, therefore it is best to take them as you are leaving. Money sent to the cash office is returned as a cheque, usually through a solicitor. The return of valuables may be delayed because of legal requirements. The cash office staff can advise you.

### The Funeral Director

Before your loved one died, they may have discussed with you the type of funeral they would like and their wishes for burial or cremation. If they didn't have this conversation, your family, friends, faith/belief representative or funeral director can help you plan how to say goodbye. Most people use the services of a funeral director when arranging a funeral. Funeral directors are available seven days a week and provide a 24-hour on-call service throughout the year. You or your loved one may have already chosen a funeral director. If not, you will find details at:

- National Association of Funeral Directors [www.nafd.org.uk](http://www.nafd.org.uk)
- National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors [www.saif.org.uk](http://www.saif.org.uk)
- Natural Death Society [www.naturaldeath.org.uk/](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk/)

For a death in hospital, the funeral director will contact the mortuary staff and will inform you when your loved one can be released into your care.

The funeral director will help with many things that may need to be done including. This may include:

- Arranging the transfer of your loved one from the hospital mortuary or place of death
- The preparation, care and dressing of your loved one
- Contacting your faith/belief representative, place of worship, cemetery or crematorium to arrange the funeral
- Arranging completion of the cremation form for the crematorium
- Assisting with the selection of a coffin/urn
- Arranging the purchase and/or opening of a grave
- Inserting newspaper/digital death notices
- Ordering flowers
- Providing a hearse and additional cars for the funeral.

The funeral director will discuss all costs to help you decide what is right for you.

### Spiritual Support

After the death of a loved one, many people get support and comfort from their faith/belief representative. If you would like a faith/belief representative to help you plan and prepare for the funeral service, contact them as soon as possible to discuss the arrangements. If you are unsure who to contact, your funeral director can advise.

### Registering a Death

When someone dies, a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is completed by the doctor who has seen and treated the patient within the last 28 days. This process is required before a funeral can take place.

Once a doctor completes the MCCD, this is emailed to the General Register Office who forward it to the local Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office then contacts a named person in your family to get information needed to complete the registration process. The funeral director may register the death on your behalf. Once the death has been registered, the registrar will issue a Certificate for Burial or Cremation to the funeral director, so they can proceed with the burial or cremation. There is no cost for registering a death, but it can be useful to buy a number of certified copies of the death certificate. This is because organisations that you need to contact, often ask for a certified copy; photocopies are unacceptable. Copies can be ordered online at:

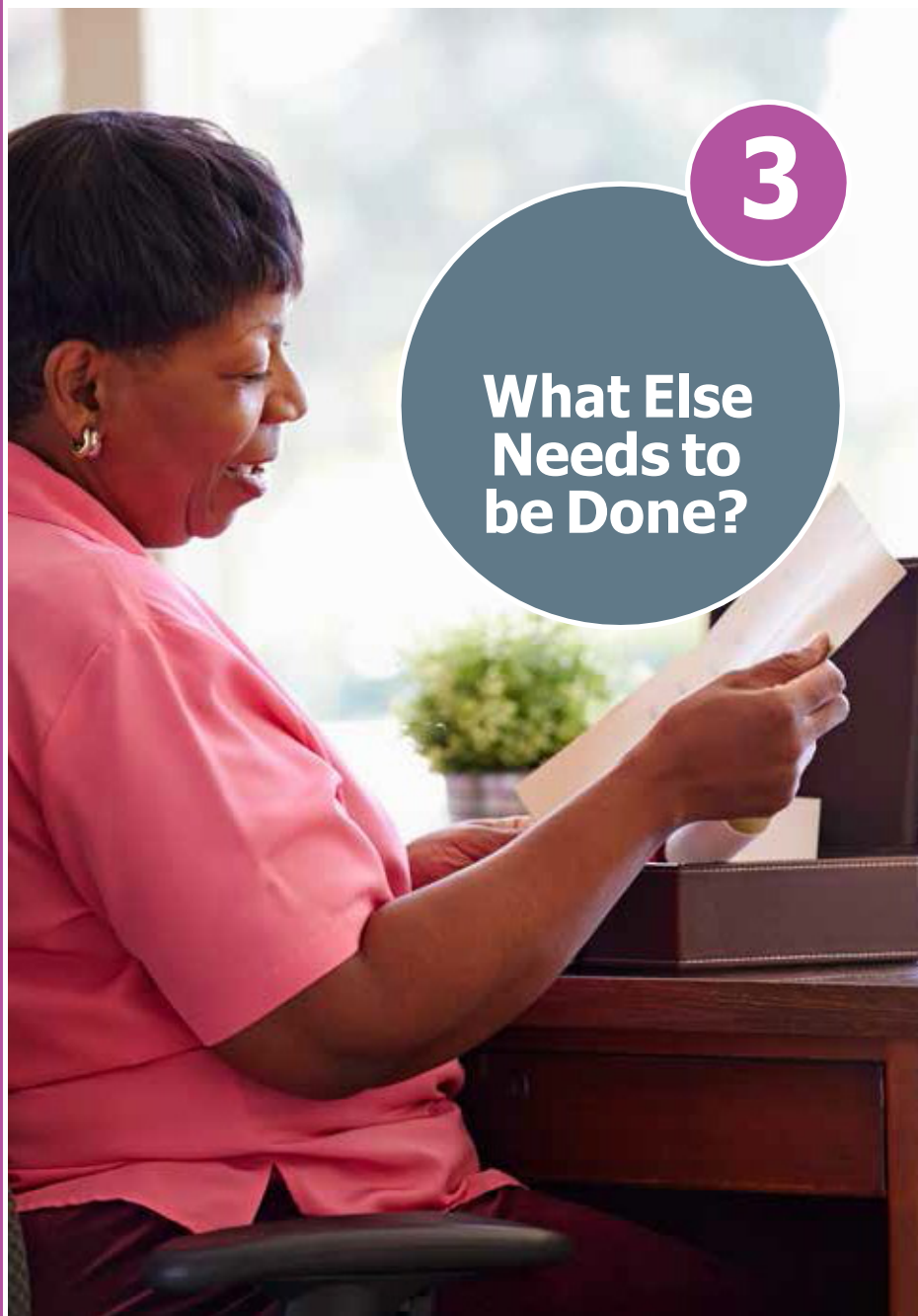
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/order-death-certificate-online>

### Repatriation

Repatriation is the process of returning a deceased person to their home country. If you wish to have your loved one's body returned to another country, the funeral director can assist with the administration and practicalities involved.

