

Questions asked ...

When someone dies

The initial process and steps taken when someone
passes away in the community



THE SEARSON FAMILY

FUNERAL SERVICE

*"We don't just arrange funerals, we create
meaningful days."*

www.thesearsonfamily.co.uk

0800 022 3309

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DEATH HAS OCCURRED:

On behalf of the Searson family, please accept our condolences and thank you for entrusting our family. This leaflet provides essential information on the immediate procedures following a death in the community, whether at a private residence, a Nursing or Care Home. It aims to guide you through the initial steps to ensure proper reporting of the death and to explain what happens over the next few days.

Some deaths are expected; some happen suddenly and unexpectedly. Before we can attend, the death must be confirmed and formally pronounced, and this will need to be done by someone medically qualified. Call the GP, Community Nurse, or, if you have already called an Ambulance, the Paramedic can confirm that death has taken place. When death occurs in residential care, a qualified member of staff will carry out the procedure.

Initially, the death will be reported to the deceased's Medical Practitioner, their GP. This may be through an attending Paramedic, a Community Nurse or an Out of Hours Doctor. The system should ensure the necessary communication, but we recommend that you contact the Doctor's Surgery the next working day, to ensure they have been informed.

Once you have contacted the Doctor's Surgery, there isn't much that can be done until the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been completed. However, this doesn't mean you can't start thinking about funeral arrangements. We are here to support you, so the next step is to give us a call to make an appointment.

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THE MEDICAL EXAMINER:

Once the GP has been notified of the death, they will report it to the Medical Examiner, who will independently review the medical history and decide what happens next.

The Medical Examiner needs to be sure that death was expected. Sometimes they will contact the Next of Kin to ask questions and clarify information. If the Medical Examiner is satisfied that no further review is necessary, they will notify the GP that a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death can be issued. We stress the importance of keeping in contact with the Doctor's Surgery, as the communication link isn't always reliable. If, after three days, you haven't heard anything, contact the GP again. It should be noted that the Medical Examiner will require approximately five working days to complete their review.

H M CORONER:

If the Medical Examiner decides that death was unexpected, unnatural or the deceased wasn't seen by their GP within the last fourteen days, they may notify HM Coroner. You should allow an additional five working days, or sometimes longer, before a final decision is provided. H M Coroner will contact you to explain what happens next, and answer any question.

Until death is certified by the GP or HM Coroner, the Registration of Death cannot be completed. Even though funeral arrangements can begin, we recommend holding back on booking a day and time for the funeral until you have been informed that the death can now be registered. Any extended delay may risk the funeral being postponed.

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REGISTRATION OF DEATH:

Once death has been reviewed and formalised, this will be the time when you can complete registration.

You should be notified which Registration Office to contact, and you will be required to book an appointment. Once you have been notified that registration can take place, you have five working days to complete the process. The Registrar will provide you with a 'Certified Copy of Entry'. This document is the official record of the death, and it is commonly referred to as the 'Death Certificate'. You can purchase as many copies as you might need, as they will be required for various administrative purposes.

Before you can register the death, you will need to ensure that any documentation the Registrar requires has been received. If the Medical Examiner were involved, they would have instructed the GP to complete the Medical Cause of Death Certificate. Sometimes this is emailed to the Registrar, sometimes you will need to collect it from the GP Surgery. Unless you have been informed otherwise, contact the surgery to confirm whether you need to collect the certificate. If HM Coroner were involved, they would have already sent the Registrar the required documentation. In some instances, HM Coroner may not conclude their investigation and will need to hold an Inquest. In most cases, the Coroner will issue an Interim Certificate so the funeral can proceed, but registration will be postponed until the Inquest has concluded.

When you have been notified that you can register, or you have received an Interim Certificate from HM Coroner, contact us straight away. We will then be able to book the day and time for the funeral.