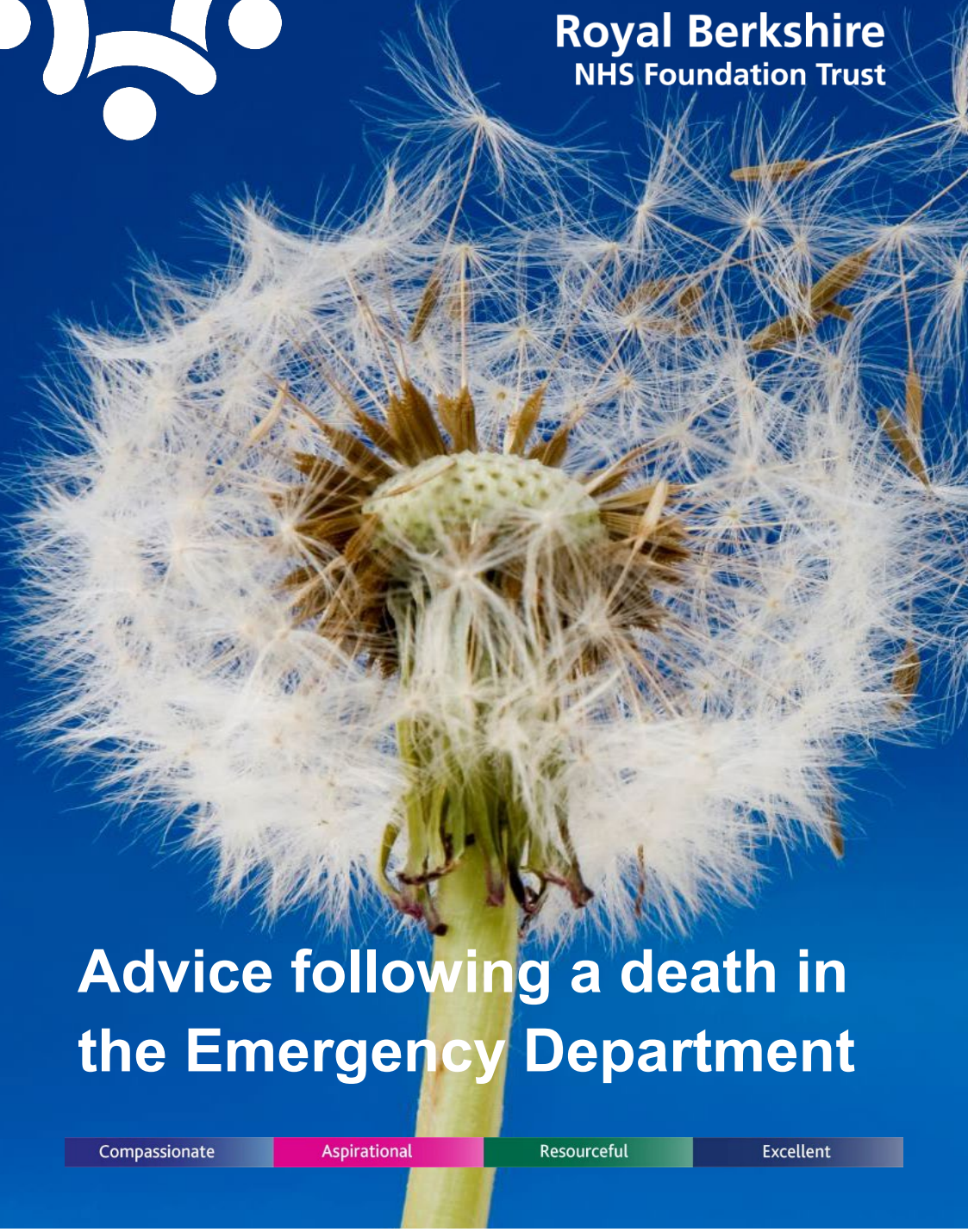




NHS

**Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust**



Advice following a death in the Emergency Department

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

You have our deepest sympathy for your bereavement.

Although it may be difficult to make decisions at a time like this, some practical things need to be done. This booklet guides you through some arrangements that you need to make and the options you have.

