

New Process: What Happens After Someone Dies?

Information for the public and health professionals

If someone dies outside of a hospital, 3 steps must happen before a funeral can take place. This guide outlines the steps in the process:

1.Verification 2.Certification 3. Registration

Step 1. Verification

Immediately after someone dies, a health professional will visit and examine their body, to confirm that they have died (verification of death).

If someone dies during GP practice open hours, please call their practice. If the practice is closed, please call 111, their death will be verified via the Out of Hours GP Service instead.

Once the GP practice is open again, the death certificate will be completed.

Step 2. Certification

All deaths (that haven't been referred to a coroner) in England and Wales now need to be reviewed by the medical examiner.

The medical examiner will work with the doctor to agree the cause of death and a death certificate will be completed.

Medical examiners are senior medical doctors trained in the legal and clinical aspects of death certification. They provide independent reviews of the causes of death. Importantly, they will not have been involved in the patient's care during their lifetime. They will...

- Speak to an agreed family member. Family have the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns about the care the person has received.
- Countersign and send the completed Death Certificate to the Sheffield Register Office. You need a Death Certificate in order to register their death.

Note: There is a limited Medical Examiner Service at weekends. They are open between 9am-10am on weekends and bank holidays, for deaths requiring urgent burial. If you sense that the person may die during the weekend or evening, please talk to their GP whilst the practice is open to put plans in place.

Please note:

- This process can take time and involves lots of different organisations. Unfortunately, there's nothing GPs can do to help speed up this process.
- The best way to make this process as smooth as possible, is to put plans in place before someone approaches the end of their life and discuss these plans with the GP.
- In some cases, the coroner may need to investigate the death, which can also result in delay.

If you sense that the person could die during the weekend or evening, please talk to your GP whilst they are open.

Please note; GPs are not paid to provide any services out of hours (evenings & weekends).

If someone requires an urgent body release for their funeral, please prepare for this in advance. Their GP practice may have options to support this.

Step 3. Registration

Once the Death Certificate has been completed and submitted to the register office, you have 5 days to register the death at Sheffield Town Hall.

You must make an appointment before going to the Town Hall by calling 0114 203 9427 or visiting www.sheffield.gov.uk.

When you register their death, you will receive a 'green form'. Your chosen funeral director can only bury or cremate someone, once they have received this form.