
Following the
**death of a
loved one**
in Shetland

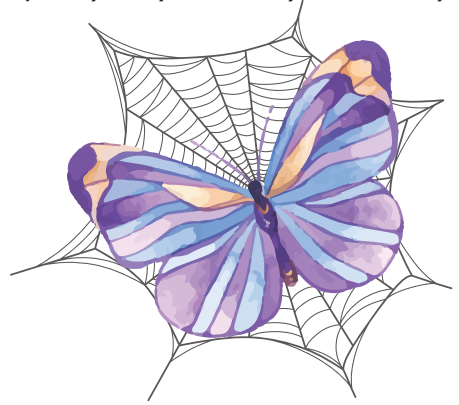


Most importantly,

We wish to express our sincere sympathy to you and your family at this time of sadness and loss.

When someone close to you dies, you may be unsure what to do. We hope this leaflet will help you through the first few days. It describes:

- **what you need to do, and**
- **how you may feel**



The death of someone close can be overwhelming and you may need help to do these things. Relatives, friends or neighbours can support you. Local faith ministers may be able to help, as will the **Spiritual Care Lead Chaplain** in Shetland NHS Health and Social Care, Neil Brice. Neil can be contacted on **01595 743662** or via the main hospital reception **01595 743000** or email **shet.spiritualcare@nhs.scot**

You might also want to contact:
Shetland Bereavement Support service

on

01595 743933

or at

www.shetlandbereavementsupportservice.com

Immediate information and advice following the death

POST-MORTEMS

The Procurator Fiscal may decide that a post-mortem is necessary. The aim of a post-mortem is to determine the cause of death. Arrangements to conduct the post-mortem will be made as soon as possible. Post-mortem examinations are carried out in Aberdeen. Please feel free to speak with the medical team if you have any questions or concerns about a post-mortem.

THE MORTUARY

Your loved one who dies in hospital will be transferred from the hospital mortuary to the funeral director's mortuary.

DEATH IN HOSPITAL

Before leaving the hospital your loved one will be placed in a protective cover. Ward staff will treat loved ones departed with the utmost respect and dignity. Families are welcome to be with the loved one in hospital before this process is completed. Once your loved one is at **Goudies Funeral Directors** in Lerwick, arrangements for viewing can be arranged with them.

DEATH AT HOME

In the event of a death at home, the first people to phone will be the GP practice or district nursing team who will be able to guide you through the process. Outside of normal working hours, this can be



done by ringing the out-of-hours service on **01595 743000** (the Gilbert Bain Hospital will be able to re-direct your call to the appropriate person). You may wish to respect and care for your loved one by “making them comfortable”. This is okay to do but most importantly, look after yourself, especially if you are alone. Try to find someone to speak to, a neighbour or friend.

This will be a difficult and stressful time and self-care is important.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AIDS

If you have Occupational Therapy aids at home that need collecting following a death, please use the numbers below for the collection of the equipment:

- **Bed and mattress** – Community Nursing – **01595 743208** or **743339**

- **Hoists, bath and shower aids** – Occupational Therapy – **01595 744319**

- **Oxygen concentrator** –

There is a number on the side of the unit – please call this number and the company will come and collect.

- **Continence pads** – Any unopened packs can be returned to your local health centre. Open packets can be discarded.
- **Prescription drugs** – These can be returned to your local pharmacy or health centre for destruction.

VIEWINGS

Families are welcome to visit their relative or loved one at the funeral directors even if the opportunity to be alongside in hospital or at home has occurred. This can take place after the death has been registered, and following a conversation with the funeral director, who will give advice and support. The utmost respect is always carried out.

REGISTERING THE DEATH

You should try and register the death at the earliest opportunity, in Scotland this must be within eight days.

You will need a death certificate, also known as a **Medical Certificate Cause of Death (MCCD)** or **Form 11** to register the death. The attending member of the medical team would normally arrange for the completion of the death certificate and it will be emailed to the registrar. This will happen in normal working hours.



