

What to do after a Death

A practical guide in Gloucestershire

We would like to extend our sincere condolences for your loss. This leaflet will help guide you through some practical things that need to be done after someone has died. It can be a difficult time for you, but there are people and information to help guide you.

Do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it.

What needs to happen now?

A doctor will arrange a medical certificate for you, as long as the death has not been referred to the Coroner. The doctor and funeral director will need to know if there is a preference for a burial or cremation. Then you will need to register the death, which is a legal obligation.

Who can register a death?

The death should be registered by a relative. If no relative is available, then it is sometimes possible for someone else to do it. This could be someone who was present at the death, or a senior member of staff from the establishment in which the death occurred, or the person making the funeral arrangements (but not the funeral director). If you are not sure whether you can register the death, call the register office before coming to register the death.

How do I register a death within Gloucestershire?

A death should be registered within 5 days and in the county in which the death occurred. You need to make an appointment to meet with a registrar to register the death. Registration in Gloucestershire is by pre-booked appointments only. The booking can be made on-line (via a computer, smartphone or tablet) OR by phoning one number. Staff at your local library can also help you to book an appointment online.

To make an appointment to register the death visit:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths-and-civil-partnerships/register-a-death/
OR

**phone the register office, Monday–Friday,
8.30am–4.30pm
01452 425060 – choose Option 1**

Where do I register the death?

Gloucestershire has eight registration offices: in Cheltenham, Gloucester, Quedgeley, Cinderford, Stroud, Cirencester, Tewkesbury and Moreton-in-Marsh. You can register the death at any of these offices, but you must ensure that you do so within the 5-day, legal timescale.

Please visit this website for address details and opening hours.

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths-and-civil-partnerships/registration-offices-contact-details-opening-times/

If for any reason you are unable to register the death in the county in which it occurred, i.e. Gloucestershire, then you are welcome to book with another registration district. The registrar there will take all of the details and the medical certificate from you and pass them to the registrar in Gloucestershire to ensure that the registration is completed.

When should I register the death?

A death is legally required to be registered within 5 days. If for any reason there are difficulties with this, call the register office to discuss the matter. If the death has been referred to the Coroner, you will have to wait until the Coroner has completed her investigations.

What happens at the appointment?

You will meet the registrar in private where you will be asked about the person who has died.

You will need to know the following information about the deceased person:

- The date and place of death
- The full name (and maiden name if the person was a married woman) and any other names the person had used or been known by
- The date and place of birth
- The home address, including the postcode
- The main or most recent occupation
- If the deceased was married, widowed or in a civil partnership, the full name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner
- If they were married or in a civil partnership, the date of birth of the surviving widow, widower or civil partner

You will be asked to check all the details once they have been recorded. As the registration is a legal document, please read it and check it carefully. It is possible to correct a registration after it is complete, but it would be costly and time-consuming for you.

What do I need to take to the appointment with the registrar?

Unless the Coroner has held a post-mortem, you must take the medical certificate that the doctor has given you.

If you need to purchase any death certificates, you will need to take the means of payment (cash, cheque, postal order or card payments are accepted).

To help ensure that the information recorded is as accurate as possible, it would be useful to bring these supporting documents for the deceased person:

- Birth certificate
- Passport
- Driving licence
- Proof of address (eg. council tax bill or utility bill)
- Marriage/Civil Partnership certificates
- NHS medical card
- Deed Poll – if the person has changed their name by deed poll.

To help verify the name and address of the person registering the death, please bring as many of the following supporting documents for the informant as you have:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Proof of address (eg. council tax bill or utility bill)

The absence of supporting documents will not prevent the registration from taking place.

Certificates

After the death has been registered, the registrar will issue you with a **Certificate for burial or cremation** ('Green form'). This should be given to the funeral director to enable the funeral to take place.

You may need to purchase a number of death certificates. A death certificate is a certified copy of the entry in the register of deaths. As death certificates may be required by solicitors and financial organisations or for pensions and insurance claims, you may wish to purchase several certificates at the time of registration as photocopies are not usually acceptable for official purposes. The registrar will help advise you on how many you may need to purchase.

Certificates cost £11.00 each. Please bring the correct money with you to your appointment if possible.

The registrar will provide you with an information leaflet advising you of how to stop **unwanted junk** mail arriving at the deceased's property.

You can order copies of a death certificate online for the same fee, at any time after the registration, at

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths-and-civil-partnerships/order-certificates/

Staff at your local library can also help you to order certificates online.

Tell Us Once service

Tell Us Once is a free service that lets you report a death to most government and local council organisations in one go. You do not have to use the Tell Us Once service, but many people find it very helpful.

When you **register the death** the registrar will give you:

- a unique reference number to enable you to access the Tell Us Once service
- the website address and the telephone number to enable you to use the Tell Us Once service online or by phone

Before you use Tell Us Once

You'll need the following details of the person who died:

- Date of birth
- National Insurance number
- Driving licence number
- Vehicle registration number(s)
- Passport number

You'll also need:

- details of any benefits or entitlements they were getting, for example State Pension
- details of any local council services they were getting, for example Blue Badge
- the name and address of their next of kin
- the name and address of a surviving spouse or civil partner
- the name, address and contact details of the person or company dealing with their estate (property, belongings and money), known as their 'executor' or 'administrator'
- details of any public sector or armed forces pension schemes they were getting or paying in to

You need permission from the next of kin, the executor, the administrator or anyone who was claiming joint benefits or entitlements with the person who died, before you give their details.

Organisations Tell Us Once will contact

Tell Us Once will notify:

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) – to deal with personal tax (you need to contact HMRC separately for business taxes, like VAT)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – to cancel benefits, for example Income Support
- Passport Office – to cancel a British passport
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) – to cancel a driving licence and to remove the person as the keeper for up to 5 vehicles
- the local council – to cancel Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, a Blue Badge, inform council housing services and remove the person from the electoral register
- public sector or armed forces pension schemes – to stop pension payments

For more information about Tell Us Once visit

www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once/

Arranging a funeral

The funeral can usually only take place after the death has been registered. Most people use a funeral director, though you can arrange the funeral yourself.

Contacting banks and other financial organisations

Contact the person's bank or mortgage, pension or insurance providers to close or change the details of their accounts.

Dealing with the estate

You might have to deal with the will, money and property of the person who's died if you're a close friend or relative, or the executor of the will.

Closing or memorialising social media accounts

Social media accounts (eg. Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) can be closed easily if you have the person's email address and password. You may want to delete, deactivate or keep a social media account active but in memorial so that friends and family can still look back through the person's photographs and updates. If you do not have the email address and password, you will need to provide additional information. The requirements differ with each provider, but typically include a death certificate and proof of authority to act on the person's behalf.

Useful Contacts:

Copy certificates, appointment bookings and information on all services offered by Gloucestershire Registration Service can be found on their website:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/registration

For further advice please contact **Patient Advice and Liaison Service**, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group.

FREEPOST RRYY-KSGT-AGBR

Sanger House, 5220 Valiant Court, Gloucester Business Park, GL3 4FE

Telephone: 01452 566698

Email: glccg.pals@nhs.net

Thank you to Gloucestershire County Council for helping to produce this leaflet.