



**DARWEN HEALTHCARE**

*"where your health matters"*



**INFORMATION FOR  
BEREAVED RELATIVES  
AND FRIENDS**

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# DARWEN HEALTHCARE

Darwen Healthcare is a General Medical Service General Practitioner (GP) Service providing quality NHS care to patients residing within Darwen and registered as a patient with the service.

This booklet provides information for bereaved relatives, family and friends on what to do when someone dies and who can help with the processes that need to be completed.

We understand that this is an extremely difficult and confusing time, so we hope that this booklet will provide useful information and advice to help navigate the many processes that you may come across in your time of loss.

There are several procedures that we, as the registered practice of your loved one, need to be processed after someone dies to enable you to make the necessary arrangements for the next part of their journey. This booklet provides information on:

- The issuing of the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (a Death Certificate) by a GP at the practice who looked after your loved one during their last illness.
- The registering of the death with the registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- The arranging of the funeral of your loved one
- Information about some of the emotions you might feel after the death of someone you were close to and details of service that may be able to support you

## **NOTIFYING DARWEN HEALTHCARE OF AN EXPECTED DEATH**

At some point following the death of your relative or friend either yourself or a family member or a health professional within the community will let us know and then we can commence the practice process with the aim of making it as seamless as possible at such a difficult time for you all.

If you wish to speak to someone at the practice please contact our main telephone number of 01254 964640 or email [darwin.healthcare@nhs.net](mailto:darwin.healthcare@nhs.net) and in the subject line add Bereavement

## **MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF THE CAUSE OF DEATH (DEATH CERTIFICATE)**

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has to be issued by a doctor who has seen your loved one at some point before their death. If your loved one died at home or in a Nursing Home or Care Home and the death was expected then this certificate will be completed by their General Practitioner (GP) and once completed will be sent electronically to the registrars office for the death certificate to be issued. Once received by the registrar they will contact you with an appointment to receive the official Death Certificate. (See Page 8)

Your loved one's body cannot be moved out of the area until the death certificate has been issued, although it may be possible to move their body to your preferred place of rest.

## **NOTIFYING DARWEN HEALTHCARE OF AN UNEXPECTED DEATH**

**IN SOME CASES IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE GP TO ISSUE THE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH.**

This could be if the death was sudden and unexpected or if the doctor is uncertain about the circumstances around the death or cause of death, in such cases the GP is legally obliged to contact the coroner.

## **THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS SERVICE**

When your relative or friends GP provides information to the Medical Examiners they scrutinise the causes of death given by the GP and give independent advice into the causes of all deaths apart from ones which need to be reviewed by a Coroner.

The Medical Examiner Service offers families and Next of Kin an opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns they may have about the cause of death of a loved one or about the care they received prior to their death. This is normally completed by telephone and they can explain any Medical Terminology that may have been used and make it easier for you to understand. This can often give you some closure about the cause of death.

Medical Examiners look at your relatives or loved ones medical records and discuss the cause of death with the GP who will be completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death Form.

## **CORONERS:**

Some deaths, as mentioned earlier, legally, may need to be notified to the coroner and the Medical Examiner Service can provide you with more details about this if required. When a Coroner has to start an investigation, although he will do it independently, he may still ask the Medical Examiner for some medical advice relating to the patient.

## **CONTACT WITH YOU FROM THE MEDICAL EXAMINER:**

For a number of years now senior NHS Doctors had the opportunity to receive training and spend some of their time working as Medical Examiners.

The Medical Examiner will explain to you what is to be written on the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death and will provide you with clarity around any medical terminology if required.

They will ask you if you have any questions or concerns relating to the care your relative or friend received prior to their death (please see next section) this is your opportunity to ask any questions and tell them if you have any concerns.

You may also wish to pass on feedback or compliments of the healthcare professionals who were involved in your loved one's care. Having this closure around the cause of death can really help you in the grieving process so please take full advantage of it.

## **WHY DOES THE MEDICAL EXAMINER ASK IF I HAVE CONCERNS:**

Having a discussion with the Medical Examiner allows you to have a honest conversation and tell them about any concerns openly as they were not involved in your loved one's care.

Medical Examiners will go through any questions you may have and if they need to obtain further information or investigate further they will refer on as required. They will make every effort to avoid any delays and work with the families if release of the body is needed quickly.

Their information can sometimes help you understand more about the treatment that was provided and the cause of death and to understand any medical language that has been used that you don't understand. Any information gathered can also be used to improve patient care in the future.