A death can be registered at any registrar in Scotland. The registrar in Shetland is based at Lerwick Town Hall. However, Shetland registrations are carried out remotely which means the registration can be completed over the phone. Since September 2022 remote death registration appointments can be booked with the registrar by phoning **01595 744562**. An appointment must be booked prior to attending the registrar.

Once the registration has been completed, the registrar will email the **Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14)** to

your chosen funeral director. This is the document that confirms that the death has been registered and is required before a burial or cremation can be organised.

It is worth bearing in mind that you may need several certified copies of the registration of death certificate, these can be obtained for a small charge and may be needed for legal or financial purposes. These Certificates of Registration of Death are required if the deceased is proceeding out of Scotland.

There is a national review system of **Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCD)** which involves independent checks on the quality and accuracy of such certificates and to improve how this information is recorded. They are not a review of the deceased's personal care or cause of death.

You may be advised that the certificate has been selected for a random review, you do not have to do anything at this point. The review relates to the quality and accuracy of the MCCD, the registrar will contact you as soon as the review has taken place to allow you to proceed with the registration process. This process is quite normal and is nothing to worry about.



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

THE PROCURATOR FISCAL

In some cases a death needs to be reported to the Procurator Fiscal. This usually happens if the death has been sudden, unexpected or if the death is suspicious or unexplained.

The medical staff will contact the Procurator Fiscal, who may decide to investigate the death. This may involve:

- speaking with the person's GP, relatives, friends or those present at the time of death; and
- a post-mortem examination (In these cases your consent is not required)

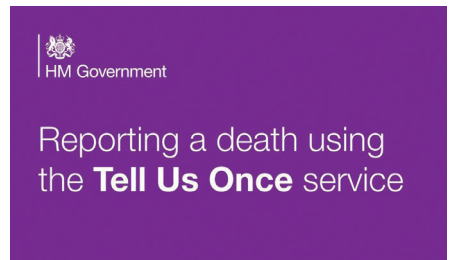
Please try not to be too concerned about the Procurator Fiscal's involvement or the involvement of the police who may assist in the investigation, as it is quite normal for the Procurator Fiscal to investigate sudden and unexpected deaths. The pathologist will email the registrar the **Form 11 (MCCD)** for families to register the death.

Further information on the role of the Procurator Fiscal in the investigation of deaths can be found at:

www.copfs.gov.uk/publications/deaths

TELL US ONCE

The Registrar Office offers a service called **Tell Us Once**. This is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go.



This includes:

- Social Security Scotland
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

- Passport Office
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- Shetland Island Council (SIC)
- Veterans UK
- Some Public Sector Pension Schemes

The Registrar will explain the **Tell Us Once** service when you register a death. Information that the registrar requires from the family during the registration process is as follows:

- If the person who has died was married or a civil partner at the date of death, tell the registrar the date of birth of the surviving widow, widower, or civil partner.
- The full name and occupation of the person who has died, their father's name and the full name and maiden surname of his or her mother.
- Whether the person was in receipt of a pension or an allowance from public funds.
- The name and address of the person's NHS doctor.

Tell Us Once does not notify any commercial organisations of the death and cannot arrange for redirection of post.

THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Another important thing to do is to engage a funeral director. You do not have to wait until the medical certificate of death is issued to do this.



The funeral director in Shetland, **Goudies**, will take care of all the practical arrangements for you. They will arrange transfer of your loved one from the hospital to their premises, if that is what you wish. They will also advise and guide you through your chosen funeral in a professional manner.

Once the **Certificate of Registration of Death (Form 14)** has been issued the family can make funeral arrangements with their chosen funeral director.

- Goudies Funeral Directors can be contacted 24hrs a day on Tel: **01595 693791** email: **info@goudiesfd.com**
- All prices for services and coffins can be found at **www.goudiesfuneraldirectors.com**

Funeral arrangements should be considered carefully. Try to have someone with you when you are making plans.