Bereavement brings a mixture of feelings, emotions and physical symptoms. You may feel shocked and find it difficult to believe the death has happened. You may find it difficult to concentrate; you may feel fatigued or physically unwell. But looking after your health is important, so try to eat and drink normally even if you do not feel like it and try to rest even if you are having difficulty sleeping. You will experience a mixture of feelings such as grief, sadness, guilt, anger, panic or relief. Crying can be exhausting, but it can bring some relief. Putting on a brave face can be equally exhausting, but everyone manages their emotions in different ways. You may find comfort in sharing your feelings with a sympathetic listener and if you later feel you need more help, do consider contacting one of the support groups listed in this booklet.

Please take some time and read this booklet. If you still have any issues or questions, please contact the Emergency Department (ED) on **0118 322 7856** and speak to one of the ED Bereavement Team – (Patient Experience Lead: Laura Seymour). Alternatively, you can email **ED.BereavementTeam@royalberkshire.nhs.uk**.

You will receive a letter in a few weeks' time offering a follow-up appointment, so that if you have any new or unanswered questions about your loved one's illness and death, you can discuss them with one of the consultants and the Bereavement Care Team. It is also helpful for us to have feedback about your experience in ED. However, everyone has different needs in bereavement, and you may feel you do not need this service.

The Emergency Department Team

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Property

We will try to return the property of your relative or friend straight away. If you think there may be property in other parts of the hospital, please tell us and we can arrange for it all to be gathered together. Please also remind us if you think there are valuables in our safe. If you were not present when your friend or relative died, our Bereavement Team will try to arrange the safe return of items.

Registering the death

What do I do now?

Please contact the Bereavement Office on 0118 322 7059 / 8066 the within three working days of the death of your relative or friend. The opening hours are 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays). We ask you to call after 9am so the Bereavement Team can contact the doctors who cared for your relative / friend and up to date information is available when you call. Outside of these hours, please leave a message and someone from the Bereavement Team will get back to you as soon as they can.

The Bereavement Office provide advice, support, and assistance to bereaved relatives, friends and careers following the death of a patient at the hospital.

In order for you to legally register the death a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) must be complete by a Qualified Attending Practitioner (QAP). This is a doctor who attended during the last illness / admission and is qualified to complete the MCCD.

The Bereavement Team will ensure that the practical arrangements are complete in a timely, professional, and caring manner. They can also provide advice on the following:

- The next steps of the process
- Any additional paperwork required such as cremation papers

- Viewings
- Collection of property and valuables
- How to register the death
- Making funeral arrangements
- The Medical Examiner Service
- Tissue donation
- The Coroners' Service – in some circumstances the death needs to be reported to the Coroner; see page 9.

More information is available at www.gov.uk/after-a-death – What to do after someone dies.

Involvement of the Medical Examiner Service

The Medical Examiner is an independent senior doctor. Their role is to scrutinise the medical records, speak to the treating doctor, and together agree on the wording for the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD). They will also ask if you have any concerns about care.

Within a few days of the death, you will be contacted by telephone by a Medical Examiner (ME) or a Medical Examiner Officer (MEO). During the telephone conversation, the ME or MEO will explain to you what the cause of death will be recorded as, or if a Coroner referral is required. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the cause of death or about any aspect of the care received during their admission.

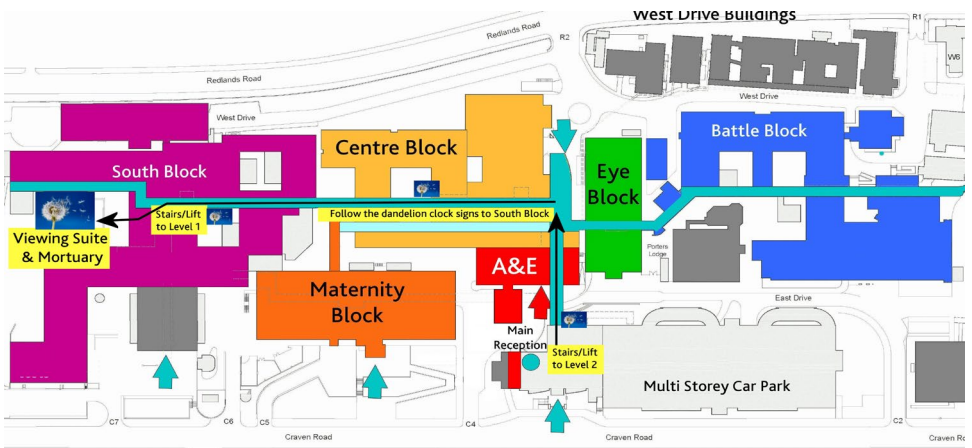
If you have concerns about care, the ME or MEO will be able to advise on the best way to raise those and may request the Trust to undertake a case review. If a case review is requested, you will have the option to discuss the outcome of this with the Trust's mortality team. Following the call, the ME or MEO will release the completed MCCD and any other legal documents to the Bereavement Team.