**When you are sorrowful  
look again in your heart, and  
you shall see that in truth you  
are weeping for that which has  
been your delight.**

**(Kahlil Gibran,  
Lebanese-American Writer  
& Poet, 1883-1931)**



## What Else Needs to be Done?

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## What Else Needs to be Done?

### Department for Communities: Bereavement Service

You must call the Bereavement Service if your loved one was receiving a state pension or Social Security benefits. The Bereavement Service will record the date of their death and inform each office from which your loved one was receiving benefits. They will also offer you an eligibility check, as you may be entitled to claim benefits. If you are eligible to make a claim for 'Bereavement Support payment' and/or 'Funeral payment' they can also take the information for your application over the phone and forward it to the relevant department. You can contact the Bereavement Service on Freephone number 0800 085 2463.

### Return of Equipment

If your loved one was cared for at home, you may find it distressing to have equipment remain in the house, or find it difficult to let the equipment go. To organise the collection of equipment, you can contact the District Nurse (DN) or Occupational Therapist (OT) who will arrange for the removal of items such as electric beds and hoists. They will do their best to arrange timely removal, please be understanding as this may take several days.

### Meeting Funeral Costs

Funerals can be expensive; some people may have contributed to a payment plan to help cover the cost of their funeral. If you are receiving particular benefits, you may qualify for financial help such as a funeral payment. You can ask your funeral director for information on funeral payments. You can also find more details at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/funeral-expenses-payments>



The Child Funeral Fund provides a payment to cover funeral expenses after the death of a child under the age of 18, or stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/child-funeral-fund>

### People and Organisations to Tell

You will need to inform a number of people and organisations when someone dies. This can be a difficult task to complete. Early contact will help avoid the distress of letters, emails and telephone calls continuing in the weeks and months ahead. It may be an idea to ask a friend or relative to help you with this. The list below details professionals and organisations you may need to contact.

You can also find relevant contact details at [nidirect.gov.uk](http://nidirect.gov.uk). It may be useful to copy the sample letter on page 19 when contacting the appropriate organisations.

Organisation	Name/ ref	Contact details	Informed?
Funeral Director			
Registrar of Deaths			
The deceased person's workplace			
Your workplace			
School/College (of person who died or of any bereaved children/young people)			
'Department for Communities' Bereavement Service (to report your loved one's death to Social Security Agency)			
GP, District Nurse, Social Worker, Home Help, Day Centre			

Organisation	Name/ ref	Contact details	Informed?
Hospital/Health Services (to cancel appointments)			
Dentist			
Optician			
Podiatrist			
Solicitor (consider checking before the funeral in case there are details of person's wishes)			
Bank/Post Office			
Building Society/Credit Union			
Credit/Store Card Companies			
Mortgage Provider/Landlord/Housing Officer			
Hire Purchase/Loans			
Pension Provider			
HM Revenue and Customs (tax office)			
Insurance Company			
Car Insurance (if you are second named driver, you may no longer be insured)			

Organisation	Name/ ref	Contact details	Informed?
Other Insurance (Household, Medical, Travel)			
DVA NI for driving licence <a href="#">Telling DVA about a bereavement   nidirect</a>			
Phone/mobile/landline provider			
TV/Internet provider			
Electricity/Gas			
Passport Office (passport number)			
Trade Union/Professional organisation			
Translink- regarding travel pass			
Library			
Clubs (Social/Sporting)			
Season Ticket Issuers			
Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Twitter / X, LinkedIn, Instagram etc)			
Postal Service - if mail needs redirected			
The Bereavement Register to stop unwanted mail <a href="http://thebereavementregister.org.uk">thebereavementregister.org.uk</a>			
Other			

## Template letter

To whom it may concern

Name of organisation	
I wish to notify you of the death of:	
Title	
First name(s)	
Surname	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Date of death	
I understand that the person named above had dealings with your organisation. <b>Please amend your records.</b> Thank you.	
Their reference number/ membership number for your organisation:	
<b>If you need more information, my details are:</b>	
Name	
Address	
Telephone (home)	(mobile)
Email	
Relationship to the person who died	
Signature	
Date	

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a green button-down shirt, is sitting at a table and looking at a photo album. She has her hand to her chin in a thoughtful pose. The photo album is open, showing several photographs. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.

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## How you may be Feeling

## How you may be Feeling

### Coping with Grief

Grief is a normal process that we all experience following a loss. People react to loss in different ways. Grief is very individual.

This section describes some of the feelings that might affect how you think and behave when you are grieving. You might be surprised by your thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Not everyone will experience all of these. You may feel some more strongly than others, and they may come in any order or be mixed up together.

There is no time limit for the feelings associated with grief - for some people it is a matter of months, for others, years. You need to give yourself time to adjust and re-engage in life in the absence of the person who died.

### Thoughts and Feelings Associated with Grief

You may feel numb at first. You may experience feelings of shock and disbelief, even if the death was expected. It may feel unreal - you may feel you cannot accept that your loved one has died. This is a normal reaction that protects you from the reality of your loss.

It is not uncommon to feel guilty. For example, you may feel guilty for things you think you should have or should not have said or done. You may experience a feeling of disloyalty when you find yourself pursuing new or old interests.

My Granny is with me for the rest of my life. Grief is something which lasts forever. It walks beside me. I will never stop grieving my Granny because I will never stop loving her. I believe grief and love link together, the reason grief is so intense is because love is so intense

You may feel angry at the person who died. You may blame other family members or the professionals involved in the care of your loved one. Depending on your faith or beliefs, you may question 'why' this was allowed to happen.

