

# Bereavement

Helping you to deal  
with the death of  
someone close to you



Marie Curie  
Cancer Care



## Introduction

All of us are likely to experience bereavement at some point in our lives.

This booklet aims to provide an overview of the practical and emotional issues that may arise if you are bereaved. It also points readers towards other organisations that may be able to help you with information and support.

If the size of the text in this booklet is too small for you to read, please see inside back cover.

### **Disclaimer**

Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Marie Curie Cancer Care and its advisers cannot guarantee the accuracy of statements about law, or accept any liability in relation to the information in this booklet. It is not a substitute for professional advice. Readers are strongly advised to discuss the information provided with and seek personalised advice from the appropriate professional.

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# What will happen immediately after the death?

## If the person dies at home

It is impossible to predict how you will react to the death of someone you love, even when it is expected. You may go into shock or cry. You may carry on as though nothing has happened – or try to do so. You may go through many different feelings and emotions after a person has died, even in the first few minutes and hours. There is no right or wrong way to feel and react.

If you are alone at this time, you may want to ask family and friends, or a religious or spiritual adviser, to come and support you.

If you and your family are alone at the death, you may find that when you call the GP they will ask what time the person died.

## Customs or preferences at time of death

If a Marie Curie Nurse or other healthcare professional is present, they will check the

care plan to see if there are any religious or other customs or preferences that need to be observed directly before or after death. Please tell them if there is anything they should or should not do. They will respect your wishes and those of the person who has died.

## Last offices or laying out the body

Last offices and laying out the body mean different things to different people. Here we refer to care of the person after they have died which may include washing the person's body, dressing them in clean clothes and arranging their hair or putting on their wig.

You can ask the Marie Curie Nurse to help you with this if you like or ask them to do it for you. You may wish to be present while they carry out this care or you may prefer not to be in the room. There is no right or wrong decision – do whatever you feel comfortable with.

If you are alone when the person dies, you may find it comforting to carry out such tasks. On the other hand, you might find it distressing, or prefer to leave it to others. Again, do whatever you feel comfortable with.

Some religions – or your own preferences – may mean that you do not want the Marie Curie Nurse to lay out the body. This should be in the care plan but do let the nurse know your wishes.

It is recommended that any equipment such as a syringe driver is usually left in place until an appropriate healthcare professional has properly recorded that death has taken place (this is known as formal verification of death).

### **What is verifying and certifying the death?**

While it may be clear that the person has died, at some point an appropriate healthcare professional will need to **verify** the death - they do this by making certain checks to be sure that the person has died. It is best not to move the body from the home before this has taken place.

In addition, a registered medical practitioner (usually a GP) will need to **certify** the death by completing a form called a medical certificate of cause of death if this was an expected death and if they are sure the death resulted from natural causes. They will also give you a

formal notice that the medical certificate has been signed. This paperwork will allow you to register the death, obtain the death certificate and arrange the funeral. Often, people mistakenly call this the death certificate, but that is a different form issued by the Registrar later.

- Sometimes a GP will verify and certify the death at the same time.
- Sometimes another healthcare professional will verify the death in the person's home while a GP certifies the death later (for instance, at the person's home the next day or at a funeral director's premises).

The doctor who certifies an expected death should be the person's regular doctor who treated them during their illness and who visited them during the two weeks prior to their death.

If no GP meets these conditions, the GP of the person who has died will need to report the death to the Coroner (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland). This is generally a formality, and may simply lead to discussions between the GP and Coroner. A death may be reported to the

Coroner for other reasons – for instance, if the person died of an occupational disease or if the GP has any questions about the death. Try not to worry if the death is reported and if you have concerns contact the Coroner's office to find out what will happen next.

If there is no Marie Curie Nurse or other healthcare professional present at the death, you will need to call the GP's surgery. The surgery or someone from their deputising service will make arrangements for a doctor or health professional to visit to verify the death and advise you. The GP will certify the death later. Arrangements may be agreed in advance with you.

If a Marie Curie Nurse or other healthcare professional is present at the time of death, they will check the person's care plan to see whether the GP needs to be called or if other arrangements are in place. The Marie Curie Nurse will ask for permission to call the appropriate person, in line with the care plan and any arrangements you have made with the GP or District Nurse.

Some Marie Curie Nurses can formally verify death in a person's home if this has been agreed between the local NHS services and the charity, and if the nurse is appropriately trained. However, they will still respect any arrangements you have made with the GP or District Nurse.

### **If you need the GP's support**

The GP will not visit the person's home if it has been agreed that another healthcare professional will formally verify the death. However, if you or your family needs support from the GP at this time, ask them if they will visit you, even if they are not your own GP (they may not always be able to do so).

### **Do you want the Marie Curie Nurse to stay?**

If a Marie Curie Nurse is in the house when the person dies, do tell them if you want them to stay until someone else arrives to verify the death formally. The relevant healthcare professional may not be able to come right away, though generally they will arrive within four hours. Equally, if you would prefer them to leave, do say so. The Marie Curie Nurse is there to help and support you.