Location of the Bereavement Office and Viewing Suite

The Bereavement Office and Viewing Suite are in South Block, on level one. Signs can be found from Craven Road main entrance by following the dandelion clock picture (see right). If you are uncertain, the main reception staff will show you the signs to look for. Visits to the office are by appointment only. Please contact the Bereavement Office to arrange a visit if required. You will be asked to show a form of identification, e.g. passport or driving licence on arrival.



Hospital location map



Registering the death?

The death should be registered within five days (unless there has been involvement of the Coroner) at the Register Office in the district where the death occurred. This is the Reading Register Office. It is possible to register outside the county by declaration, but this could cause a delay. The Bereavement Team can explain the process if required.

After the call with the Medical Examiner's Office, the Bereavement Team will send the MCCD to the Reading Register Office.

The Bereavement Team will then call the documented next of kin (NoK) as provided to them by the ward and issue a six digit reference code. Please quote this reference code when making your appointment with the Registrar, as this confirms to them that the Medical Examiner has issued the MCCD. This can be done over the telephone or via the website.

Reading Register Office opening hours:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (excluding weekends and bank holidays).

Tel: 0118 937 3533 or email register.office@reading.gov.uk

The Registration appointment

The appointment with the Registrar takes approximately 30 minutes.

During the appointment, the Registrar will ask you:

- The deceased's full name and any previous names
- Last occupation
- Last address
- Date and place of birth
- Date and place of death
- Full name, occupation and date of birth of their spouse or partner, if they were married or in a Civil Partnership
- Whether they received a pension or any type of allowance from public funds
- Your (the 'informant's') name and address.

If you cannot find or do not have any of the above information please do not worry but you should still register the death as soon as possible.

A death can be registered by a relative, by someone who was present at the death, occupier or manager of the premises where they died, or by the person responsible for making the funeral arrangements.

The Registrar will provide you with:

The Registrar can help with the official 'Tell us Once' service, which alerts other government agencies of the death at the same time. The Registrar can provide you with the unique reference number and details of the service. Find out more about the 'Tell us Once' service by visiting www.gov.uk/tell-us-once or calling 0800 085 7308.

The Registrar will produce a certificate of burial or cremation ('green form'). This is for your appointed funeral director. It confirms that the registration has taken place and the funeral arrangements can proceed.

The Registrar will also provide you with a notification of registration of death form (BD8) for use in connection with Department of Work & Pension benefits.

You will need to get copies of the death certificate for several official purposes. For example, private pensions, insurances, premium bonds and bank accounts.

There is a fee for providing copies of the death certificate, the Registrar can advise you of the current charges.

Note

There is a charge for any amendments / corrections to registration entries. Please check very carefully before signing to say that you agree with the death certificate details before it goes to print.

Arranging to see your friend or relative

The funeral director will arrange to collect your deceased relative or friend from the hospital once the death has been registered. You can make arrangements with your appointed funeral director to see your relative or friend at the funeral home.

If you wish to see your relative or friend while they are still at the hospital the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death must be issued to ensure there is no Coroner involvement. Authorisation must also be given from the primary documented next of kin as documented by the ward. Viewings are for 30 minute appointment slots 9am – 3pm Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays). When booking a viewing appointment, the Bereavement Officer will ask you to confirm your deceased relative's details, such as full name, date of birth, date of death, name of hospital ward, address, and NHS number (if known). We need this information to pass on to the mortuary staff. You will be asked to confirm three of these identifiers on arrival at your appointment and to sign paperwork to this effect. **Please bring a form of ID with you, such as a driving licence or passport.**

The Bereavement Team can advise you further on this. However, once the funeral director of your choice have collected the deceased from the hospital mortuary, you should be able to make arrangements for viewing directly with them.