BEREAVEMENT BENEFITS AND PAYMENTS

This includes:

- **Funeral Support Payment**
– help towards the cost of a funeral if you're on low income and live in Scotland.
- **Bereavement Support Payment** – If you're under State Pension age and have a husband, wife or civil partner who has died in the last 21 months.



It's also advisable at this time to make sure everyone who needs to know is informed, for example, family, friends, employer, and try to find out whether a Will has been made.

PAYING FOR THE FUNERAL

Funeral directors should explain their costs and give you a written estimate. Before meeting the funeral director, you should try to think about how to pay for the funeral.

- Find out if the person who died:
Made arrangements to pay for the funeral for example, with a life assurance policy or a prepaid funeral plan or left enough money to pay for the funeral. Funeral costs have the first claim on any remaining estate.
- If no money is available and you get benefits or tax credits, you may be able to apply for:

Funeral Support Payment – help towards the cost of a funeral if you're on low income and live in Scotland.

Tell the funeral director as soon as possible if you want to apply.

- If your wife, husband or civil partner has died you may be able to apply for a benefit called a **Bereavement Support Payment**.

More information is available here:

www.mygov.scot/bereavement-benefits

Funeral Support payment and **Bereavement Support payment** are subject to conditions and you should not assume you are eligible.

If no one is able to arrange and pay for the funeral, the local council may be able to assist with arrangements.

The person who makes the arrangements with the funeral director is the person responsible for payment. If there is a solicitor involved they may take the account from the funeral director subject to the person's estate having sufficient funds available.

PEOPLE TO INFORM

Following a bereavement various people, companies, and other interested parties need to be informed of the death. The following list is to help start the process.

STOPPING JUNK MAIL TO THE RECENTLY DECEASED

If someone you know has died, the amount of unwanted marketing post being sent to them can be greatly reduced which helps to stop painful daily reminders.

By registering with the free service 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. If you cannot access the internet you can call **0808 168 9607**, where you will be asked for very simple information that will take only a few minutes to complete. Alternatively, ask the bereavement team for a leaflet that can be returned in the post.

This free of charge service provided by the **Bereavement Support Network** will actively reduce unwanted marketing mail but also can help reduce the likelihood of identity theft following the death of someone close. The information is not used for any other purpose and you only have to complete this once. Additionally, to stop mail a comparable service can also be accessed from the **Bereavement Register** or **Deceased Preference Service** if you would prefer to use them.



BEREAVEMENT – OUR RESPONSE TO LOSS

Grief is our natural response to loss – a complex mix of sometimes sadness, anger, helplessness, regret and despair.

Whether someone we are close to dies suddenly or when we have known for some time to expect their death, it is most likely that we will experience a sense of shock and disbelief. Initially, we may feel numb, and our loss and situation around us seem unreal for some considerable time. This initial sense of disbelief will start to lift over the forthcoming days or weeks, though it can return from time to time throughout our grief. Sometimes, especially in the early days of grieving, it is not uncommon to think we can see or hear the person who has died. Should this happen, we can feel a sharp shock, when we realise the reality that the person has died.

It is not unusual for people to cry, sometimes uncontrollably, and this can make you feel exhausted. However, many people find it is more helpful to cry, rather than bottle up feelings. Alongside your great feeling of sadness, you may have a sense of feeling

empty and without purpose. Your concentration may be poor, and you can experience loss of appetite. You may find sleeping difficult. It is important to realise that, although these feelings are very distressing, they are all normal responses to the loss of a loved one.

Looking after yourself will assist in lowering the impact of your grief. Try to avoid anything that requires too much concentration. If you find eating difficult, try to eat smaller portions of nutritious food that you find appealing, rather than snacking.

Grieving takes time and cannot be hurried. Complex emotional feelings may come and go for a long time; this is all part of adjustment to life without your special person.

HOW CAN I DEAL WITH MY FEELINGS?

As you try to cope with the emotions of a death, consider the following.

