



Certifying and Registering a Death and Coping with Grief

A Guide for the Bereaved

Can I view the deceased after they have been moved from the ward?

- As we have no facility for viewings in our mortuary, you will be unable to view the deceased after they have been moved from the ward. Please speak to your nominated funeral director regarding viewing arrangements.
- **You do not need to collect a physical death certificate from the hospital (Medical Certificate of Cause of Death – MCCD).**
- **Please make sure you leave the contact details of the person who will be registering the death with the ward team.**

What happens after someone dies in hospital?

- The medical notes will be reviewed by The Medical Examiner Service. This will include discussions with the attending doctors.
- If the cause of death is natural and a doctor is available, the MCCD will usually be completed the following day (Mon-Fri).
- If the death requires referral to the coroner, the process will be different. Please contact the mortuary department for further information.
- The Medical Examiner's Service will try to contact you by telephone. This service is made up of **Medical Examiners** – independent doctors or Medical Examiner's Officers. This will usually take place the following day (Mon-Fri).
- The Medical Examiner will explain the cause of death entered on the MCCD and offer you the opportunity to ask questions.
- Please contact the Mortuary Team to confirm the MCCD has been completed.
- Once completed, the hospital will email the MCCD directly to Islington Town Hall Registration Services.



- You will then be able to book an appointment online to complete the registration of the death at <https://www.islington.gov.uk/birth-death-marriage-and-citizenship/register-a-death>
- Follow the instructions online. You will be given the option to select a time for the registration to take place. You must then attend the appointment in person at Islington Town Hall.
- **If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the Mortuary Team who can advise you further.**

What if I need an urgent death certificate out of hours or in special circumstances?

- Some faiths require the deceased to be buried as soon as possible after death and Whittington Hospital will support this as far as it is legal and practical.
- During office hours this will be arranged through the Mortuary Team.
- Mortuary office: 020 7288 5330.
- Please note that certain criteria will need to be met to facilitate this process:
 - The death does not require referral to the Coroner.
 - A doctor who attended the deceased is available to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause Of Death with a legitimate cause.
 - The death has been registered and a green form produced.
 - The Duty Site Manager can be contacted via main switchboard on 020 7272 3070.

Further advice and guidance

Please contact the numbers below:

Mortuary Team:

020 7288 5330/3119

Monday-Friday 9 AM to 3.30 PM

Medical Examiner Service:

020 7288 5680

Monday-Friday 8 AM to 4 PM



Coping With Grief

- When first bereaved, it may seem that you will never get past the initial pain of loss.
- During this difficult time, you must remember to be kind to yourself – get lots of rest and remember to eat properly.
- Don't feel embarrassed to show your feelings. Allow yourself to grieve openly, rather than suppressing your sorrow.
- Talking about what has happened and how you are feeling can be helpful. You may find someone within your family, a friend, or a support group, with whom you feel safe to express your emotions. It is also very important to keep in touch with the people in your life who you care about, even though you may not feel like seeing them straight away.
- Try not to make any important decisions during this grieving period. Your focus will be otherwise engaged.
- When you feel ready, you can begin to make plans for your future and start to move forward with your life, at your own pace and in your own time.
- Your GP will be able to help if you are experiencing physical symptoms and will also be able to refer you to the appropriate person/people to support you psychologically.
- St Joseph's Hospice offer a bereavement service which is open to residents of Islington, Camden, Haringey and Hackney. Their number is 0300 303 0400.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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