The Coroner

Under certain circumstances it is a legal requirement to inform the Coroner of a person's death. If this is thought to be necessary, the Medical Examiner's Office will talk you through the process.

If there is a need to contact the Coroner, the Coroner will decide if the treating doctor can issue the MCCD or whether further investigations are needed such as a post-mortem and or inquest. If the Coroner requests a post-mortem, your permission is not required.

If a post-mortem shows that the death was due to natural causes, the Coroner will issue a notification to the Registrar, known as the Pink Form (Form 100B), which gives the cause of death so that the death can be registered. If the deceased is to be cremated, the Coroner will give your chosen funeral director a certificate for cremation. If there is to be an inquest, an interim certificate of fact of death can be issued by the Coroner.

If the Coroner decides that the doctor can issue the MCCD, the Bereavement Team will contact you and the registration process will resume.

The Coroner's Office can be contacted on 0118 937 2300 Monday to Friday (excluding weekends and bank holidays, 8am–4pm or email Coroner@reading.gov.uk. Out of hours there is an answerphone for you to leave a message

Hospital consent post mortem examination

The hospital doctor issuing the MCCD may ask you to consider a hospital post-mortem. They will discuss this with you and explain the reasons why. These are sometimes important for further learning about the cause of death and improving treatments. You will be under no pressure to consent. It will not delay the registration process. The doctor can issue the MCCD and you can register in the usual way.

If you do agree to a hospital post-mortem, you would be invited to a meeting which involves the completion of a consent form. A doctor from the treating team, a trained consent taker and a member of the mortuary or Bereavement Team will be present to guide you through the process. You have 24-hours after signing the consent form to change your decision. Please call the Bereavement Office as soon as possible during this time if you wish to withdraw consent. The results of a hospital post-mortem usually take around 6-8 weeks and you can arrange to meet with the treating doctors to discuss the results.

A word about funerals

What should I do first?

You can if you wish make preliminary arrangements with a funeral director but we recommend that you do not book a date until the death has been registered. The funeral directors can advise you further on this. Most families choose to use the services of a funeral director. If you have no experience in this it might be a good idea to ask relatives or friends for recommendations. The funeral director you choose should be a member of either the National Association of Funeral arrangers (NAFD) or the Society of Allied Independent Funeral arrangers (SAIFD).

There are of course alternatives and the Natural Death Centre can offer advice as to your choices and help friends and relatives to arrange funerals with or without funeral directors. The Centre can also provide advice on “green” burials using sustainable coffins and natural burial grounds. They can be contacted at:

The Natural Death Centre, In The Hill House, Watley Lane, Twyford, Winchester S021 1QX Tel: 01962 712 690 www.naturaldeath.org.uk

If you intend to arrange and conduct your own funeral arrangements, please contact the Mortuary Team, who can advise you further on how to do this.

What should I ask?

It is important to discuss how much it will cost with your funeral director. Cost will be affected by things like flowers, the type of service, materials for the coffin and transportation.

In the current circumstances, different funeral directors have different arrangements for viewings and this may influence your choice.

No matter what type of funeral you choose or what you spend, funeral directors have the responsibility to provide a high standard of care and consideration to you and the deceased.

Financial assistance may be available to you and we would advise that you research this prior to contacting the funeral director.

The deceased's bank will also be happy to talk to you about reimbursement for funeral expenses from your loved one's estate and may pay the undertakers directly.

What kind of funeral?

- **Cremation.** Did the deceased leave any instructions or wishes in this area? Are there religious considerations?
- **Direct cremation.** The deceased is cremated without a service or family present.
- **Burial.** If you feel the deceased would prefer a churchyard to a cemetery, you may find that many churchyards no longer have space available for burial. This may be discussed with your funeral director or clergyman/woman.
- **Religious service.** The funeral director will contact your religious leader if you have a particular place of worship, or if not will advise you and contact the appropriate religious leader, who will assist you with planning the actual funeral service.
- **Non-religious ceremony.** While those committed to a religious faith may want a minister or religious leader to officiate, many people do not. There are many independent funeral celebrants who will be happy to discuss your requirements with you. Your funeral directors or the local crematoria would be happy to put you in touch. Various options are available – your funeral director will be able to advise you.

