

**Arranging a funeral**

The death of a partner, relative or friend is a painful loss. As many families know very little about funerals, it is a difficult and worrying time and it is natural to want the best for your loved one. Funerals are an important part of the bereavement process, which includes acknowledging your loss and expressing your sadness. They are a way of showing your love and respect for the deceased, it is a celebration of their life. This leaflet has been produced to provide advice and help from registering a death to arranging a funeral in the United Kingdom and lists useful contact details and where you can get more information.

**Where do I start?**

When a loved one passes away there are 3 things you must do in the first few days.

**1. Get a medical certificate from a GP or hospital doctor**

To register the death you will be required to produce a certificate of the cause of death which will be issued by a Medical Practitioner, which could be the local GP or a doctor from the hospital. In cases of a sudden death, accident or when the cause of death isn’t known, it may result in the Coroner being notified. If this is the case, then the Coroner may issue an alternative certificate - Coroner’s Inquest Form - you’ll need this to register the death.

**2. Register the death**

When a loved one passes away you need to register their death. You need to do this within 5 days of their passing.

A death can be registered by:​

* a relative of the deceased
* a person present at the death
* the occupier of the house where the death took place
* the person who is arranging the funeral and instructing the Funeral Director.

You can get the address of the local registrar from either their GP, the hospital, the phone book or by visiting the following websites:

Visit: [Hertfordshire County Council website](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/births-deaths-marriages-and-citizenship/deaths/register-a-death.aspx).

[www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages](http://www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages).

When you register the death you will be given a Certificate of Registration of Death. You will need this before a funeral can take place.

**3. Arrange the funeral**

To arrange the funeral you can use a funeral director or you can arrange it yourself. You must give the Certificate of Registration of Death to the funeral director, or if you are arranging the funeral yourself, this must be given to your local Cemetery.

**Where can I get help to arrange a funeral?**

**Cremation or Burial?**

The first decision to make is whether the deceased is to be buried or cremated. This will determine what paperwork will need to be completed. What sort of funeral? Funerals can take many different forms. They can be religious or nonreligious, traditional or non-traditional, formal or informal. You should arrange whatever suits you best. Most people use a Funeral Director. They have a lot of experience organising funerals and are able to suggest ideas for you to consider and inform you if your wishes are possible and how to go about planning the type of funeral you would like for your loved one. You can find the names of local Funeral Directors either by searching on line or by looking in the telephone directory.

Many Funeral Directors are members of the National Association of Funeral Directors or the Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors Contact Details The National Association of Funeral Directors Tel: 0845 230 1343 (local rate) or 0121 711 1343 Visit: www.nafd.org.uk The Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors Tel: 0845 230 6777 (local rate) or 01279 726 777 Visit: [www.saif.org.uk](http://www.saif.org.uk)

**Burial**

If the deceased is to be buried, is there a family grave or do you need to purchase a grave? If you are using a Funeral Director they will be able to advise you, including the cost and can help you with the purchase of a grave. You will also have to complete a Notice of Interment Form and if they are being buried in an existing grave you will need to produce the grave deeds. You can get the form from your local Cemetery or from your Funeral Director.

**Costs**

Funeral Directors should give you a written quotation for their costs and may require you to pay a deposit. Charges differ between Funeral Directors and therefore it is advisable for you to get more than one quote so you are able to compare the prices.

Whilst we cannot recommend a specific funeral director, costs and services can be compared on the following sites:

<https://localfuneral.co.uk/>

<https://www.yourfuneralchoice.com/>

**Worried about the cost?**

Funerals can be expensive and whilst we all want to do the best for our loved ones, we also have to be mindful of how much it will cost and what we can afford. You should make sure you know exactly how much it will cost, you need to take into account flowers, transport to take family members to the funeral, death notices for the local paper (obituaries), cost of the cremation or burial, fees for a church service prior to burial or cremation and also the Funeral Directors fees. Something to consider is whether your Funeral Director has signed up to the ‘Fair Funerals’ pledge which asks them to:

1. Recognise funerals can be expensive and many people struggle with the cost.

2. Make their most affordable funeral package visible to the public, including third party costs. 3. Charge clear prices for goods and services so people know what they’re buying. Communicate prices in initial conversations and prominently display full price lists.

Visit: [www.fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk/](http://www.fairfuneralscampaign.org.uk/)

**Help with funeral costs**

You may be eligible for help with funeral costs;

**The Social fund**

You could get a Funeral Payment if you’re on a low income and need help to pay for a funeral you’re arranging. How much you get depends on your circumstances and if you’re eligible. To get a Funeral Payment you must:

• be arranging a funeral in the UK, the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland

• meet the rules on your relationship with the deceased

• get certain benefits or tax credits

Telephone: 0345 606 0265

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funeral-payment-claim-form>

**Want to do it yourself?**

There is no legal requirement to use the services of a funeral director but many families find the prospect of organising a funeral entirely without support from an undertaker very daunting, not least from a practical point of view. A middle road is to find a funeral director who will provide as much or as little help as you require.

A funeral director typically organises the funeral by collecting and moving the body, arranging embalming, (if required), viewing of the deceased, providing a coffin, hearse and other elements. Carrying out these services relieves the bereaved from doing what they may feel are unpleasant and difficult tasks. Ultimately, the funeral director must operate commercially and in charging for his or her services, funerals can be expensive.

Some people do not wish to use a funeral director. This can be for a wide variety of reasons.  It is your right to make this decision without giving a reason.

It is your right, as executor (or next of kin) to be given the body by a mortuary, hospital, etc., in order to carry out a funeral without a Funeral Director.

Almost all aspects of a funeral are relatively straight forward in themselves, the difficulties arise because of the emotional strain of being bereaved, the pressure of time, the lack of experience of looking after the body of someone who has died and a lack of knowledge about the paperwork required. The entire funeral can be handled by the bereaved family Watford Borough Council cemetery service are able to assist in facilitating this.

**Legal requirements**

You are required to get a death certificate from the doctor at the GP surgery or hospital.

You must register the death in the district where death occurs.

**Transporting the deceased**

The person arranging the funeral must arrange transport for the deceased to the cemetery or crematorium in a suitable vehicle. They must also arrange for bearers. These must be people who are capable of carrying the deceased in the chosen container to and from the vehicle and into a chapel or to the grave. They will also need to lower the deceased into the grave if burial is chosen, we will provide lowering straps for this.

If you think you are able to arrange a funeral yourself, please consider the points below and contact Bereavement Services for advice.

* The body must be suitably transported to the cemetery or crematorium in a container, clearly identifying the name and age of the deceased. The container most commonly used is a coffin.
* If you plan to make your own container, use the smallest size possible to accommodate the deceased but strong enough to hold the weight.

For additional information get a copy of [The Natural Death Handbook](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk/index.php?page=book-shop) a complete manual for anyone considering caring for their dead and organising a funeral without the services of a funeral director.

**Baby Funerals**

Losing a child is a part of life that no one should have to experience. At North Watford Cemetery we will do all we can to help ease the pain in a professional and caring way.

If your baby was born or stillborn in a hospital, there will be staff there who can help and advise you with funeral arrangements. Often, the hospital will be able to recommend a funeral director to organise a baby funeral, but you can always make the arrangements with a funeral director of your choice or directly with us.

There is no burial fee for a child under the age of 18. We have separate areas for children’s burials and these plots are allowed a memorial of choice should the family wish to place one. A memorial fee will apply.

**Support & Advice**

The team at North Watford Cemetery are able to offer support and advice on all aspects of burial at their cemeteries.