### **NOMINATED PERSON TO CONTACT:**

If you feel that you are not in a position to handle the calls you can nominate another individual to discuss on your behalf as a first point of contact. Everyone understands how difficult it may be to discuss elements of your loved ones death so it is completely your choice to speak with them or nominate another person to speak with them on your behalf.

### **MEDICAL EXAMINER OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS:**

You can contact the Medical Examiner Office either by phone or email:

Telephone Number: 01254 735673  
Email Address: [medicalexaminer@elht.nhs.uk](mailto:medicalexaminer@elht.nhs.uk)  
Opening Hours are: 08:30 – 16:00 Monday to Friday

## REGISTERING THE DEATH

After a person has died, their GP health records will be passed to Primary Care Support England (PCSE) so they can be stored. GP records are generally retained for 10 years after the patient's death before they're destroyed.

To access their GP records, you need to contact the last GP surgery they were registered with i.e. **Darwen Healthcare F.A.O Medical Records**

## REGISTERING THE DEATH

This legal process should generally be done within 5 days of the death unless the coroner is investigating the circumstances of the death. The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be sent electronically to the Registry Office by Darwen Healthcare.

**The following can register a death:**

- A relative of the deceased
- A person presents at the death.
- The person arranging the funeral

**The Registrar will ask you the following:**

- The date and place of death
- The full name, Surname, and maiden name of the person who has died was married
- The date and place of birth of the deceased
- The occupation of the deceased and if the deceased person was a married woman or woman or widow, the full name and occupation of the spouse and if retired
- The usual address of the deceased



- If the person who has died was married, the date of birth of the surviving spouse
- Whether the person who has died was receiving a state pension

**Important: Please take the person's birth certificate and if they were married a copy of the marriage certificate with you to the Registry Office.**

The registrar will enter the information onto the computer system and print off a copy of what will be the death certificate and ask you to check that all the information is correct. Please ensure that you check it carefully as any mistakes identified later can be very difficult to amend.

This is the official Death Certificate and further signed copies can be obtained and currently the cost is £11.00 per copy. At the same time you will be given a Green form which enables you to arrange the funeral. You will also receive a form to complete about benefits.

Deaths that occur at home in Darwen must be registered in Blackburn Registrar's Office:

The Register Office

Town Hall

Blackburn

BB1 7 DY

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday 09:00 am to 16:30 BY APPOINTMENT ONLY Tel  
No: 01254 588660

## **NHS EQUIPMENT & MEDICATION**

If your loved one was using a NHS Bed the this must be returned, This can be done by contacting the District Nurses linked with Darwen Healthcare. Other equipment used during your loved one's illness is their property and therefore you are free to dispose of it as you feel appropriate.

Any controlled medication kept at the home should be handed to the District Nurses for disposal. Any unused prescribed medication should be returned to the Pharmacy that dispensed it.

Wheelchairs issued by Preston Specialist Mobility Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC) need to be returned to them via Tel No: 01772 716921

## **TELL US ONCE SERVICE**

To use "tell us once" the death has to have been registered. The Registrar will give you information about the service when you go to register the death.

You can also find information from the registrar or at [www.gov.uk/tell-us-once](http://www.gov.uk/tell-us-once)

Tell us once brings together several organisation (see below)) so that people do not need to notify them individually of the death:

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Local Authorities
- Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- Identity and Passport Service (IPS)

## **Other organisations you may need to contact:**

- Royal Mail
- Utilities - Gas, Electric, Water, Phones & Internet
- TV Licensing
- Insurance Companies
- Bank/Building Society
- Credit Cards
- Dentist
- Opticians

## **STOPPING JUNK MAIL TO THE DECEASED PERSON**

By registering. With the free service [www.stopmail.co.uk](http://www.stopmail.co.uk) the names and addresses of the deceased are removed from mailing lists, Stopping most advertising mail within as little as six weeks. You can also call them via 0808 168 9607 where you will be asked some simple information that only takes a few minutes to complete.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

If you have access to their login details it will make the process simpler, but they are not essential to close or alter them. A copy of the death certificate and a few other documents are required for to action your requests.

### **TWITTER**

This will automatically close after six months of inactivity; it can be refreshed if someone were to gain access at a later date. Twitter provides options of official deactivation or the deletion of the account.

### **FACEBOOK**

Has two options: The account can either be closed permanently or you can chose to have the page memorialised so family and friends can still share memories after the person has died. Some users of

Facebook may have nominated a “legacy contact” to administer their account in the event of a death.

## **INSTAGRAM**

Has two options. The account can either closed permanently or you can choose to have the page memorialised.

## **LINKED IN**

If the account is premium it will first have to downgraded before it can be closed.

