

# Making arrangements following your bereavement



## Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disc, Braille, large print, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone 01271 314090.

## CONTENTS

<b>Bereavement Support Office</b> .....	page 1
<b>What happens next</b> .....	page 2
<b>Post Mortem</b> .....	page 3
<b>Arranging the funeral</b> .....	page 4
<b>Tissue donation</b> .....	page 5
<b>Paying last respects</b> .....	page 6
<b>Clothing and valuables</b> .....	page 6
<b>Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care</b> .....	page 7
<b>Registering the death</b> .....	page 7
<b>Letting people know about the death</b> .....	page 13
<b>Further information and support</b> .....	page 14
<b>Helpful contacts</b> .....	page 15
<b>PALS</b> .....	page 16

## **North Devon District Hospital Bereavement Support Office**

The Bereavement Support Office is situated on level 0 at North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

### **How to find us**

Go through the main entrance to the lifts.

Take the lift down to level 0.

Turn right out of the lifts and walk a short way down the corridor.

The Bereavement Support Office is a door on your left. Please press the buzzer to let us know you have arrived.

**Please telephone the Bereavement Support Office**  
**Telephone 01271 322 404**  
**Between 9am - 4pm Monday to Friday**  
**(excluding Bank Holidays)**  
**email: [ndht.bereavementsupport@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.bereavementsupport@nhs.net)**  
**[www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/bereavement](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/bereavement)**

We provide sympathetic support and assistance to bereaved relatives and carers to help them through the procedures following the death of a patient at the hospital. This booklet is designed to help you with these practical steps over the coming few days or weeks.

## What happens next

Your first point of contact is the Bereavement Support Office at North Devon District Hospital. This office is open from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). The Bereavement Support Officers are available for advice and information so please call them if you have any questions.

**Please call the office as soon as you are able, to give us your contact details, on 01271 322 404.** If the line is busy, please leave a message on the answer phone and one of the team will return your call as soon as possible.

The hospital doctor may need to telephone the Coroners Office to discuss the cause of death before a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death can be issued. If the doctor has permission from the Coroner to issue the certificate, we will contact you as soon as it has been completed to arrange a time for you to come in and collect it. We advise you not to come until we have told you that the certificate has been completed to avoid a wasted journey. We will be doing everything we can to get the documents completed as quickly as possible but it will probably take a few days. After a weekend or bank holiday this process may take longer.

If you require these documents urgently for religious reasons, please let us know.

Please also let the Bereavement Support Officers know if the funeral service is to be a burial or a cremation so that the relevant documents can be completed. In the case of cremation, the hospital doctors will need to complete cremation forms. This means that the deceased cannot be moved to your choice of Funeral Director until these forms have been completed.

The staff do their best to get the forms ready for the Funeral Director as quickly as they can, however sometimes a short delay is unavoidable.

The Bereavement Support Officers will ask you to sign a release form. This allows your chosen Funeral Director to collect the deceased from the hospital.

## Post Mortem

Sometimes the Coroner will decide that there must be a post mortem and/or an inquest. If this is the case we will let you know, and the Coroners Office will contact you. If you have any questions about the involvement of the Coroner we can explain this to you in more detail.

A hospital doctor may ask your permission to carry out a post mortem examination to further understand the cause of death and to help with future diagnosis and treatment for other patients. It is up to you whether you give your consent for this to take place. The Bereavement Support Officers will provide you with information about the examination so that you are able to make an informed decision before you give consent. This examination does not usually delay arrangements for the funeral.

Barnstaple Coroners Office: 01271 311359

## Arranging the funeral

You do not have to have a funeral ceremony, religious minister, or use a Funeral Director.

If you wish to use a Funeral Director you do not need to wait until you have received the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death before contacting them. However, any provisional arrangements can only be finalised once the Funeral Director has received the certificate for burial or cremation (green form) which you will be given by the Registrar.

If you are unsure of the wishes of the deceased regarding the funeral, you may find they have included this in their Will.