### **What next?**

After the death has been formally verified, the next stage depends on whether you have decided to use a funeral director or are handling the arrangements yourself. See **Do I have to use a funeral director?** on page 13 and **Selecting a funeral director** on page 14 for more information.

If you are using a funeral director, you can contact them once you are ready. You do not have to rush. The funeral director will generally come within an hour of being contacted. If this is too soon (for instance, you may want a little more time to sit with the body, or wait for family or friends to arrive, or simply to collect yourself), discuss with them what time you want them to come.

Some people may find it distressing to see the person's body being moved or to see some of the steps that may need to be taken before moving the body. You may want to ask the funeral director what will be involved, as some people may prefer to leave the room.

### **Can you keep the body at home?**

Funeral directors tend to take the body

away promptly these days, but in most cases they don't have to do so. If you are using a funeral director and want to keep the body at home for a few hours, discuss this with them and they will advise you.

If you choose not to use a funeral director the ***Natural Death Handbook*** includes advice on keeping the body at home. See **Further information** on page 34.

## If the patient dies in a Marie Curie Hospice, other local hospice, or hospital

Hospices and hospitals have their own local arrangements regarding verification and certification of death and will issue the medical certificate confirming cause of death. They will provide information about how to register the death.

An appropriate member of staff (for instance, bereavement or mortuary staff) should also be able to offer advice on contacting a funeral director, or what to do next if you do not plan to use a funeral director.

### **When death is unexpected**

This booklet was originally written for people involved with our services, who in general would be experiencing bereavement that was expected either at home or in a hospice. Because of this, we do not include information about unexpected or suspicious deaths. The Department of Health produces a booklet ***Help is at hand: a resource for people bereaved by suicide and other sudden, traumatic death*** – visit [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) and search for *help is at hand* 2008.

## Registering the death

It is a legal requirement to register a death with the Registrar for Births, Deaths and Marriages:

- within five days in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- within eight days in Scotland

unless the Registrar agrees to extend this period or when the death has been referred to the Coroner (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland).

In **Scotland and Northern Ireland** the death can be registered in the district where the person died or where they lived.

In **England and Wales**, the death must be registered in the district where the person died. If this is not convenient for the person registering the death, registration can be arranged through any register office within England and Wales. However, it may take a day or two longer to issue the Death Certificate and the Certificate for Burial or Cremation (often called the green form) which is required for a

cremation to proceed. If you think this may delay arrangements, do discuss with your local Registrar before you arrange for registration through them, or discuss with the funeral director (if you are using one).

The majority of deaths are registered by a relative and the Registrar will normally only allow someone else to do so if no relatives are available. However, the death can be registered by any of the following people (this list is not comprehensive but covers most situations):

- a relative
- someone unrelated but who was present at the time of death
- the occupier of, or an official at, the building where the death occurred - for example, a matron of a nursing home
- the person responsible for arranging the funeral (not a funeral director)

Before registering the death, you should discuss your intention to do so with anyone else who has the right and who is likely to want to do so, to make sure that your efforts are coordinated.

You will find the address of the register office in your local Yellow Pages directory

(under local government). You can also find this information on the web for:  
England and Wales: **www.gro.gov.uk**  
Scotland: **www.gro-scotland.gov.uk**  
Northern Ireland: **www.groni.gov.uk**

Some register offices operate an appointments system, and opening hours vary between offices, so it is advisable to phone and check before you visit.

You should take with you the following documents about the person who has died:

- the medical certificate of cause of death which was issued by the doctor (this is essential)
- National Health Service medical card (if available)
- birth certificate (if available)
- marriage or civil partnership certificate (if available and appropriate) as well as the date of birth of a surviving spouse or civil partner

#### **The Registrar will want to know the:**

- date and place of death
- person's first names and last name at time of death as well as any names previously used and last usual address

- person's date and place of birth
- person's occupation and whether they were receiving a state pension or other state benefit

#### **The Registrar will provide:**

##### **In England and Wales**

- Certificate for Burial or Cremation (often called the green form) which generally needs to be given to the crematorium before cremation or to the landowner or land manager for a burial.
- A certificate for social security benefits for you to take or send to the local Jobcentre Plus or social security office along with any pension, income support or other benefit books.

##### **In Scotland**

- A Certificate of Registration of Death so the funeral can take place.
- Form 334/SI Registration or notification of death, for use in obtaining or adjusting social security benefits.

##### **In Northern Ireland**

- A GRO 21 form which permits the funeral to take place.
- Form 36 for production at the social

security offices regarding benefits.

### **What if the burial has to go ahead quickly?**

Some burials are required to take place within 24 hours of the death – for instance, for religious or cultural reasons. Advice should always be obtained from a Registrar or local funeral director.

### **The death certificate**

There is no charge to register the death. However, there is a charge if you want a copy of the death certificate.