The Spiritual Healthcare (Chaplaincy) Team

The Trust has a team of experienced chaplains drawn from a range of religious and belief traditions. They are available to offer support and guidance during this time. You can contact them on 0118 322 7105 Monday to Friday 8am–4pm.

Out of hours – please ask ward staff or ward receptionist to page the on call chaplain or call switchboard on 0118 322 5111.

Organ and tissue donation

Some people wish to help others after their death by becoming organ and/or tissue donors.

As well as donating heart, lungs, liver and kidneys for transplantation, donation of tissues can also dramatically improve the quality of life for recipients and even save lives. Tissues that can be donated include corneas, heart valves, skin, bone, tendons and cartilage. Tissue donation is almost always an option even if the circumstances of the death prevent organ donation. Tissues should be retrieved as soon as possible after death, ideally within 24 hours.

If you know or believe that your relative would have wanted to be a donor, or if you would like to make a decision on their behalf, the Emergency Department can contact the Tissue Donor Co-ordinator. These are specially trained nurses who will telephone you to ensure you have all the information to make an informed decision about donation. If you decide to proceed with donation, this call will then be recorded and will take about half an hour, covering:

- Your relative's medical, social and behavioural history
- Their lifestyle
- Donation options and process

You will have the opportunity to ask as many questions as you feel are necessary, and if you wish to proceed, they will take consent for donation over the phone.

They will also contact the patient's GP for similar information, to ensure that donated tissues are safe and to minimise the risk of disease transmission.

If the Coroner is involved, the Tissue Donor Co-ordinator will liaise with him and obtain his permission for donation.

Once everything is agreed, the Tissue Donor Co-ordinator will arrange for a specially trained team to come and retrieve the agreed tissues, either in the mortuary or at the funeral arrangers. Donation will not delay the funeral. The donor is always treated with respect and dignity and the body is restored to normal appearance after donation.

Up to 40 people may benefit from such a tissue donation. After the transplant operations you can receive acknowledgement and a letter with some information about recipients.

Checklist of departments you can notify through Tell Us Once (you do not need a death certificate for these)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> HMRC Inland Revenue | <input type="checkbox"/> Department of Work & Pensions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Tax | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle licensing (DVLA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electoral Roll | <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Pass / Blue Badge | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Driving Licence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council Housing Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> Government / Public Service |

Organisations you may need to notify personally:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Probate Office | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsagent / Milkman etc |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank / Building Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit card companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance companies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitor | <input type="checkbox"/> TV Licensing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rental companies | <input type="checkbox"/> Household utilities (water, gas etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pension providers | <input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage providers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Mail deliveries Associations | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Union / Clubs / |

What help and support is available?

You are always welcome to contact the Emergency Department Bereavement Team (Tel: 0118 322 5387) for help and advice. Support and guidance can come from family, friends, your GP, health/social worker, school and faith organisations. There is a list below of various specialist organisations that offer help, advice and support during this distressing and emotional time. Their support can include individual or family counselling, face-to-face counselling, telephone support, support groups meetings and information and advice.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This is an impartial, confidential and friendly service that can guide you through the different services provided by the Trust. They can be contacted on 0118 322 8338 Monday – Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) from 9am–4pm or email: PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk PALS aim to provide a reply to your enquiry within five working days. Sometimes, it may take longer than this, because they simply need more time to find the answer or because the enquiry is more complex.

Emergency Department Charity Fund

The Emergency Department assesses and implements emergency care to hundreds of patients each day. Much of the equipment and some of the staffing are funded through non-NHS money, i.e. raised by donations and charitable resources. The Emergency Department Charity Fund U425 was set up with the purpose to support high quality emergency care above and beyond what the NHS can provide. This funding is used to help improve staff and patient experience. Please feel free to donate today to the Royal Berks Charity Emergency Department Support Fund U425 and help make a difference – scan the QR code.