Part of grieving is trying to make sense of something that seems senseless. You may find yourself thinking 'If only...'

If you have lost someone who has been a big part of your life, your home may seem very empty. The feeling of isolation can be painfully strong.

Longing can be a big part of grief. For instance, you may look for your loved one in a crowd; you may think you have seen them or even heard their voice, even though you know that they are dead.

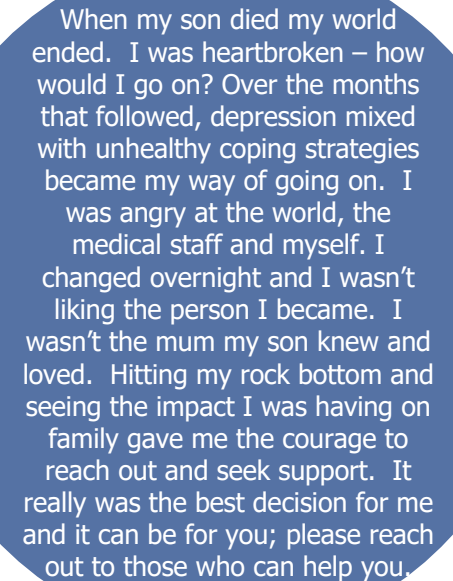
People respond differently to bereavement; even members from the same family respond in different ways. Everyone has their own way of grieving and how they show and cope with their feelings can be very different; this can be difficult for others to understand.

It is common to have feelings of sadness and depression. These should lessen with time. If however, the feelings get stronger and you are unable to carry out normal tasks or you experience suicidal thoughts, then it is important for you to seek specialist help. The usual way to access this is through your GP. You can also access help through Lifeline which provides 24-hour support for those in distress. Telephone Freephone 0808 808 8000 or access at [www.lifelinehelpline.info](http://www.lifelinehelpline.info)

### Physical and Behavioural Changes

You may feel tired but can't sleep. You may feel hungry but unable to eat. You may have difficulty concentrating and be easily distracted or forgetful.

You may find yourself in a state of panic or viewing simple problems out of proportion. You may feel run down and lethargic or have aches and pains that you don't normally have. This can be a normal part of the grieving process. You may find that friends and neighbours sometimes avoid you. This is because they do not know what to say or they are finding it difficult to cope with their own feelings. It may help if you take the first step by letting them know that you would appreciate their friendship and support.



When my son died my world ended. I was heartbroken – how would I go on? Over the months that followed, depression mixed with unhealthy coping strategies became my way of going on. I was angry at the world, the medical staff and myself. I changed overnight and I wasn't liking the person I became. I wasn't the mum my son knew and loved. Hitting my rock bottom and seeing the impact I was having on family gave me the courage to reach out and seek support. It really was the best decision for me and it can be for you; please reach out to those who can help you.

### Seek advice from your GP if you are concerned

It might seem that life would be more bearable if you made drastic changes to avoid painful memories, such as moving house or disposing of your loved one's belongings. Try to avoid doing this at an early stage in your loss. There will come a time when it is right for you to make such important decisions.

### Talking to Someone

It is important to take care of yourself. One of the most helpful things can be to talk about the person who has died. Only you can decide who would be most helpful to speak with. It could be:

- A family member
- A friend
- Your faith/belief representative
- Your GP
- Someone from a support organisation.

Further details of support organisations can be found on page 37.

My husband died seven weeks after his cancer diagnosis. This was a terrible shock. I miss him terribly. If it wasn't for my faith I would never have got through this. He died two years ago. I am feeling a bit better now and knowing he is at peace gives me great comfort. I have made new friends and my church has been good to me. My husband told me before he died to look after myself, to make a new life and move on so that's what I'm trying to do.

#### Try to:

- Talk about the person who has died
- Look after yourself. Eat properly and try to rest even if you can't sleep
- Give yourself time and permission to grieve
- Seek help and support if you feel you need it
- Tell people what you need

#### Try not to:

- Isolate yourself or keep emotions bottled up
- Think you are weak for needing help
- Feel guilty if you are struggling to cope
- Turn to drugs or alcohol as the relief will only be temporary

There is a sacredness in tears. They are not a mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition and of unspeakable love.

(Washington Irving,  
American Author 1783-1859)



## Caring for Children

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## Caring for Children

Adults often feel the need to protect children from death and their own grief, as they think the children will find it too upsetting. However, children are often more anxious when they are not sure what is happening around them, rather than when they are included. When you tell children that a loved one has died, use simple language and answer any questions as honestly as you can. Use words such as 'dead' and 'death' rather than 'lost' or 'sleeping' which can be confusing for them. Pre-school children generally don't understand that death is permanent and may repeatedly ask questions such as 'When is granny coming back?' Children of primary school age usually have an understanding of the finality of death and often ask direct questions about it. For further information and support please see page 41.

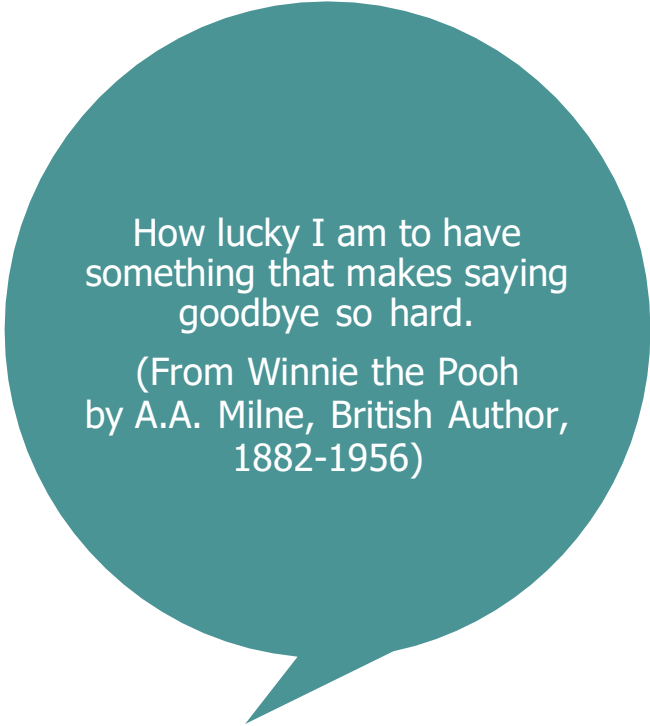
### Signs of Grief

Children may display symptoms such as becoming quiet and withdrawn, clingy towards a parent, bed-wetting, fear of the dark, sleep or behavioural problems at home or school. These are all normal reactions for young children, and for most they will pass in time. Teenagers are already going through physical and emotional changes, and communication can often be difficult for this age group. They often feel a sense of injustice and question why their relative or friend had to die. They may test boundaries by staying out late or losing interest in school. It can be helpful for them to talk about their feelings. It is important that they feel someone is listening to them and acknowledging how they feel.