On any of the social media platforms, visit their webpage scroll to the bottom and click “help” and use the search term “deceased” they will direct you from there on to the next stages

## **FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

If you choose to use the services of a Funeral Service they will make the necessary arrangements for you, in what is a very difficult and distressing time for most people. You do not have to wait for the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death to be issued before you can make contact with a Funeral Service. You may wish to consider services offered and the likely cost before you make a decision and we have listed a number of local Funeral Services contact details at the end of this booklet. Your loved one may have already decided on a funeral director as part of an advance care plan or may have a prepaid funeral plan.

Your chosen Funeral Service will provide you with options and discuss with you the arrangements that you may wish to make. A funeral provides you with the opportunity for you and those close to say a final goodbye to your loved one in an appropriate way for both you and the person who has died.

You may wish to choose whether a Religious or Non-Religious Service and select pieces of music and readings that either you or those close may wish to make to reflect on the life of the loved one. You will need to decide whether your loved one’s body is to be buried or cremated. Please take the time you need to consider the options as they are not easy decisions to make. We have listed some of the local Funeral services on Page 15

## **VIEWING YOUR LOVED ONE'S BODY**

Please let the Funeral Director know if you would like to view your loved one again after they have died. Some find it helpful to view their loved ones one last time and it may also be helpful for relatives who might not have been able to see them before their death.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANT TO HELP WITH FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS:**

### **FUNERAL EXPENSES PAYMENT**

You could be entitled to Funeral Expenses Payment (also called a Funeral Payment) if you get certain benefits and need help to pay for a funeral you're arranging. For further information please visit [Get help with funeral costs \(Funeral Expenses Payment\): How it works - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

### **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PAYMENT**

The amount of Bereavement Support Payment you can get will depend on:

- your relationship to the person who died
- when you make your claim
- when you reach State Pension age

Your relationship to the person who died

If you were married or in a registered civil partnership

You'll get the higher rate if one of the following applied when your partner died:

- you were getting Child Benefit for a child that lived with you
- you were told by the Child Benefit Office that you were entitled to Child Benefit for a child that lived with you
- you were pregnant

The most you can get is:

a one-off payment of £3,500 or 18 monthly payments of £350

If you're not eligible for the higher rate, you'll get the lower rate instead.

The most you can get is:

- a one-off payment of £2,500
- 18 monthly payments of £100
- If you were living together as if you were married
- The most you can get is:
  - a one-off payment of £3,500
  - 18 monthly payments of £350

For further information and eligibility please visit: Bereavement Support Payment: Eligibility - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

Current as at August 2024

## **PENSION/ALLOWANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

Queries regarding pensions and allowances should be directed to the Pension Service – Tel : 0800 731 0469

If the deceased was in receipt of a war pension , you would need to telephone the Veterans Agency on 0808 802 1212. You will need to provide the mention information and National Insurance Number of the deceased and their Next of Kin.

## **FUNERAL SERVICES:**

**EDWIN AINSWORTH  
CHURCH BANK STREET  
DARWEN  
BB3 3HA  
TEL: 01254 8873290**

**CO-OP FUNERAL CARE  
234 DUCKWORTH STREET  
DARWEN  
BB3 1PX  
TEL: 01254 701145**

**KC FUNERAL SERVICE  
11 BRIDGE STREET  
DARWEN  
BB3 2AA  
TEL: 01254 920034**

**DARWEN FUNERAL SERVICE  
59/61 BLACKBURN ROAD  
DARWEN  
BB3 1EJ  
TEL: 01254 873618**

**L CHAMP FUNERAL  
SERVICE  
BANK HOUSE  
WHALLEY ROAD  
CLAYTON-LE-MOORS  
BB5 5DY  
TEL: 01254 390731**

## **AFTER THE FUNERAL**

Having to deal with the deceased person's estate can be difficult and upsetting. If you loved one made a will, an executor will be named and it is their responsibility to carry out the person's wishes.

This ensures that further expenses, debts and taxes are paid from the deceased person's estate. It can also include disposing appropriately of possessions and assets in accordance with the deceased person's will.

If a person dies without leaving a valid will, their estate must be dealt with according to certain rules, These are called rules of intestacy. FURTHER DETAILS AVAILABLE FROM THE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU OR Intestacy - who inherits if someone dies without a will? - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

## **LOCAL BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS**

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### **EAST LANCASHIRE HOSPICE**

Bereavement support provision is available to anyone registered with a GP in Blackburn, Darwen, Hyndburn or Ribble Valley who is over the age of 18 and is grieving, irrespective of time, cause of death or relationship to the person who has died. There is no requirement to have had previous contact with the hospice services. Information is available on the hospice website or telephone number. Darwen Healthcare can also refer you to the hospice.