Bereavement support groups

Cruse Bereavement Care

West Berkshire Branch Tel: 01635 523 573

Thames Valley Berkshire Area Tel: 01344 411 919

National helpline Tel: 0808 808 1677

Young People's helpline Tel: 0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk

www.hopeagain.org.uk (Cruse website for young people). Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Cruse offers face to face, telephone, email and website support.

Child Bereavement UK Tel: 0800 0288840

www.childbereavementuk.org/

Information for bereaved children and families

Child Death Helpline Tel: 0800 282 986 / 0808 800 6019

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Helpline for anyone affected by the death of a child of any age from pre-birth to adult, however recently or long ago.

Daisy's Dream Tel: 0118 934 2604 www.daisysdream.org.uk

Email: info@daisysdream.org.uk

For children up to the age of 19 years who have had a bereavement.

The Lullaby Trust Tel: 0808 802 6868 (free helpline)

www.lullabytrust.org.uk Email: support@lullabytrust.org.uk

Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths. Offers telephone, e-mail and befriending service.

Institute of Family Therapy

Tel: 020 7391 9150 www.ift.org.uk

Counselling for couples and families dealing with a variety of issues including bereavement.

Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project

Tel: 020 7833 1674 www.londonfriend.org.uk

Offers support and advice to lesbians and gay men bereaved by death of a same sex life partner.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Tel: 0118 322 8700 / 0808 8010 388 www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Meningitis Now www.meningitisnow.org

24-hour nurse led helpline for bereavement support.

National Bereavement Services

Helpline Tel: 0800 0246121 www.nationalbereavementservice.org

National directory of bereavement and loss services.

Roadpeace Tel: 0845 4500 355 www.roadpeace.org

E-mail: info@roadpeace.org

National charity for road traffic victims and bereaved families, giving practical and emotional support.

Samaritans Tel: 116 123 www.samaritans.org.uk

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org.uk

SAMM Support After Murder and Manslaughter

Tel. 0845 872 3440 www.samm.org.uk

E-mail: info@samm.org.uk

A self-help group for those bereaved by murder or manslaughter.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society

Tel: 0808 164 3332 www.uk-sands.org

E-mail: helpline@uk-sands.org

Sudden Death www.suddendeath.org

For friends and relatives of people who die suddenly.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide Tel: 0300 111 5065

www.uk-sobs.org.uk

E-mail: sobs.support@hotmail.com

Terence Higgins Trust Tel: 0808 802 1221 (advice line)

www.tht.org.uk info@tht.org.uk

Charity providing practical support, help, counselling and advice for anyone concerned about HIV or AIDS.

The Compassionate Friends Tel: 0345 123 2304

www.tcf.org.uk E-mail: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Support for parents, grandparents and siblings after the death of a child of any age and from any cause. There are some local groups.

Winston's Wish Tel: 0808 802 0021 (helpline)

www.winstonswish.org Tel. 01242 515 157 (general enquiries)

E-mail: info@winstonswish.org (general)

E-mail: ask@winstonswish.org (support)

Individual and group counselling and support as well as information and advice for bereaved children and their families.

Other useful telephone numbers

Age UK Free Helpline

Tel: 0800 6781602

www.ageuk.org.uk

Reading: 0118 950 2480

info@ageukreading.org.uk or contact@ageuk.org.uk

Have factsheets and advice regarding funerals benefits etc.

Citizens Advice Bureau (Reading)

Tel: 03444 111 306

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

www.rcab.org.uk

Reading Borough Council

www.reading.gov.uk

Reading Services Guide.

Reading Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Tel: 0118 937 3533

SSAFA Forces Help

Tel: 0800 731 4880/ 0118 957 3393

www.ssafa.org.uk/berkshire

A national charity providing practical, financial and emotional help for serving and ex-service men, women and their families.

NHS Organ Donation

Tel: 0300 123 23 23

www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Intensive Care Society

www.ics.ac.uk

Patients and relatives section.

Reading Coroner's Office

Tel: 0118 937 2300

www.reading.gov.uk/Coroners

E-mail: Coroner@reading.gov.uk

Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading RG1 1QH

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 0118 322 8066/7059 (Bereavement)

E-mail: rbft.bereavementoffice@nhs.net

Hospital Bereavement Office.

Notes

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Emergency Department, May 2024

Next review due: May 2026