## Helping Children Cope

Sometimes it helps to allow children to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to see the person after death. However, to enable them to make their decision, you will need to prepare them by explaining what they will see. For young children you may need to explain that their loved one will no longer eat, talk, walk or sleep and they may feel cold to touch.

Children and young people who were close to the person who died may like to be involved in planning and taking part in the funeral. It may be helpful to encourage the child to write a letter, draw a picture or put a small gift or toy in the coffin (take care that this does not include batteries or electrical items if your loved one is going to be cremated). This can be a positive way for the child to say goodbye. You can also encourage children to remember the person who died by sharing stories, looking at photographs or keeping mementos. They may wish to keep a memory box or book containing special things or thoughts of their loved one. As with adults, sometimes individual children will benefit from specialist bereavement support. If you think this is the case for a child in your care, contact your GP or one of the organisations listed in the Support Organisations section of this booklet.



How lucky I am to have  
something that makes saying  
goodbye so hard.

(From Winnie the Pooh  
by A.A. Milne, British Author,  
1882-1956)



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## Getting Through and Facing the Future

## Getting Through and Facing the Future

After someone dies it may be that you look after everyone except yourself. It can sometimes be tempting to become very busy and to exhaust yourself with tasks so that the tiredness blocks out some of the pain, even for a moment or two. Trying to put on a brave face and ignore your feelings may only add to the pain and hurt. Taking care of yourself may mean spending time in the company of friends with whom you can be honest, or it may mean choosing to be alone. You may want different things on different days. It is important to recognise your needs and to make sure you care for them.

### Taking Care of Yourself

- Try to eat well even if you don't feel like it
- Get some rest, even if you can't sleep
- Take some gentle exercise
- Accept help if offered
- Try to find some routine to your day
- Avoid 'quick fixes' that may cause additional distress.

**Be kind to yourself**

### Suggestions that may help

Allow yourself time to grieve. Accept that crying is a normal way to release your feelings and that you may need to allow yourself to cry sometimes. Try to accept help from others, and do not allow yourself to become isolated. Remember that anniversaries, birthdays and holidays can intensify feelings of grief, so you may benefit from extra support at these times. Try to keep to routines – perhaps re-establish old routines or set new ones.



## Check with your GP if you have any health worries

If you find yourself isolated or alone try to be open to new things, for example, exploring new hobbies or maybe joining local community groups or clubs. Sharing your feelings can be helpful. It is not always easy to do this with family and friends, and you may prefer to speak with someone else you trust. You might also consider contacting local organisations that offer bereavement support. (See Support Organisations)

Remember, you will have good days and bad days. Allow yourself to laugh, cry and be angry - you have lost someone you love and it hurts. As time passes you will find that memories are perhaps less painful. You will be able to remember without becoming so distressed. You may find yourself pursuing new or old interests. Keep in mind that specific things which may be too painful for you to do at the beginning may provide comfort later on, for example, visiting the grave, listening to a special piece of music or looking at photographs. Starting a box for mementos such as letters, pictures and items that had special significance for your loved one can also be a helpful focus for your grief. Keeping a journal can help you to process painful feelings that you may find hard to share. Try to avoid becoming dependent on substances such as alcohol, non-prescribed medications or drugs.

"My Dad died five years ago today. After visiting his grave, I went for a walk around the lake where we had walked together after his surgery for cancer. Physically, that was a real challenge for Dad but his mental stamina was amazing. Following the same path we had taken that day and remembering Dad's determination, gave me the strength I needed to cope with this anniversary."

## Facing Difficult Occasions

You may be particularly affected on and near significant anniversaries, birthdays and holidays for many years after a death. Some people find it helpful to plan in advance what they are going to do on those days, to avoid feeling left alone with their emotions. Some people create a tradition of visiting special places that remind them of the person who has died. Others find this too painful. There is no right or wrong way to mark these events; you may need to find the right way for you.

## Bereaved NI Website

Information and support if you are experiencing grief and bereavement or helping other people who are bereaved can be found on the Bereaved NI website: <https://bereaved.hscni.net/>

## Health & Social Care Trust Services

For local Trust information please visit the links below in your Health & Social Care Trust.

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

<https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/service/bereavement>

Northern Health & Social Care Trust

<https://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/services/bereavement-services/>

South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

<https://setrust.hscni.net/service/bereavement-care/>

Southern Health & Social Care Trust

<https://southerntrust.hscni.net/service/bereavement/>

Western Health & Social Care Trust

<https://westerntrust.hscni.net/service/bereavement-care/>

## Care Opinion

Care Opinion is the online patient feedback platform for health and social care services across Northern Ireland. It offers you the opportunity to share your experience of Health and Social Care services and to feedback on what went well or when things could have gone better.

You can share your story by:

- Visiting [careopinion.org.uk](http://careopinion.org.uk)
- Calling the Care Opinion Freephone number on 0800 122 3135
- Completing a Freepost Care Opinion feedback leaflet.

## Compliments and Complaints

HSC Trusts want you to experience the best possible health and social care. Telling them what you think of the services you have received is important as it can help confirm what they are doing well and identify areas that need improvement. You can contact the Trust to:

- Give a compliment about the service you have used
- Make a comment or suggestion for improvement
- Make a complaint.

