

A message from the chief constable

“On behalf of my staff, may I extend my deepest sympathy to you and your family during this traumatic time. This leaflet is intended to provide information and answers to some of the questions that may arise in the days to come. It also contains the details of organisations who may be able to help or offer advice and support over the coming weeks and months following your bereavement.” Chief Constable Francis Habgood, Thames Valley Police

Introduction

It is natural to experience shock and bewilderment after being told that someone in your family has died. However, there will be a number of necessary procedures that follow a sudden death.

We hope this leaflet will give you some idea of what happens next. There are also details of various organisations which may be of help in the short or longer-term.

Coroner's officer

After initial contact has been made by the police, responsibility will be handed over to the coroner's officer, who may contact you for other information required by the coroner.

The coroner's officer will advise you regarding a post-mortem examination if one is necessary, death certificates and matters concerning the burial or cremation.

Post-mortem

A post-mortem is a medical examination carried out by a pathologist, who is a specialist doctor, to establish the cause of death.

The coroner may require a post-mortem to be carried out and, if appropriate, will hold an inquest.

Coroner's officer details:

Name:

Tel:

General coroner's office numbers:

Oxfordshire: 01865 815020

Berkshire: 01189 372300

Buckinghamshire: 01494 475505

Milton Keynes: 01908 254327

Formal identification

It is a legal requirement for the coroner to ensure that the person who has died is properly identified.

On most occasions this identification will be done formally by the next of kin, a relative or a close friend of the family to a police officer or the coroner's officer. However other options are available and will be considered if necessary.

Evidence concerning the identification will be presented at the inquest.

Inquest

The inquest will usually be opened by the coroner very soon after the death. There is no need for you attend this first hearing. It is the legal way for the coroner to formally identify the person who has died. The inquest will then be adjourned, while further enquiries are made prior to the full inquest taking place. The family will be informed as soon as possible of any inquest date.

The media

The police do not routinely publicise sudden deaths, but will confirm basic details if asked to do so by the media.

Reporters may ask the police press office to contact the next of kin when a person dies to see if someone from the family, or a close friend, would speak to a journalist to help provide a tribute story.

If you wish to speak to the media ask your police contact officer to put you in touch with the police press office.

Caring agencies

No one can be prepared for a sudden death. Even the most capable of people say they felt completely unable to cope at the time.

For many, family and friends will be your main support, especially in the immediate period after someone has died. However, you may wish to contact some of the organisations listed overleaf, particularly if you would find it helpful to talk with others who have coped with a similar situation.

The Compassionate Friends: supporting bereaved parents and their families after a child dies.

Tel: 0845 123 2304

Web: www.tcf.org.uk

Winston's Wish: a national grief support programme for bereaved children.

Tel: 08452 03 04 05

Web: www.winstonswish.org.uk

The Way Foundation (widowed and young): aims to support young widowed men and women as they adjust to life after the death of their partner.

Tel: 0300 012 4929

Samaritans: who listen to people who are angry, depressed and suicidal any time - night or day.

Tel: 116 123 (freephone)

Web: www.samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Cruse Bereavement Care: a confidential bereavement service.

Tel: 01242 252518 or 0844 477 9400

Web: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS): offers emotional support, help and information in a number of ways, and can direct you to the nearest local SOBS support group.

Helpline: 0300 111 5065

Web: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Further contact information is listed on the back page of this leaflet.

Farming Community Network (FCN): bereavement support and advice to those particularly involved in the farming community.

Tel: 03000 111 999

Web: www.fcn.org.uk/

Talking to your children about your loved one's death is important. Your local child bereavement charity will be able to help you with this:

- Oxfordshire: **SeeSaw:** 01865 744768
- Berkshire: **Daisy's Dream:** 0118 934 2604
- Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes: **Child Bereavement UK:** 0800 02 888 40. This is also a national organisation. Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.

The police officer attending your loved one's death will ask if you consent to NHS England sending you some additional details about support that is available to you locally. you agree, you will receive a letter within the next week.

Your GP is there to support you – do think about making an appointment to see your GP very soon.

If there is anything that you do not understand or anything else you wish to know please contact the police officers or coroner's officer on the numbers contained in this leaflet.

Cover image courtesy of Annabel Farley entitled 'our hands' via www.stockpholio.net/view/image/id/6189995173#!Our+hands



Supporting you
after traumatic
bereavement

Officer: _____

Station: _____

Tel: _____

Incident reference number:

(If your contact officer is not on duty please ask for a supervisor and quote the reference number above)

