

Notifying other people of the death

Banks, solicitors, insurance companies and other relevant parties need to be informed of the death and may require a copy of the Death Certificate (as opposed to the Cause of Death Certificate). When you register the death it is advisable to ask for two or more copies of the certificate. The funeral director can also advise you on this point.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The information given here is correct at the time of printing (June 2012)

Hospice:

- **Hospice Counsellor** 647449
- **Palliative Care Nurses** 647474
- **Chaplaincy** 647448
 - **Social Worker** 647443

How to contact Hospice Isle of Man and Rebecca House

- By Post:** Hospice Isle of Man/Rebecca House
Strang
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM4 4RP
- Telephone:** 01624 647400
- Email:** **General Enquiries:** admin@hospice.org.im
Fundraising: fundraising@hospice.org.im
- Website:** www.hospice.org.im

Hospice Isle of Man is the operating name of the Isle of Man charity Hospice Care, registered number 317.

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Coping with Bereavement

Help, support and practical guidance

It's the hardest fact of life that the death of a loved one can take you to a very low point. The emotional turmoil that results from losing someone very close to you can be, and often is, overwhelming. It is important to understand that feelings such as disbelief, confusion, regret, anger, guilt and even rejection are normal and all part of the grieving process, and given time they will pass.

It is hoped that the notes and suggestions in this guide, based on many years' experience, will be of some use in helping you make this very personal journey. Please remember that you need never feel alone or isolated in your grief. At Hospice Isle of Man there are people who can offer you and your family emotional and/or spiritual support, if and when you need it.

You will not be alone in experiencing any or all of these sometimes extreme emotions following bereavement.

■ **Loneliness and numbness.** Very common feelings as a result of being grief-stricken.

■ **Disbelief.** An ability to come to terms with the tragic event - a feeling that it's unreal and that the person you've lost will somehow still be in his or her usual places.

■ **Confusion.** This often displays itself as an inability to concentrate or a tendency to become forgetful or lose things. You may even have difficulty remembering simple things, words and names very familiar to you.

■ **Exhaustion.** You feel unusually tired, can't sleep and use all your energy just coping and you fear doing things that have previously been so easy for you.



■ **Guilt, regret and anger.** Such feelings may be totally unreasonable and misplaced but the emotions are so strong that you're unaware of this. The anger is often directed at those whom you feel have failed either you or the person you have lost.

■ **Rejection.** This can arise out of a feeling, real or imagined, that other people seem to be avoiding you or won't speak to you of your bereavement.

Things you can do to help you cope with bereavement

In basic and broad terms, the most important thing is to avoid letting yourself 'fade away' by disappearing into a shell and shutting everyone else out - especially those who love and care about you. However tempting and natural this may seem at the time, it will only serve to prolong the pain of your grieving and unhappiness and make those people close to you unhappy too.

The much more positive route to overcoming grief is to do the very simple but very effective things.

- Don't be afraid to cry. Far from being a sign of weakness, it's often a great release.
 - Allow yourself to grieve, even though it may take a long time.
 - Let others know how you feel.
 - Be prepared to accept help from others - but don't let them influence your thoughts and decisions. There is no guilt in recognising the fact that for you, life goes on.
 - By the same token, look after yourself physically in terms of diet and sleep, and consult your doctor about any health worries.
 - Take each day as it comes - keep life as normal as possible and get into a regular routine.



■ In the first year of your bereavement don't be rushed into making big decisions which you might later regret, such as moving house.

■ Regularly remind yourself of all the good things in your life that haven't changed - pleasure you can still enjoy when you feel ready.

■ In time, look for ways of helping others and enjoy the rewards of feeling useful and needed.

■ Try new interests and hobbies and make new friends.

However long it takes (and each of us is different and unique, there are no set rules), you will come to accept your loss and treasure the happier memories of your loved one. You'll cry less often, and good days will outnumber bad days.

There is some small comfort in knowing that sad and painful though this experience is, it's a part of life - and at some time or other it inevitably affects us all.

How Hospice Isle of Man bereavement support and guidance can help

Providing family support is a very important and sensitive aspect of the work of Hospice Isle of Man. From one-to-one support for individuals to regular meetings dedicated specifically to family groups - namely siblings, parents and grandparents.

In addition, bereavement care and support is available to you through trained and experienced people such as the Social Worker, the Chaplain and Counsellor. The choice is down to you and whoever you feel most comfortable talking to, either at home or at the hospice.

Informal monthly bereavement sessions at the Hospice also present an opportunity to chat over coffee or tea and biscuits to others in a similar situation to yourself.

Other specific ways in which Hospice Isle of Man offers help and support include:

- Social work support.
- Benefits advice.
- Access to legal advice.
- One-to-one support (in your home or at the Hospice).
- Bereavement Drop-in Group
- For further information about any of this support, call the Hospice Counsellor on **01624 647449**.

What to do in the event of someone's death.

At such a distressing time it's difficult to think of all the practical implications of bereavement and the things that have to be done. This guide is intended to help you.

First decide which funeral directors you wish to use. They will support you through the things that need to be done prior to the funeral.

Where to collect the cause of death certificate

If death occurred in the Hospice, hospital or a nursing or residential home, a member of the medical staff will complete the certificate and you can arrange to collect it - or the funeral director may collect it for you.

Death at home

If the death was expected, the doctor who attended during the deceased's final illness needs to be contacted. If the doctor can certify the cause of death, he or she will give you a sealed envelope (containing the certificate) addressed to the Registrar. If appropriate, and you have not already done so, you may wish to contact the deceased's minister of religion.

Death occurring off island

For people whose relatives die in a UK hospital or Hospice, extra financial help is available. For more information contact the hospital's or Hospice's Social Worker on **01624 647443**. Or call the Isle of Man Department of Social Care on **01624 685656**.

Coroner's inquiry

In some circumstances it will not be possible for an attending doctor to issue a Cause of Death Certificate. This is most likely to happen when the death has been sudden or unexpected, or is due to an accident and the doctor will be able to discuss it with you.