Please see HSC Trust contact details below:

### Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

Complaints Department  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust  
7th Floor, McKinney House  
Musgrave Park Hospital  
Stockman's Lane  
Belfast BT9 7JB

Tel: 028 9504 8000 (Monday-Friday: 10am-12pm)  
Textphone: 18001 028 950 48000

Email: [complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net) or  
[compliments@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:compliments@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Complete our online form available at:  
<https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints/feedback-form/>

### Northern Health & Social Care Trust

Service User Feedback Department  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust  
Bush House  
45 Bush Road  
Antrim BT41 2QB

Tel: 028 9442 4655

Email: [user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net)

Complete our online form available at:  
[Service User Feedback Form - Northern Health and Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](#)

South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust
<p>Complaints Department            South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust            Lough House, Ards Hospital            Newtownards BT23 4AS</p> <p>Tel: 028 9056 1427</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:complaints@setrust.hscni.net">complaints@setrust.hscni.net</a></p>
Southern Health & Social Care Trust
<p>Service User Feedback Team            Southern Health and Social Care Trust            First Floor, Finance Building,            100 Sloan Street, Lurgan BT66 3NX</p> <p>Tel: 028 3756 4600</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:serviceuserfeedback@southerntrust.hscni.net">serviceuserfeedback@southerntrust.hscni.net</a></p> <p>Service User Feedback form <a href="https://southerntrust.hscni.net/get-in-touch/service-user-feedback-form/">https://southerntrust.hscni.net/get-in-touch/service-user-feedback-form/</a></p>
Western Health & Social Care Trust
<p>Complaints Department            Western Health and Social Care Trust            Trust Headquarters, Altnagelvin Hospital            Derry / Londonderry BT47 6SB</p> <p>Tel: 028 7134 5171 Extension 214142            Direct Dial No: 028 7161 1226            SMS Text Facility: 077 8094 9796</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:complaints.department@westerntrust.hscni.net">complaints.department@westerntrust.hscni.net</a></p> <p>Compliments can be emailed to:  <a href="mailto:compliments@westerntrust.hscni.net">compliments@westerntrust.hscni.net</a></p>

## Support Organisations

The support information below can also be found on the Bereaved NI website: <https://bereaved.hscni.net/>

UK Leading Bereavement Charity	Contact Details
<p><b>Cruse Bereavement Support</b></p> <p>Provides group and one to one bereavement support and information for adults, children and young people.</p>	<p>Belfast Office            Tel: 028 9043 4600</p> <p>Northern Area Office            Tel: 028 2766 6686</p> <p>Armagh Dungannon Office            Tel: 028 8778 4004</p> <p>Western Area Office            Tel: 028 7126 2941</p> <p>Newry &amp; Mourne Office            Tel: 028 9553 1000</p> <p>North Down &amp; Ards Office            Tel: 028 9127 2444</p> <p>Omagh Fermanagh Office            Tel: 028 8224 4414</p> <p>Cruse UK National Helpline            Freephone 0808 808 1677            Website: <a href="http://www.cruse.org.uk">www.cruse.org.uk</a></p> <p>Young People's Website:  <a href="http://www.hopeagain.org.uk">www.hopeagain.org.uk</a></p> <p>Facebook:  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/crusebereavementsupport/">www.facebook.com/crusebereavementsupport/</a></p>

NI Crisis Response Helplines	Contact Details
<p><b>Lifeline Helpline</b></p> <p>Lifeline is Northern Ireland's free crisis response helpline service for people experiencing distress or despair.</p> <p>Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen and help, in confidence.</p>	<p>Lifeline counsellors are experienced in working with trauma, suicide, self-harm, abuse, depression and anxiety.</p> <p>You will receive immediate support on the phone.</p> <p>Tel: Freephone 0808 808 8000</p> <p>Text Phone 18001 0808 808 8000 for deaf and hard of hearing users</p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.lifelinehelpline.info/">https://www.lifelinehelpline.info/</a></p>
<p><b>Samaritans</b></p> <p>Emotional support 24 hours per day to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide.</p>	<p>National Helpline: Freephone 116 123</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a></p> <p>Response time 24 hours</p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.samaritans.org/">https://www.samaritans.org/</a></p>

Bereaved through Cancer or Terminal Illness	Contact Details
<p><b>Cancer Focus NI</b></p> <p>Family Support Service - for families during their cancer journey. Programmes include Family Bereavement, Memory Work, Child/Young Person Support &amp; Group Work.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9066 3281</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:familysupport@cancerfocusni.org">familysupport@cancerfocusni.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://cancerfocusni.org">cancerfocusni.org</a></p>
<p><b>Marie Curie</b></p> <p>Telephone Bereavement Support Service</p>	<p>Support line: 0800 090 2309</p> <p>8am – 6pm Monday to Friday 11am – 5pm Saturday</p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/bereavement">https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/bereavement</a></p>
<p><b>NI Hospice</b></p> <p>Bereavement support for families whose loved ones received NI Hospice services.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9078 1836</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:information@nihospice.org">information@nihospice.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.nihospice.org/our-services/adult-services/bereavement-support/">https://www.nihospice.org/our-services/adult-services/bereavement-support/</a></p>

Bereaved through Cancer or Terminal Illness	Contact Details
<p><b>NI Children's Hospice</b></p> <p>Horizons Bereavement Support: providing bereavement support for families who experience the death of a child, under any circumstance in the Royal Hospital, Belfast</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9077 7635</p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.nihospice.org/our-services/children-s-services/horizons-bereavement-support/">https://www.nihospice.org/our-services/children-s-services/horizons-bereavement-support/</a></p>
<p><b>Foyle Hospice</b></p> <p>Provides bereavement support to adults, young people and children in the northern sector of the Western Health and Social Care Trust.</p>	<p>Tel: 02871351010</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:care@foylehospice.com">care@foylehospice.com</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://foylehospice.com/our-services/bereavement-support/">https://foylehospice.com/our-services/bereavement-support/</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://foylehospice.com/our-services/child-and-young-person-bereavement-support/">https://foylehospice.com/our-services/child-and-young-person-bereavement-support/</a></p>
<p><b>Southern Area Hospice Services</b></p> <p>Provides bereavement support and counselling for anyone who has been bereaved due to a palliative illness within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust</p>	<p>Tel: 028 3026 7711</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@southernareahospiceservices.org">info@southernareahospiceservices.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.southernareahospiceservices.org/bereavement-services">https://www.southernareahospiceservices.org/bereavement-services</a></p>

