

Bereavement information for families, friends and carers during the coronavirus pandemic



This information is for families, friends and carers who have lost a loved one during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It has been produced by a number of local organisations in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, working together during the pandemic, including your council, the Police, coroner's office, NHS, faith leaders, and local funeral, crematoria and burial services. We work together as the Local Resilience Partnership.

We know that this will be a very distressing time for you, and we are very sorry for your loss.

We hope that this information will provide the answers to some of your questions at this difficult time, and point you in the direction of further support.

This leaflet explains what happens next, what you need to do and what will be different in these exceptional circumstances.

What is different at this time?

At this time, the organisations involved in the Local Resilience Partnership (known as LLR Prepared) are working with funeral directors in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to help people affected by coronavirus and all bereaved friends and families to help keep us all safe.

Depending on the circumstances of your loved one's passing, for example whether they are either at home or in a hospital, your loved one will be taken to the hospital mortuary and looked after by NHS mortuary staff at the site or they will go to a funeral director of your choice. A medical practitioner who attended during the deceased person's last illness (within 28 days) will complete the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD).

What hasn't changed is that your loved one will receive the same care and attention as our trained professionals always give.

If your loved one passed away in hospital, and is being cared for in the hospital mortuary, as soon as you are able, please make contact with the funeral director who is making arrangements for your loved one – they will contact the mortuary and arrange to collect your loved one.

If you have lost a loved one to coronavirus...

Please don't be alarmed that there might be people supporting you at this time who need to wear masks and goggles and other protective clothing to help stop the spread of the virus.

What happens next?

- Bereavement services at the hospital (or your funeral director if you already have one) will give you advice on how to register your loved one's death if you need their assistance – this is done by telephone only at the moment – contact details are below
- You'll need to contact a funeral director within the next 48 hours

After your loved one is taken to the mortuary, it won't be possible for you to visit or spend time with them, as this is not safe for you and your family.

We appreciate that this is difficult to hear, and that it might add to your distress, but this is to keep you and those around you safe and well.

This also means that you won't be able to wash or prepare your loved one yourselves, but you can of course discuss washing, dressing and any religious observances with your funeral director. Please also see 'Preparing for the funeral' below.

Due to Covid-19 guidelines, you must self-isolate for 14 days isolation period from the last day that you had contact with your loved one.

- mourners who are self-isolating due to someone in their household or support bubble being unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 or as advised by [NHS Test and Trace](#), but are not symptomatic themselves, should be facilitated to attend the funeral in person should they wish to do so, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission
- mourners who are clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable should also be facilitated to attend, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission

If you haven't got a funeral director in mind, you can find industry inspected local funeral directors on these websites:

- The National Association of Funeral Directors: funeral-directory.co.uk
- The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors: saif.org.uk/members-search

Leicester Muslim Burial Council (A scheme has been set up, in line with PHE guidance, for trained volunteers from the Muslim community to ritually wash and prepare the body.)

www.mbc.org.uk

Registering the death

During the current period there is a change to the way that all deaths are registered. All deaths are now being registered by telephone (or email if you cannot use a telephone) until further notice. Please do not go to your local Registration Office

When a loved one dies, the doctor will advise you that the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) has been sent directly to the relevant Registration Service. The Registration Service will then contact you to make arrangements to register the death by telephone.

The registrar will register the death and then issue the "Green Form" (Form 9) for burial or cremation directly to your chosen burial authority and copied to your funeral director.

Leicestershire and Rutland registrars will discuss with you how many death certificates you would like and post them out to you. You should have a credit or debit card ready to pay for the certificates, which cost £11 each.

For Leicester death registrations the registrars will advise on the process for obtaining certificates as they are operating slightly differently.

What if the death is referred to the coroner?

If the death is referred to the coroner, we will contact you when the paperwork has been released and arrange the appointment to register by telephone as above.

