

After death

When someone dies there are many decisions and arrangements to make, all of which can be difficult to manage in a time of grief. Wherever the person has died their body should continue to be cared for with dignity and respect and in accordance with any religious and cultural beliefs they may have had until funeral arrangements are made.

It helps to know the practical things that must be done in the following days and weeks. If the death happened in hospital, hospital staff will make arrangements for the medical certificate verifying the death to be issued by a doctor. Hospital staff will provide information regarding the next stages for registering the death and explain where the person's body will be kept until an undertaker is arranged.

When the death occurs at home, the GP should be notified. The GP will then visit and if the person has been seen by a doctor in the last 14 days and death was expected, they will issue a medical certificate verifying death. Two certificates are required for cremation and the doctor concerned will arrange the second certificate by an independent doctor who did not treat the deceased person.


If the death was unexpected, the doctor may report the death to the Coroner e.g. if the person was not attended by a doctor during their final few days or the cause of death was not known or uncertain.

In cases of sudden unexpected death, the police are also notified.

The next step is to arrange for the body to be removed, usually to the care of a funeral director where the body can be cared for and viewed if people wish to. This will vary according to a person's cultural and religious practices as some faiths require cremations or burial within a short timeframe and have their own services for this.

In cases where a funeral director is not used, the deceased can remain at home or in the local mortuary, cemetery or crematorium until the funeral.


Further information can be found on the:

 [Good Funeral Guide website](#)

Registering a death

The death is then registered within five days, unless the Coroner is investigating the circumstances relating to the death. If the death occurred in Redbridge, it must be registered at the Register Office in Barkingside and an appointment can be booked online or contact the Register Office on 020 8708 7123.

To book an appointment online and for information on who can register a death and what you need to provide visit:

 [Redbridge Council website](#)

If the death occurred in another area, the Registrar will be the one covering that particular borough.

When a person dies a number of different government departments and local services must be notified about the death and this usually means providing them with the same information. The Redbridge 'Tell Us Once' service makes this process easier and can be organised at the Register Office.

If the person was receiving services from Redbridge Health and Adult Social Services, the relevant Redbridge locality team should be notified.

Bereavement benefits

Depending on individual circumstances and relationship to the person who has died, bereavement benefits may be payable to a partner or spouse. These include bereavement allowance, bereavement payment, widowed parent's allowance and funeral payment to help with funeral costs. Information relating to benefits and financial help are also available at the Register Office.

For more information visit:



[GOV.UK website](#)

[Citizens Advice website](#)

Arranging the funeral

If the person who died did not pre pay their funeral or leave instructions on what they would like, it usually falls to the next of kin or the closest person to them to make the necessary arrangements for the funeral. Where there is no one appropriate, willing or able to undertake this, there are legal duties for local authorities and hospitals to take this on, depending on where the death occurred. Where possible the funeral expenses are then recovered from the deceased person's estate.

It is important to note that by engaging the services of a funeral director you will be responsible for ensuring the funeral is paid for. If there are any difficulties or issues with this the Quaker Social Action project called Down to Earth offers free advocacy and practical guidance for people on low incomes on finding the most affordable and appropriate funeral, whilst helping people apply for financial assistance.

For more information visit:



[Quaker Social Action website](#)

Nowadays there are many variations on the funeral theme and attitudes are changing with some people choosing to do without the services of a funeral director altogether or using just some of a funeral director's services.

For advice on arranging a funeral yourself visit:



[Natural Death Centre website](#)

Wills, probate and inheritance

Following the funeral there is the often difficult task of deciding what to do with the deceased person's belongings and any estate. If they have left a will, one or more executors will be named whose duty will be to carry out the instructions of the will. Depending on the value of the estate,

it is often necessary to obtain a court order called Probate to release the deceased person's assets. Without a will a person's estate is intestate and the law decides who the beneficiaries will be. Professional help is available from solicitors and specialist probate services which will incur fees.

For more information on wills, probate and inheritance visit

 [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)

Other end of life, death and dying factsheets which may be of interest

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| Factsheet 1: About end of life care | ▶ | Factsheet 4: Care in the final days | ▶ |
| Factsheet 2: Planning ahead | ▶ | Factsheet 5: After death | ▶ |
| Factsheet 3: Supportive care for end of life | ▶ | Factsheet 6: Bereavement support | ▶ |