Bereaved through Cancer or Terminal Illness	Contact Details
<p><b>Macmillan Cancer Support</b></p> <p>Support with grief and coping with bereavement.</p>	<p>Support Line 0808 808 0000 7 days a week, 8am-8pm</p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help">https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help</a></p>
For Bereaved Parents	Contact Details
<p><b>Anam Cara NI</b></p> <p>Supporting parents after bereavement.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9521 3120</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@anamcarani.co.uk">info@anamcarani.co.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://anamcarani.co.uk/">https://anamcarani.co.uk/</a></p>
<p><b>Barnardo's Child Bereavement Service</b></p> <p>Advice and support to parents/carers of children and young people up to age 18 years who have been bereaved.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9066 8333</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:cbsreferrals@barnardos.org.uk">cbsreferrals@barnardos.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/services/child-bereavement-service-general">https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/services/child-bereavement-service-general</a></p>

For Bereaved Parents	Contact Details
<p><b>Compassionate Friends</b></p> <p>Support for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child or children from a month old and from any cause.</p>	<p>Helpline: 0345 123 2304</p> <p>Open 10am–4pm every day of the year.</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk">helpline@tcf.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.tcf.org.uk">www.tcf.org.uk</a></p>
For Children & Young People	Contact Details
<p><b>Child Bereavement UK</b></p> <p>Supporting children and young people (up to the age of 25) and families, to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies.</p>	<p>Helpline: 0800 02 888 40</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@childbereavementuk.org">helpline@childbereavementuk.org</a></p> <p>Live Chat: via our website: <a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org">www.childbereavementuk.org</a></p> <p>Open: 9am–5pm</p>
<p><b>Grief Encounter</b></p> <p>Support for bereaved children and young people following the death of someone close.</p>	<p>Helpline: 0808 802 0111</p> <p>Open weekdays 9am–5pm</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk">griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.griefencounter.org.uk">www.griefencounter.org.uk</a></p>

For Children & Young People	Contact Details
<p><b>Winston's Wish</b></p> <p>Emotional and practical bereavement support for children, young people and those who care for them.</p>	<p>Freephone National Helpline: 08088 020 021</p> <p>Monday-Friday 9am-5pm</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:ask@winstonswish.org">ask@winstonswish.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.winstonswish.org">www.winstonswish.org</a></p>
Bereaved by Sudden Death	Contact Details
<p><b>Sudden</b></p> <p>A service for people bereaved by a sudden death.</p>	<p>Resources are available at: <a href="http://www.sudden.org">www.sudden.org</a></p>
<p><b>Brake</b></p> <p>Support for people bereaved by road crashes.</p>	<p>Helpline: 0808 800 0401</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:help@brake.org.uk">help@brake.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.brake.org.uk">www.brake.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>WAVE Trauma Centre</b></p> <p>Support to anyone bereaved through civil unrest in Northern Ireland, irrespective of religious, cultural or political belief.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9077 9922</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:adminhq@wavetrauma.org">adminhq@wavetrauma.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk">www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk</a></p>

Bereaved through Suicide	Contact Details
<p><b>PIPS Charity</b> Support for family and friends bereaved by suicide.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9080 5850 Helpline: 0800 088 6042 Mon-Friday 9am-9pm &amp; Sat-Sun 10am-6pm Email: <a href="mailto:info@pipscharity.com">info@pipscharity.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.pipscharity.com">www.pipscharity.com</a></p>
<p><b>The Niamh Louise Foundation</b> Support for anyone in crisis with thoughts of suicide or who has been bereaved through suicide.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 8775 3327 Email: <a href="mailto:info@niamhlouisefoundation.com">info@niamhlouisefoundation.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.niamhlouisefoundation.com">www.niamhlouisefoundation.com</a></p>
<p><b>Lighthouse Charity</b> Support for those bereaved through suicide or other sudden death.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9075 5070 Monday-Friday 8:30am-5pm Email: <a href="mailto:info@lighthousecharity.com">info@lighthousecharity.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.lighthousecharity.com">www.lighthousecharity.com</a></p>
For Bereaved Older People	Contact Details
<p><b>Age NI</b> Information and support for older people who have been bereaved.</p>	<p>Advice Line: 0808 808 7575 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm Email: <a href="mailto:advice@ageni.org">advice@ageni.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/">www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/</a></p>

For Bereaved Partners	Contact Details
<p><b>WAY - Widowed and Young</b> Peer support for people 50 and under, whose partner has died.</p>	<p>Tel: 0300 201 0051 Email: <a href="mailto:membership@widowedandyoung.org.uk">membership@widowedandyoung.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk">www.widowedandyoung.org.uk</a> (Membership £25 per year)</p>
For Bereaved LGBT People	Contact Details
<p><b>Switchboard LGBT</b> Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people who have been bereaved.</p>	<p>Tel: Helpline 0800 0119 100 Daily 10am-10pm Email: <a href="mailto:hello@switchboard.lgbt">hello@switchboard.lgbt</a> Website: <a href="http://www.switchboard.lgbt">www.switchboard.lgbt</a></p>
For People from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups	Contact Details
<p><b>Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)</b> Information and support for people from ethnic minority groups.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9023 8645 Website: <a href="http://www.nicem.org.uk">www.nicem.org.uk</a></p>