'Tell Us Once'

The Registrar will take some information from you to allow you to access the [Tell Us Once](#) system (which notifies other government departments, like the DVLA, DWP etc.)

Tell Us Once can be found on the government website (www.gov.uk).

Contact details for Registration Services

Please telephone your local registration service. If you are not able to telephone, then you can send an email.

Leicester Death Registrations:

0116 454 1000

register.office@leicester.gov.uk

Leicestershire Death Registrations:

0116 305 6565 registration@leics.gov.uk

Rutland Death Registrations:

01572 758 380 registrars@rutland.gov.uk

Preparing for the funeral

If you have a nominated funeral director who is collecting your loved one, they will contact you to arrange the funeral.

Your funeral director will work with you to help you lay your loved one to rest, whether that is a cremation or burial. The funeral should be held as soon as it is possible to do so.

The opportunity to attend the funeral of a loved one is so important for many of us. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, there will be restrictions on the number of people that can attend the funeral and on some of the rites you might usually observe.

At present, the government advise that only a modest number of family and friends of the deceased should travel to and attend the funeral. You must also check local restrictions with your funeral director in the event of a local lockdown or similar situation.

Consider asking mourners to notify you if they plan to attend, so that you have an idea of numbers. You may want to discuss this with the funeral director or venue manager. The venue manager will need to make sure that social distancing can be maintained, and will restrict the number of people who can enter the building.

You may attend a funeral even if you are shielding or are in self-isolation as long as you are not displaying symptoms of the virus, no matter how mild.

No-one who has symptoms of COVID-19 (a persistent cough or a temperature Or loss of smell or taste) should attend a funeral. It is now mandatory to wear a face covering when attending a chapel service or a place of worship.

You may also want to think about hosting a memorial service when it is safe to do so and when government guidelines allow, rather than inviting people to a funeral service during the pandemic.

We know that some of this information will be upsetting, but it will help to stop the virus from spreading.

It's important to note that it is still your right as next of kin to choose a burial or cremation in accordance with your loved one's wishes, and that the right be buried in consecrated ground will be respected.

*Although some crematoria may have different limitations on who can attend. Your funeral director can advise you on those.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Losing a loved one can feel overwhelming, and may be made more distressing at this time, and in the circumstances. There are local and national organisations who can help you and your family, and a selection are listed below.

There are a number of organisations who can support you and your family during this distressing time, and you may also consider your local faith leaders and places of worship if you feel this would help.

- Faith and Chaplaincy at Leicester's hospitals – find out more information at www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/patient-and-visitor-services/faith-and-chaplaincy/
- **Cruse** - If you need support dealing with bereavement and grief during the coronavirus outbreak, Cruse has information on their website (www.cruse.org.uk). Cruse also operate a free helpline: **0808 808 1677**
- The Laura Centre is a Leicester based charity to support people who have lost a child, or a child who is bereaved. www.thelauracentre.org.uk/
- **The National Bereavement Partnership - COVID-19 Hub.**
The partnership (www.nationalbereavementpartnership.org) provides a platform for associated practical advice services, support assistance and where needed, counselling to all those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For a step-by-step guide after a bereavement visit www.gov.uk/after-a-death.
There is also a section on financial help with funeral costs on the government's website: www.gov.uk/funeral-payments.
- The Compassionate Friends offer support to families after the death of a child of any age and from any cause: tcf.org.uk Alternatively, call: **0345 123 2304**
- The Bereavement Advice Centre can be reached on **0800 634 9494**
www.bereavementadvice.org/
- Citizens Advice Bureau – www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- Samaritans – e-mail enquiries to jo@samaritans.org.uk
or visit website www.samaritans.org or call 116 123

We hope that this leaflet has been helpful at this very difficult time.

If you require this leaflet in a different format, or need it translating into another language, please contact your local authority:

Leicester and Leicestershire - comms@leics.gov.uk

Rutland - communications@rutland.gov.uk

To request an Easy Read version of this leaflet please email: comms@leics.gov.uk