



FINAL JOURNEY

Lasting memories of a unique farewell

What to do when someone dies – Information and next steps

If the person is at home when they die, contact your doctor no matter what time of day it is. They will arrange to come and confirm death, issuing you with a 'medical certificate' to confirm the cause of death. The person's body cannot be moved until this has happened.

If you already know that you would like the person cremated, tell your doctor as they will need to prepare different forms and make further arrangements.

You will need to take the medical certificate to the registrar within 5 days to register the death.

Keep the room as cold as possible. Switch off any electric blankets. If they are on a pressure relieving mattress, this can be left on.

You may want to wash and dress them, brush their hair. Close their eyes and mouth, roll up a towel and place it under the chin if necessary.

If death occurs suddenly (ie: The person has not been seen by a doctor within the last 14 days) the body is immediately in care of the coroner. This also applies if the person died following an accident or injury, due to an industrial disease, during a surgical operation, if the cause of death is unknown or if the death is unexplained.

Normally a Post Mortem is carried out to establish the cause of death. This can be a very upsetting and scary time for the family. The police can be involved and may want to question family members. It is standard procedure.

Choosing a funeral director

You do not have to use a funeral director and may want to organise the funeral yourself. You may want to use some but not all of a funeral director's services. It is important to choose someone that you trust and understands what it is you want, so you may want to call around some different organisations before you decide.

At Final Journey we welcome such enquiries. We can help as much or as little as you want. Whether it is help with transport from A-B, supplying a coffin through to organising all aspects of the funeral.

We will talk you through any aspects of the process that you need to know. We can arrange to come and collect the person's body and take them into our care until the funeral, if this is what you would like. We can also advise and support keeping the body at home.

We will arrange to meet with you to discuss what ideas you have about the funeral arrangements either at your home or at our office.

Call Registration Services to arrange an appointment

The death of a member of the family, a relative or a friend is a distressing and difficult time. Not only do we have to deal with the grief and sadness we have, but there is the important issue of arranging to register the death.

In England and Wales a death must be registered within 5 days of the date of death, unless the Registrar says that this period may be extended or if the coroner is involved. The Registration itself will take approximately 30 minutes.

Unless the Coroner is involved, you will be issued with a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death by the Doctor of the deceased, who will either be a General Practitioner or a Hospital Doctor. Once you have this certificate you should arrange an appointment with the Registrar.

The local registrar offices in Cumbria are as follows

Lady Gillfords House, Petteril Bank Road, CARLISLE, CA1 3AJ

Tel: 0300 303 2472

Wigton Library, WIGTON CA7 9NJ

Tel: 0300 303 2472

Penrith Library, St Andrew's Churchyard, PENRITH CA11 7YA

Tel: 0300 303 2472

County Offices, Busher Walk, KENDAL LA9 4RQ

Tel: 0300 303 2472

College House, Flatt Walk WHITEHAVEN CA28 7RW

Tel: 0300 303 2472

Nan Tait Centre, Abbey Road BARROW IN FURNESS LA14 1LG

Tel: 0300 303 2472

Who can register the death?

The law states that the following may register a death, in this order:

- A relative of the deceased
- A person present at the death
- The occupier of the house or institution where the death took place if there is not anyone more qualified to register
- The person who is arranging the funeral (that is, the person instructing the funeral director).

Others may be qualified in specific circumstances. Consult a Registrar for details.

You may bring a friend or relative with you to see the Registrar together with any documents (medical card, birth certificates and marriage certificates that relate to the person that has died). The Registrar will see you in private and will ask you questions but please do not worry about the registration - if you are upset, the Registrar will understand and will give you the time you need.

After Registration you will be issued with two forms:

A green form to take to allow you to make arrangements for the burial or cremation. If the coroner has been involved then this may be issued by their office and not the Registrar. **The green form should be given to the Funeral Directors or directly to the burial or cremation authorities.**

The Registration or Notification of Death Form is for Social Security purposes. Please read and complete the back of the form, returning it to any local Department of Social Security Office without delay - this relates to state pensions and benefits.

Death certificates may be required by banks, building societies, solicitors or for some insurance and pension claims (photocopies are not acceptable). You may purchase as many certificates as you wish at the time of registration. Normally cost £11.00 per certificate at time of entry.

Who should I tell about a death?

When someone dies you will need to contact a wide variety of organisations to inform them of the death. Here are just some of those you may need to contact, you may have to send them a death certificate:

- Vehicle registration and driving licence
- Passport
- Motoring insurance and breakdown policy providers
- Insurance companies
- Pension plans
- Bank and building society
- Credit card companies
- Utilities (gas, electricity, water, telephone)
- Employees or employers
- Council tax
- Benefit agency
- Income tax
- Mortgage
- Internet provider
- Child's school or childcare provider
- Doctors and dentists
- Hospital clinics or private health care provider
- Solicitor

This is not an exhaustive list and each case will have different officials, organisations and people to advise.

It is important to note that if the deceased owned a vehicle then it may be no-one now has insurance cover to drive it. Many policies state that a vehicle may be driven by someone else with the owner's permission but as soon as the owner dies any such permission may cease. Contact the car insurance company before anyone drives the vehicle to make sure they are covered.