For People with Dementia or Learning Disability	Contact Details
<p><b>Alzheimer's Society</b></p> <p>Works to improve the quality of life of people affected by dementia.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9066 4100 National Helpline: 0300 222 1122</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:nir@alzheimers.org.uk">nir@alzheimers.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/help-dementia-care/grief-loss-and-bereavement">www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/help-dementia-care/grief-loss-and-bereavement</a></p>
<p><b>Mencap NI</b></p> <p>Supports people with a learning disability and their families in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9069 1351 NI Disability Helpline: 0808 808 1111</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:helpline.ni@mencap.org.uk">helpline.ni@mencap.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/dealing-bereavement">www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/dealing-bereavement</a></p>
<p><b>Down's Syndrome Association Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>Helps people with Down's Syndrome to live full and rewarding lives.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 9066 5260 Helpline: 0333 121 2300</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@downs-syndrome.org.uk">info@downs-syndrome.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk">www.downs-syndrome.org.uk</a></p>
Bereaved through Meningitis	Contact Details
<p><b>Meningitis Now</b></p> <p>Support for those bereaved through meningitis.</p>	<p>Helpline: 0808 80 10 388 NI: 0345 120 0663</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@meningitisnow.org">info@meningitisnow.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.meningitisnow.org">www.meningitisnow.org</a></p>

Other Organisations	Contact Details
<p><b>Coroner's Service for Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>Information about the work of the Coroner's Service, the inquest process and any questions you have in relation to the coroner's system.</p>	<p>Tel: 0300 200 7811</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:coronersoffice@courtsni.gov.uk">coronersoffice@courtsni.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/coroners-service-northern-ireland">www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/coroners-service-northern-ireland</a></p>
<p><b>Bereavement Register</b></p> <p>Help to stop unwanted direct mail to those who have died.</p>	<p>Tel: 020 7089 6403 Tel: 0800 082 1230</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:help@thebereavementregister.org.uk">help@thebereavementregister.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.thebereavementregister.org.uk">www.thebereavementregister.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>General Register Office</b></p> <p>Registration of deaths, registration records &amp; issue of death certificates on request.</p>	<p>Tel: 0300 200 7890</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:gro_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk">gro_nisra@finance-ni.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/general-register-office-northern-ireland">www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/general-register-office-northern-ireland</a></p>



Other Organisations	Contact Details
<p><b>Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust</b></p> <p>Aims to alleviate the financial hardship of bereaved families repatriating the body of loved ones who have died abroad in sudden or tragic circumstances back to Ireland.</p>	<p>Tel: 028 3083 3311 Tel: 077 7543 0193</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@kevinbellrepatriation.com">info@kevinbellrepatriation.com</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://kbrtrust.com/">https://kbrtrust.com/</a></p>
<p><b>Department for Communities: Bereavement Service</b></p> <p>Service to report a person's death, check if you might be entitled to benefits or financial help, make a claim for benefits or for a social fund funeral payment.</p>	<p>Tel: Freephone 0800 085 2463</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/bereavement">www.nidirect.gov.uk/bereavement</a></p>
<p><b>Advice NI</b></p> <p>Independent Advice Network. Provides accessible advice services across Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Tel: Freephone 0800 915 4604</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:advice@adviceni.net">advice@adviceni.net</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/advice-ni">www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/advice-ni</a></p>



## Helpful Reading & Resources

Below are some books and resources you may find helpful. This is not an exhaustive list.

### For Adults

- The Orphaned Adult: Understanding and coping with grief and change after the death of our parents. Alexander Levy (2000)
- A Grief Observed. CS Lewis (2015)
- It's OK to laugh (crying is cool too). Nora McInerney Purmort (2016)
- It's OK that you're not OK: Meeting grief and loss in a culture that doesn't understand. Megan Devine (2017)
- Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death & Surviving. Julia Samuel (2017)
- Thinking Out Loud; Love, Grief and being Mum and Dad. Rio Ferdinand (2017)
- Sisters & Brothers: Stories about the death of a sibling. Julie Bentley & Simon Anthony Blake (2020)
- Tell me the truth about loss. Niamh Fitzpatrick (2020)
- The Plain Guide to Grief. John Wilson (2020)
- Has someone died? Restoring hope. Cruse Bereavement Support Available at [https://www.cruse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Restoring\\_Hope\\_Jul2017.pdf](https://www.cruse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Restoring_Hope_Jul2017.pdf)
- Surviving the Early Loss of a Mother: Daughters Speak. Anne Tracey (2008)
- Stillbirth and Miscarriage, A Life-Changing Loss 'Say my baby's name' Anne Tracey (2022)

### For Teens & Young Adults

- When a friend dies: A book for teens about grieving & healing. Marilyn E. Gootman (2005)
- Out of the blue: Making memories last when someone has died. Winston's Wish (2006)
- Still Here with Me: Teenagers and Children on Losing a Parent. Suzanne Sjogvist (2006)
- Sometimes Life Sucks: When Someone You Love Dies. Molly Carlisle (2011)
- We Get It. Heather L. Servaty-Seib & David C. Fajgenbaum. (2015)
- A Teenage Guide to coping when someone dies. Child Bereavement UK (2019)

### For Children

- Badger's Parting Gifts. Susan Varley (1987). 35th Anniversary Edition of multi-award-winning picture book.
- Muddles, puddles and sunshine. Diane Crossley (2001)
- A Child's Grief: Supporting a Child When Someone in Their Family Has Died. Di Stubbs (2009)
- What does dead mean?: A book for young children to help explain death and dying. Caroline Jay and Jenni Thomas (2012)
- The Memory Tree. Britta Teckentrup (2014)
- The coat I wear. Mel Maxwell (2014)
- The Goodbye Book. Todd Parr (2016)
- Cry heart but never break. Glenn Ringtved (2016)
- The Invisible String. Patrice Karst (2018)

## Other helpful resources for Children and Young People

Cruse Bereavement Support NI has developed a helpful resource for bereaved children and young people (8-25 years old)

To access this resource, please visit:

<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/-resources>

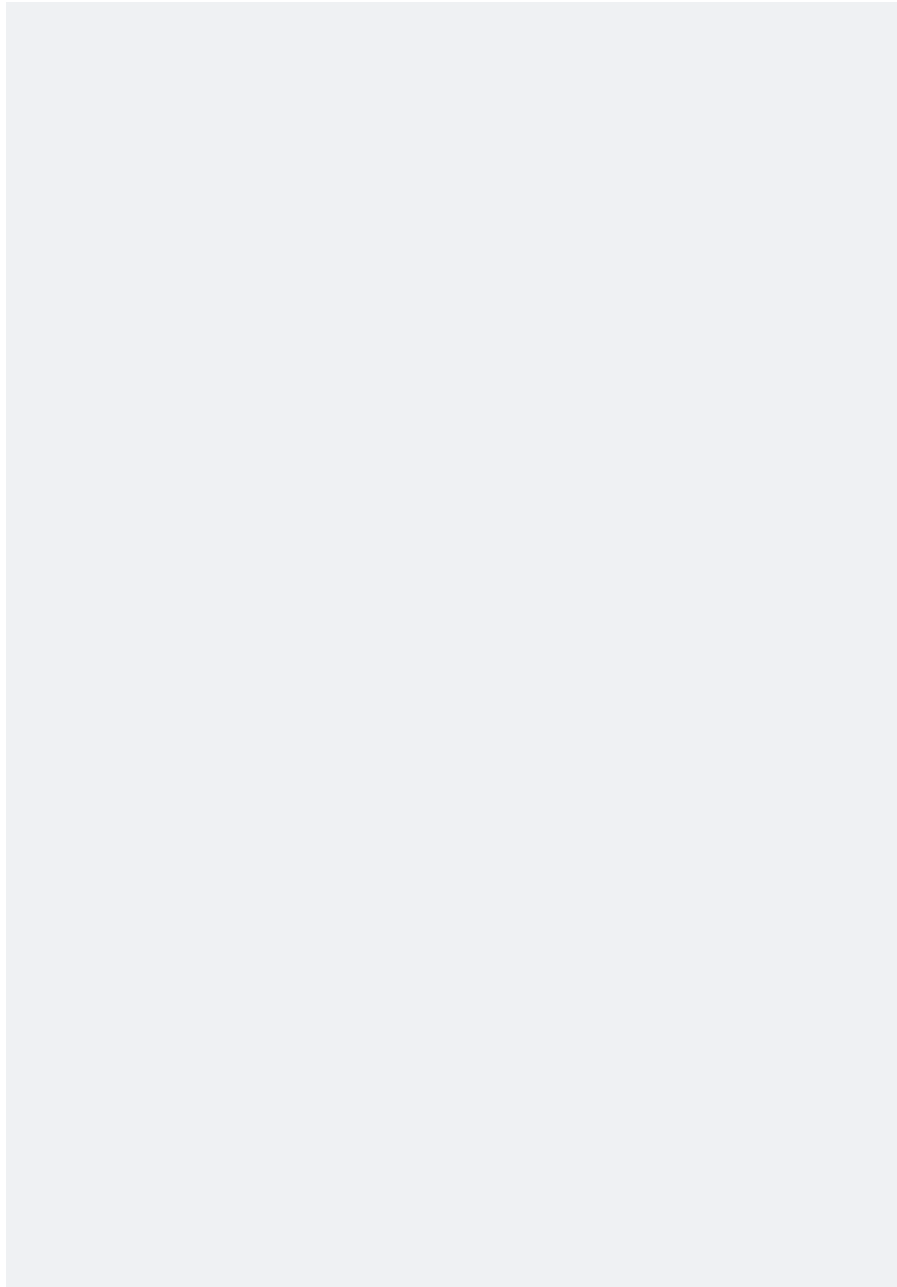
The NI Bereavement Network website Bereaved NI provides information and support for children and young people who have been bereaved and for adults after the death of a child:

<https://bereaved.hscni.net/bereavement-support/children-and-young-people/>

## For People with a Learning Disability or Dementia

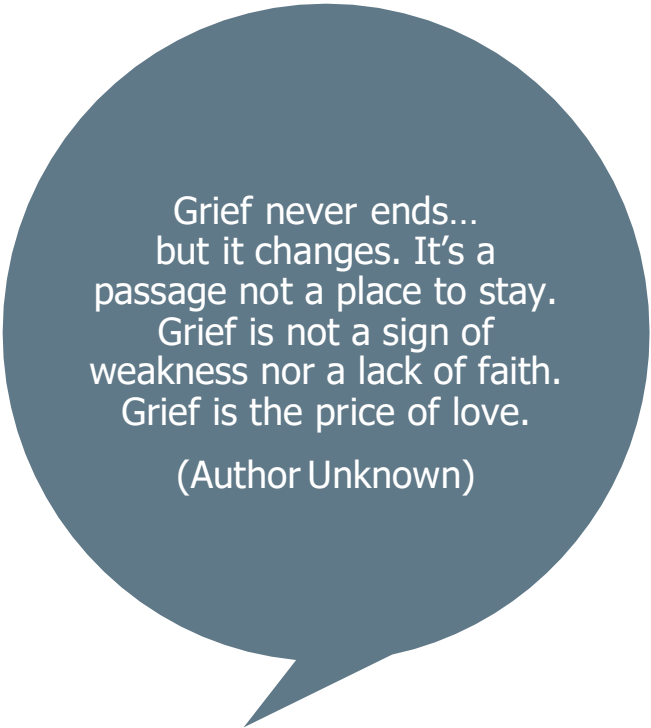
- How to break Bad News to People with Intellectual Disabilities. Irene Truffrey-Wijne (2013)
- What can help you feel better when someone dies?  
CHANGE Easy Read Series (2016)  
Available at <https://be.macmillan.org.uk/be/p-25653-what-can-help-you-feel-better-when-someone-dies.aspx>
- When someone dies: Feelings you might have.  
An easy read booklet to help with feelings after someone dies.  
Marie Curie 2023.  
<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/publications/all/easy-read-feelings-when-someone-dies>

## Your notes



What we have enjoyed, we  
can never lose... all that we  
love deeply becomes a part  
of us.

(Helen Keller,  
American deaf-blind author,  
lecturer and activist,  
1880-1968)



Grief never ends...  
but it changes. It's a  
passage not a place to stay.  
Grief is not a sign of  
weakness nor a lack of faith.  
Grief is the price of love.

(Author Unknown)