Funeral Directors are valuable sources of information and advice and most are open seven days a week. The cost of a funeral can vary greatly so you may wish to ask for a brochure and price list to compare costs before making a decision.

If you receive state benefits you can apply for help to fund part of the cost of the funeral. You can pick up a form SF200 – Funeral Payment from the Social Fund from the local Department for Work and Pensions office or local Job Centre Plus, or it can be downloaded from [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk).

## Tissue donation

Some people have made a decision to donate organs and tissues after their death. The deceased person may have carried an organ donor card or discussed donation with you during their lifetime.

If you wish to consider donation, eyes for corneal transplant may be donated up to 24 hours after death. Donation will not delay funeral plans or alter the appearance of the deceased.

If the person who has died has completed forms regarding donation of their body to medical science you should contact the telephone number on the form straight away. Please also let us know. You cannot donate the body on someone's behalf after their death as it has to be done by the person in life. However, it is possible to donate the brain and spinal cord for research into diseases such as Alzheimers. Please contact us immediately if you would like more information.

If you would like to discuss this further or for more information, please contact:

- The Bereavement Support Office on 01271 322 404
- NHS Blood and Transplant National Helpline referral centre on: 0800 432 0559 (24 hour pager).

Leave your name and full telephone number and a specialist tissue donation nurse will return your call.

- S.W. Dementia Brain Bank, Bristol: 0117 414 7821

## Paying last respects

If you wish to spend time with the deceased, please telephone the Bereavement Support Office on 01271 322404 to arrange an appointment. Our usual appointment times are between 9am and 3pm.

If you would like the Hospital Chaplain to be present please let us know and we will try to arrange this for you.

For visits out of office hours, please contact the hospital switchboard on 01271 322577 and they will be able to direct your request.

## Clothing and valuables

When you collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death from the Bereavement Support Office at the hospital, you will also be able to collect any property belonging to the deceased.

Any property, other than valuables left with the Bereavement Support Office will be disposed of if not collected within three months.



## Hospital Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care

The Hospital Chaplaincy team are here to support you and your family through this emotional time. This support is available for everyone and is not dependent on belonging to any faith group.

The Hospital Chaplain can be contacted via the hospital switchboard on 01271 322577.

The Hospital Chapel and Faith Centre on Level 1 and the Garden of Remembrance opposite the main hospital entrance are always open for private reflection.

## Registering the death

Once you have received the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death from the Bereavement Support Office, you can register the death. Usually this has to be done within five days unless the death has been reported to the Coroner.

If the death was discussed with the Coroner, he will write directly to the Registration Service giving them authorisation to register the death. Your contact details will be passed to the Registration Service and as soon as they have received the Coroner's authorisation they should contact you to arrange an appointment.

If the death was not discussed with the Coroner, we will tell you when you can contact the Registration Service to make your appointment.