A new service called **'Tell Us Once'** has been introduced in England, Scotland and Wales which helps you tell the government just once about a person's death. The registrar will issue this form when you register the death.

Organising the funeral

A funeral is one of those rare events which is not necessarily improved by professionals. Your funeral needs to be created and conducted according to the culture, customs and language of your family. You have choices.....

- No funeral, nothing. – this is known as a direct cremation/burial
- A funeral at which the dead person is not present – usually called a memorial service
- A family-organised farewell event with or without the ashes present. You can hold this anywhere you want – home, a special place – at any time you choose.
- A private funeral to which only certain people are invited
- A conventional funeral on which you set your stylistic stamp – eg, alternative hearse, colourful coffin, dress code, theme, 'different' music, etc
- A conventional funeral with all the traditional elements.

The Coffin

There are a wide variety of coffins to choose from. Some of which can reflect the personality of the person who has died as well as your budget.

As well as traditional wood veneered coffins with rope handles or brass effect fittings, you can choose from bamboo, willow, pandanus, banana leaf, plain or pictorial cardboard. There are also bamboo and woollen shrouds.

You may want to decorate the coffin yourself with pictures, paintings and poems or embroider the shrouds.

Transport

You can choose to have the coffin arrive in our Gold Mercedes vito hearse. Alternatively a traditional hearse with or without limousines for the family or perhaps a motorcycle hearse, VW Camper van, Horse and cart or you can simply use your own big car or van.

You may want to meet at the crematorium or burial ground or have the cortege set off from the house. You may want to drive a specific route to take in special places en route to the funeral..

Flowers

Flowers can be a beautiful part of the funeral. They can be simple, such a picked from the garden or formal. We work with some very talented florists that can create a tribute right for you. Some flowers can stay with the coffin when it is cremated. Otherwise they will be displayed outside for 5 days. You may wish for these to be collected and returned to you so they can be enjoyed at home, given to family members or taken to the hospice.

Donations

It is increasingly popular to ask for donations to charity instead of funeral flowers.

Yes, you can have a cash collection at the funeral service. Final Journey will be pleased to organise this for you and either bring the monies to you or send the money to your chosen charity.

But you will almost certainly raise much more money, and therefore do more good, if you ask people to contribute through a fundraising website. It's far less painful for them to part with virtual money than five pound notes.

Eat some food or drink a toast

If Granddad was famous for his love of Murraymints, why not invite everyone to suck one as they listen to people talking about him? Consider raising a glass of something to the person who has died at the goodbye moment when the curtains close.

Put something on the coffin

Whether the funeral is at the crematorium or a burial ground you can ask people to come forward at some point and put a single flower stem on the coffin, or a sprig of herb, or write a last message. This can be very intense.

Funeral favours

You can give those who come to the funeral a little keepsake to take home with them. It could be a paper bag containing the 'secret recipe of ginger bread', a bag of maltesers and a bag of forget me not seeds to plant in their garden. It could be some little thing that belonged to the dead person and by which they will be remembered – a trowel for one person, a book for another. Little things, but full of personal meaning.

Dress up – or down

Ask people to dress in a way which will reflect and add to the sense of occasion. Ask the funeral director to do the same, if you wish.

Music

You will want to consider the music you would like for different parts of the service. The music you choose should express how you and everyone else feel. It should, of course, have a strong connection to the person who has died and is likely to include some of that person's favourites.

Something at the beginning, something at the end and perhaps a piece in the middle, lasting 3 minutes at most, will probably be quite enough for a ceremony.

Music can be much more powerful and evocative than spoken words—and the words of a song far less meaningful than its tune and the way it is sung.

If you want to play recorded music, most crematoriums have the Wesley music system, which can download from the internet almost anything ever recorded. Any crematorium which does not have the Wesley system may insist on original, not burned, CDs.

Live music works well, of course, and there are professional musicians out there of all sorts to play for you. A Grandchild singing or playing a musical instrument is likely to be far more touching than a stranger playing a harp like an angel.

Order of Service Booklets

These are very useful if you are singing hymns as the words can be written inside for all to read. A member of the family can design and print these or we at Final Journey can arrange this for you.

Recording/Filming and Photography

Carlisle Crematorium can record the audio of the service and put it onto a cd, there is a charge for this.

We have filmed services for families which have been put onto a DVD, we have also taken photographs. It can be difficult to remember who is there and what is going on.

More and more people want to share and savour the funeral they made. Take your camera and/or invite others to bring theirs. Alternatively, you can book a professional.

Food and Drinks

It is traditional to have a gathering after the funeral for family and friends to spend time talking and sharing stories. You could go to a venue of your choosing and have an afternoon tea, or you may wish to go the local village hall. You could have the persons favourite food or a special family dish. You could ask family and friends to make something and bring it, which helps to involve them or have the help of a caterer. Final Journey can help to arrange caterers if you require.

Cremated Remains

Ashes are available for collection the next day. Final Journey will collect these and arrange to bring them to you.

If you want to know more, please contact us, we will be happy to help.

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