TAKE YOUR TIME

It's important – especially in the first few days – that you allow yourself:

- Time to take in what has happened
- Time to talk about the person who has died
- Time to feel the pain and the loneliness
- Time for yourself

Do it your way, we are all different, and we react to death in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Just try to do what feels right for you.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

It is important to look after yourself. It's also important to know that it's normal to feel afraid, have nightmares or struggle to see the point of life. However, if you are worried about your feelings; speak to someone. The **Spiritual**

Care Lead, Neil Brice may be able to help, make contact via the hospital switchboard or e-mail shet.spiritualcare@nhs.scot



There is the support of Shetland Bereavement Support on **01595 743933**, or e-mail sbss@shetland.org or via www.shetlandbereavementsupportservice.com



REMEMBER

- Grief is normal – it is part of what it is to be human and to have feelings.
- Grief is a journey – it is often hard, but it will get easier.
- Grief has no shortcuts – grief takes time. It often takes much longer than you, and many people around you may expect.

- It is normal both to grieve and live – if you find yourself not thinking about the person who has died, that is alright.
- Grief can be scary – and can lead to depressing thoughts and even thoughts of suicide. It is natural to think this way and okay to talk about it.

Finally, it is important not to expect too much of yourself, and know when to ask for help. The death of someone close is a major event in anybody's life and there are no quick ways of adjusting. It can be helpful to find someone you trust that you can talk to.



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Everyone experiences different reactions following a loss. Bereavement can turn our world upside down and is one of the most painful experiences we have to endure. Some people

feel extremely anxious or may have trouble sleeping. It is good to talk it through with someone you trust.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Family and friends can be of great support at this difficult time. Being close to others can be a great source of comfort. It is not always necessary to say anything, just being there is enough.

Allow people into your life and accept offers of practical help, for example with domestic chores and looking after children.

SPIRITUAL CARE

The death of a loved one can be a time of great pain and sometimes people experience shock, numbness, sadness, anger, exhaustion, confusion, and irritability. At such times, people often have a need to express their feelings honestly in a safe and confidential space.

Healthcare Chaplains are employed by the NHS and operate as part of the wider healthcare team. They are employed to respond to the needs of people going through difficult times and especially deep emotions that come with loss and grief. Chaplains will listen, with care, about your loss and give the time and space for your feelings to be heard.

The Chaplain is contactable via the hospital switchboard.

The Chaplain (**Spiritual Care Lead**) can also offer advice and support to help with the planning and arrangement of funeral services. Where appropriate, and requested by the next of kin of the deceased, the Chaplain is able to conduct funerals.



'Though we need to weep your loss, you dwell in that safe place in our hearts where no storm or night of pain can reach you.'

John O'Donohue (2008).

Useful contacts and further sources of advice and support

- Goudies Funeral Directors can be contacted 24hrs a day on Tel: **01595 693791** e-mail: **info@goudiesfd.com**
 - Bed & Mattress removal – Community Nursing – **01595 743208** or **743339**
- Hoists, bath and shower aids removal – Occupational Therapy – **01595 744319**
 - NHS Shetland website: **www.nhsshotland.scot**
 - **Shetland Bereavement Support** on **01595 743933** e-mail **sbss@shetland.org** or **www.shetlandbereavementsupportservice.com**
 - NHS Inform website: **www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/death-and-bereavement**

Useful websites:

NHS inform:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/palliative-care/preparing-for-death-and-bereavement/what-to-do-after-a-death>

www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/bereavement_charter_mark/

www.gov.scot/policies/death-and-end-of-life/bereavement/

Who you may need to inform:

A CHECKLIST:

- *Registered Health Centre/GP*
 - *Solicitor*
- *Bank /Building Society/ Insurance company*
 - *Social Work*
 - *Employer*
- *Utilities companies*
 - *Council tax*
- *Club memberships*
 - *School*

DO YOU NEED TO RETURN?

- *Passport*
- *Driving licence*
- *Car registration documents*
- *Hospital equipment/medications*
 - *Tax related papers*