<https://eastlancshospice.org.uk/berereavement-support-service>

Tel : 01254 965863 Monday to Friday 08:00-17:00

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### **CHAMP BEREAVEMENT GROUP (LIFE AFTER LOSS)**

[www.champfunerals.com](http://www.champfunerals.com) TEL: 01254 390731

Champ Funeral Services have teamed up with Clayton Community Centre to reach out and offer support to people in the Hyndburn and surrounding areas.

Providing a safe place to come together to share your story with others who have also experienced bereavement.

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### **BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN CARERS SERVICE**

[WWW.BWDCARERS.ORG.UK/](http://WWW.BWDCARERS.ORG.UK/)

The Service offers a 6 week course for those who were previously caring for a loved one who was a resident of Blackburn with Darwen and may not have had time for themselves whilst caring to regain their own lives.

For more information please ring 01254 688440

Or email [office@bwdcarers.org.uk](mailto:office@bwdcarers.org.uk)

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## TALK ME HAPPY

BME Lancashire Network <https://lancashirebmenetwork.org.uk/talk-me-happy/step-by-step-counselling/>

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## SPEAK THEIR NAME

For those bereaved by suicide <https://bewellbwd.com/news/speak-their-name/>

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## BAGS FOR STRIFE

For those bereaved by suicide <http://bagsforstrife.co.uk>

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## LANCASHIRE COUNCIL OF MOSQUES BEREAVEMENT AND COUNSELLING HELPLINE

<https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/suicide-1/resources/lancashire-council-mosques-bereavement-counselling-helpline>

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## HOME START

For families with one child under the age of seven <https://home-startblackburnanddarwen.org/>

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## AMPARO/Listening Ear

<https://listening-ear.co.uk/amparo/>

Amparo means 'shelter' or 'safe haven' in Spanish and provides support for anyone affected by suicide. Support can be provided one-to-one, to family groups, groups of colleagues or peers

(Tel:) 0151 488 6648 (E)[enquiries@listening-ear.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@listening-ear.co.uk)

## **CRUSE Bereavement Care**

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) Tel: 0808 808 1677

Their mission is to offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies and to enhance society's care of bereaved people.

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## **Child Bereavement UK**

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Tel:0800 02 888 40 [support@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:support@childbereavementuk.org)

Child Bereavement UK helps children, parents and families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. We support children and young people up to the age of 25 who are facing bereavement, and anyone affected by the death of a child of any age. We provide training to professionals in health and social care, education, and the voluntary and corporate sectors, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families.

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## **St Catherine's Hospice Bereavement Support Group**

Tel: 01772 629171 Online support [enquiries@stcatherines.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@stcatherines.co.uk)

[www.stcatherines.co.uk/our-care/bereavement-and-remembrance/](http://www.stcatherines.co.uk/our-care/bereavement-and-remembrance/)

Bereavement support is offered through all of their community and hospice-based teams and involves various different people including doctors, nurses, social workers, volunteer chaplains and volunteer counsellors.

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## **SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE**

[www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk/](http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk/) On line support

SASP bring together national and local organisations that are involved in delivering suicide bereavement support across the UK and to address the need for formal, multi-agency, proactive suicide bereavement support. We're a special interest group of the National Suicide Prevention Alliance (NSPA) based at Samaritans.

## Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

[www.uksobs.org/](http://www.uksobs.org/)

Providing support to those bereaved by suicide is key to helping them to cope and recover – survivors often express a strong sense of isolation and feeling alone at a time when they are hurting and vulnerable.

Tel: 0300 111 5065 (E) [email.support@uksobs.org](mailto:email.support@uksobs.org)

Punjabi speaking: [birmingham@uksobs.org](mailto:birmingham@uksobs.org) or 07376 303 438

## WAY (Widows and Young)

WAY is a UK charity that offers a peer-to-peer support network for anyone who's lost a partner before their 51st birthday – married or not, with or without children, inclusive of sexual orientation, gender, race and religion.

<https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/>

## Notes

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## FEATHERS

I left you a little white feather  
I placed it right there in your way  
I wrapped it in love with a message  
To let you know you'll be okay

I drew you a colourful rainbow  
It followed your car for a while  
I made a spectacular rainbow  
I hoped it would show me your smile

I flew down a beautiful robin  
It landed right there on your ledge  
I prayed he would give you the  
strength  
To push yourself back from the edge

I try every day to remind you  
That I never did go away  
The feathers, the rainbows, the  
robins  
Are my way of trying to stay.