**The Devon Registration Service appointments number is  
0345 155 1002.**

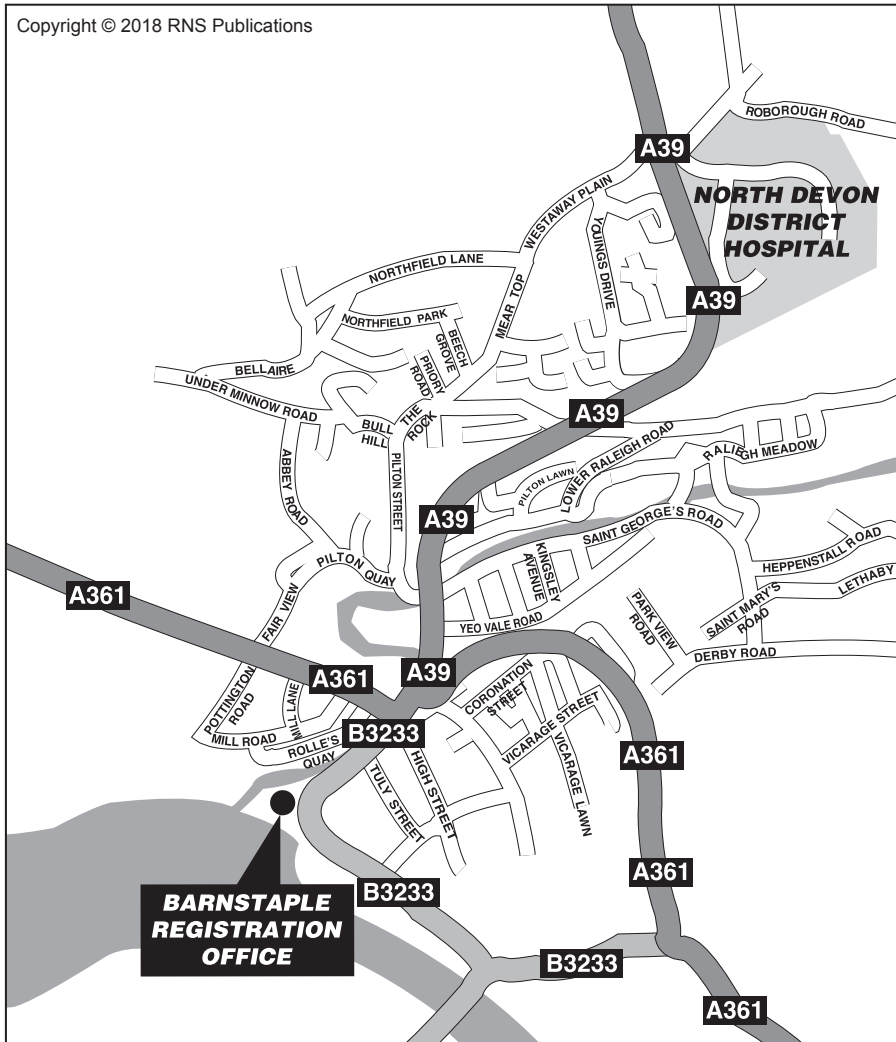
**Open 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am - 1pm Saturday.  
You must make an appointment to register the death.**

The nearest Registrar to North Devon District Hospital is:

**The Barnstaple Registration Office**

Taw View  
North Walk  
Barnstaple  
EX31 1ED

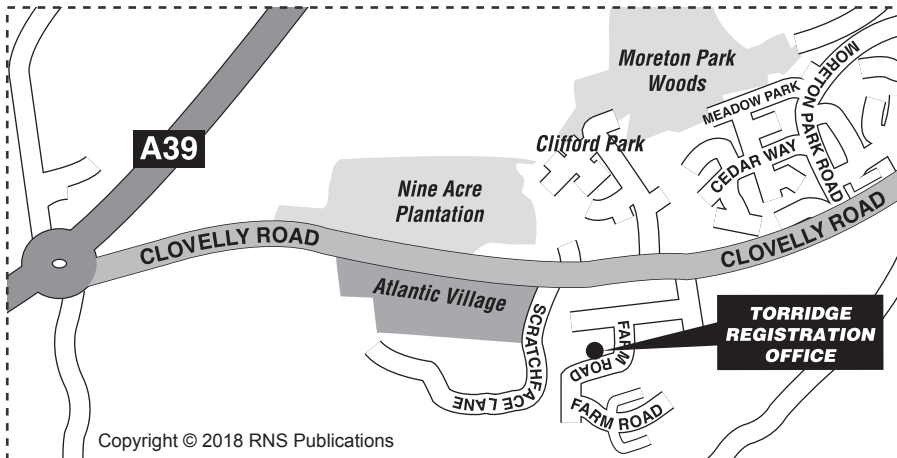
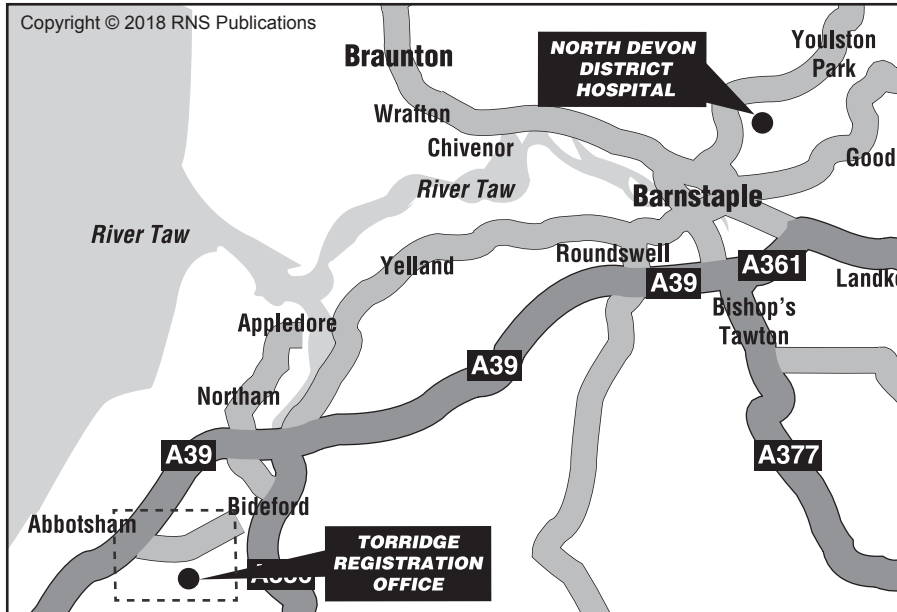
The office is open:  
Monday to Thursday 9am - 4.30pm  
Friday 9am - 4pm.  
**Appointment only by prior arrangement**



# The Torrige Registration Office

Caddsdow Business Support Centre  
Farm Road  
Bideford  
EX39 3DX  
Off Clovelly Road (just below Atlantic Village)

The office is open:  
Monday to Friday  
9am - 5pm.  
**Appointment only by  
prior arrangement**



If a post mortem is needed, the Coroner will issue the required Notification to the Registrar once the cause of death has been established and enquiries are complete. You should then proceed with registering the death as described on these pages. It will be necessary to telephone the Registrar in the first instance to ensure that the necessary paperwork has been received from the Coroner prior to making an appointment to register the death.

If you have any questions about the involvement of the Coroner, the Bereavement Support Officers will be able to give advice. Alternatively the Coroner's office can be contacted on 01271 311359.

### Who can register the death?

In order to register the death you must be either a relative of the deceased, have been present at the time of death or be the person making the funeral arrangements. If you are not able to register the death in Devon it is possible to register by declaration from elsewhere in England and Wales.

When you phone the Registration Office they will offer you their **"Tell us Once"** service. They are able to pass on the relevant information about the person who has died to the Department for Work and Pensions, and other organisations such as: H.M.Revenue and Customs, Passport Service, Council Tax Office, Electoral Service, and the DVLA.

## What happens at the meeting with the Registrar?

You need to give the Registrar the following information:

- Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (obtained earlier from Bereavement Support Office)
- The deceased's medical card, birth and marriage certificate (if available)
- If applicable: the reference number of any pension paid out of public funds (apart from the state retirement pension)

The Registrar will talk to you in private about the person who has just died and you will need to know the following:

- The full names and surname (and maiden surname)
- The date and place of their death
- Their last permanent address
- The date and place of their birth
- Their previous occupation (or former occupation if retired)
- If married, the name, occupation, date and place of birth of their marriage partner

This information is entered into the Register. You will be required to read, check the entry and sign.

## What will the Registrar give me?

1. Form BD8 for the Department for Work and Pensions (unless you have used the 'Tell Us Once' service).

If you would like to stop all State Pension or Benefit payments straight away or would like any advice, phone the Department for Work and Pensions customer service line 0800 731 0469.

2. A certificate for burial or cremation ('green form').

This is for your Funeral Director and authorises them to make arrangements on your behalf.

