



WHEN SOMEONE PASSES AWAY

A Step-by-Step Guide to Help You Through What Happens Next

LESIA Alliance



Introduction

Losing someone can be overwhelming. Alongside grief, there are often practical steps that need to be taken, sometimes within a short space of time.

This guide provides clear, step-by-step information about what typically happens when someone dies in the UK. You do not need to do everything at once, and support is available.

First things to know

There is no right or wrong way to feel

You do not have to manage everything immediately

It's okay to ask for help or take things slowly

This guide is intended to help you understand the process and feel less alone.

Immediate steps (first few days)

1. Confirm the death and contact the right people

What you need to do depends on where and how the person died:

- If the person died at home (expected death):
Contact the person's GP, or the hospice or district nurse if they were receiving care. A medical professional will confirm the death.
- If the person died at home (unexpected or unclear):
Call 999. The police and coroner may need to be involved to establish the cause of death.
- If the person died in a hospital or a care setting:
Staff will guide you through what happens next and arrange the necessary paperwork.

A Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) is needed before the death can be registered.

2. Gather key documents (if you can)

If possible, try to gather:

- Birth certificate
- Marriage or civil partnership certificate (if applicable)
- NHS number or NHS card
- Passport
- Driving licence
- Details of any benefits or pensions

If you can't find everything, don't worry.

You can still register the death without all the documents. Missing paperwork can usually be dealt with later.

3. Register the death

In England and Wales, a death must usually be registered within 5 days.

You will need to:

- Make an appointment with the register office in the district where the death occurred
- Take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)
- The registrar will ask for basic details about the person who has died.

You will receive:

- The green certificate (Certificate for Burial or Cremation)
- Information about using Tell Us Once
- The option to purchase death certificates (it can be helpful to have more than one)

Next steps (over the following weeks)

4. Use the *Tell Us Once* service

Tell Us Once is a UK government service that allows you to notify multiple departments at the same time, including:

- DWP
- HMRC
- DVLA
- Passport Office
- Local council

You will usually be given access to this service after registering the death.

5. Arrange the funeral

The green certificate must be given to the funeral director before the funeral can take place.

You can:

- Use a funeral director
- Or make arrangements yourself if you prefer

There is no obligation to rush. You may want to consider:

- Any wishes the person shared
- Cultural or faith traditions
- Support from family, friends, or the community

6. Inform other organisations

You may also need to contact:

- Banks and building societies
- Employers or former employers
- Utility companies
- Insurance providers

This does not all need to be done immediately. Take things at a pace that feels manageable.

7. Check for financial or bereavement support

You may be entitled to financial help or bereavement benefits.

Information is available through:

- GOV.UK
- Citizens Advice

Eligibility depends on individual circumstances.

Bereavement support at LESLA Alliance

Even with clear information available online, many people find this process hard to manage while grieving.

LESLA Alliance offers human support alongside official guidance.

We don't provide legal or professional advice, but we can:

- Talk things through at your pace
- Help you understand what steps may need to happen next
- Break things down into manageable stages
- Offer reassurance and connection during a difficult time

This support is particularly shaped by our work with members of the Windrush generation, their descendants, and older people who may feel isolated.

Official guidance

For the most up-to-date and authoritative information, visit:

GOV.UK – When someone dies

<https://www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies>

This page includes detailed guidance on registration, Tell Us Once, funerals, benefits, and official records.

A gentle note

Everyone's situation is different. This guide is provided as general information and signposting only. You may wish to seek professional advice where appropriate.

You don't have to go through this alone.

If you would like support or someone to talk things through with, LESLA Alliance is here.