3. You will need to get copies of the Death Certificate for a number of official purposes. We cannot say how many you will need as individual circumstances vary. As an example you may need copies for such things as insurance, premium bonds, bank accounts and private pensions. There is a fee for providing copies of the Death Certificate.

**Please note that there is no free copy of the certificate.**

## Letting people know about the death

People and organisations that may need to be informed of the death:

- Local Social Services if meals on wheels, home help, or day centre transport were used
- Any other hospital the person was attending
- Banks, Building Societies, insurance provider etc
- Appointed solicitor and executors of the Will
- Any employer or trade union
- A child or young person's teacher, employer or college should be informed if a parent, brother, sister, grandparent or close friend has died
- Car insurance and other insurance companies. People driving a car insured in the deceased's name are not legally insured
- Gas, electricity and telephone providers, newsagents
- The Local Housing Department, landlord or mortgage company need to be informed depending on the deceased's housing affairs

## Further information and support

Check for any library books that might need returning.

Any large items of NHS or Social Services equipment should be returned, please contact Millbrook Healthcare in Exeter, 0330 124 4491 for advice.

**Bereavement** is a very personal event and you may go through a range of emotions and reactions. This can be very upsetting but realising that these feelings are quite normal may help.

Grief may affect you emotionally, physically and mentally or you may be too shocked to feel anything at first.

It is important to ask for help and support. This may be from family and friends initially.

**Your doctor** can help if you feel the need for medical support to help you through your bereavement. There is help available and you shouldn't hesitate to contact your family doctor.

**Help is also available from most local Church or faith groups.** Pastoral support can be beneficial in helping anyone come to terms with loss, helplessness and grief experienced in bereavement. The Hospital Chaplaincy Service is available for anyone, to support you as appropriate.

**Cruse Bereavement Care** provides free practical and emotional support for anyone who has been bereaved.



## Helpful contacts

### **Cruse Bereavement Care**

Offers free information, advice and support to bereaved people.

0808 808 1677

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

### **Cruse Bereavement Care in Devon**

0300 330 5466

[devon@cruse.org.uk](mailto:devon@cruse.org.uk)

### **Samaritans**

Provides a confidential 24 hour telephone helpline.

116 123 Freephone

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **Age UK**

Provides advice, information and support to people in later life.

0800 169 2081

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### **Child Bereavement UK**

Provides specialised support and information to all those affected when a child dies or when a child is bereaved.

0800 0288840

(free from land-line)

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

03444 111 444

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

We have information and contact details for many local and national charities and organisations, please ask if you have a specific need.

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please visit them in the Information Centre on Level 2 at North Devon District Hospital or contact them on 01271 314090 or [ndht.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.PALS@nhs.net).

### **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about our service, please let us know. There is a freepost comments form at the back of this booklet.

If you would like to make a formal complaint, please contact the Customer Relations Manager on 01271 322334. Compliments or concerns can also be sent to the Chief Executive, Northern Devon Healthcare Trust, Raleigh Park, Barnstaple, EX31 4JB.

### **Disclaimer**

Whilst the Trust is grateful of the support of companies advertising, we stress that any inclusion of any advertisement in this booklet does not imply approval or recommendation of the advertisers by the Trust, nor does the Trust necessarily support the product advertised.



We appreciate this a difficult time for you, but it would help us to provide the best service we can if you could share your views with us.

**On which ward was your relative/friend during their last days?**

.....

**Was the support and information you received from the Bereavement Support staff helpful? Yes / No**

Comments: .....

.....

**Is there anything we could improve on?**

Comments: .....

.....

**Was this booklet helpful? Yes / No**

Comments: .....

.....

**Is there any other information that could be included?**

Comments: .....

.....

*Thank you very much for your comments, please send this form to:*

Bereavement Services, Freepost RSAH-JRBJ-BJUT  
North Devon District Hospital, Raleigh Park, Barnstaple EX31 4JB