Extra copies of the death certificate may be needed to administer the estate. Some companies holding assets such as bank accounts, insurance policies or shares will accept a photocopy of the death certificate if certified by a solicitor as a true copy but many insist on an official copy from the Registrar. If you want to deal with several assets simultaneously in order to speed up the administration of the estate, it can be helpful to purchase extra copies when you register the death. Ask the Registrar to guide you on the number of copies you will need.

### **Booklets and information available from the Registrar**

When you register the death, ask the Registrar to give you relevant booklets or information.

#### **England and Wales**

##### ***What to do after a death in England and Wales***

Visit: [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk) and search the publications catalogue for DWP1027 (English version) or DWP 1027W (Welsh version).

#### **Scotland**

***What to do after a death in Scotland: practical advice for times of bereavement*** (Scottish Executive).

***What to do after a death in Scotland: social security supplement*** (Department for Work and Pensions).

Visit: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk) and search under publications.

#### **Northern Ireland**

Ask the Registrar to give you relevant booklets or information.

# The Funeral

## Do I have to use a funeral director?

You have a choice about whether to use a funeral director.

You may want to use a funeral director for everything, organise the funeral yourself, or choose something in between. At one end of the spectrum this could mean that the funeral director makes most of the arrangements while you put together the funeral service. At the other end of the spectrum you might decide to organise everything yourself but source specific facilities, services or items (for example, a coffin or a hearse) from a funeral director.

You may presume that you have to use a funeral director but you are able to do some things yourself if you wish. For instance, you can make arrangements directly with the manager of a crematorium, or place a death announcement in a newspaper.

You may feel that using a funeral director is the easiest thing to do at an already

difficult time. Don't feel guilty if you feel you can't cope with making the arrangements yourself – do what feels right for you.

You may be put off making the arrangements yourself because you don't know what to do. However, a lot of information is now available, especially on the internet, to help if you wish to make some or all of the arrangements yourself.

You may find it comforting to be responsible for some arrangements, such as bringing personal touches to the funeral service; or you may find that having practical tasks to do can be a useful focus or welcome distraction, and that such activity can help to keep you going.

You may think that in order to get the funeral you want (and the funeral the person who died wanted), you will have to organise everything yourself. This is not the case. You are purchasing a service and the funeral director should support you in achieving what you want (within the limits of the law and local regulations). However, do ensure that you give them clear instructions.

If you decide to instruct a funeral director but want to take on certain responsibilities yourself, discuss your wishes with funeral directors before you commit, to be sure that they are happy to share these responsibilities. Some firms may not be prepared to do so because they see certain responsibilities as part of their service, while others may be more flexible.

Do not presume that funeral directors' fees will be reduced if you take on certain responsibilities – this may not be the case. Check fees before committing yourself, especially if your reason for undertaking some tasks yourself is to keep costs down.

Even if you are making the funeral arrangements yourself, some funeral directors may still be prepared to provide certain services for a charge. For instance, some may allow you to use their mortuary or may deal with documentation. Some may be prepared to supply a simple coffin, or hire out a hearse or other suitable vehicle (see **Hearses** on page 22).

When deciding how much you will arrange and how much you will leave to others, make the choices you are comfortable

with and are able to manage emotionally and financially – whether this means taking charge of everything yourself, asking a funeral director to do everything or something in between.

## Selecting a funeral director

If you decide to use a funeral director:

- You may wish to choose a firm that has been recommended by family or friends or one that you know locally.
- You may wish to consider a number of firms so you can compare services and prices.
- You could ask a local minister or religious leader for recommendations.
- There is a growing number of environmentally friendly funeral directors who can help create a green funeral and arrange tailor-made rites in a variety of settings. See your local Yellow Pages, or ***The Natural Death Handbook*** mentioned on page 34.
- See **Further information: Trade associations for funeral directors** on page 34. Each association has its own code of practice and can provide you with details of local member firms.

You may find it useful to get quotes so

you can compare costs. Many of the costs (such as cremation fees) will be fixed but funeral directors' charges can vary considerably. A price list or breakdown of the costs can also help you decide which items and services to choose, which can make a considerable difference to the final cost. Don't feel embarrassed about asking for a simpler or less expensive option, and don't feel under pressure to make choices that are beyond your means.

You may find it helpful to talk to funeral directors before the death takes place so you have information about their prices and services and can perhaps choose which firm to use.

While you may feel that it is inappropriate to discuss funeral arrangements before a person has died, you may find that the person approaching the end of their life would like to do so. Some people find it comforting to be involved in decisions such as how to celebrate their life and where to be buried.

### **Some questions you may want to ask if choosing a funeral director**

- What services do you provide?

- Can we pick what we want from your menu of services and just pay for those?
- What do your charges include?
- Are any of the items included in your quote optional or are there alternatives?
- When do we pay the bill?
- Do we have to pay a deposit?
- Are you comfortable delivering the choices we have discussed?
- Can we buy a coffin or its equivalent from another source?
- Can we provide our own transport?

### **Arranging a funeral without the help of a funeral director**

It is possible to arrange all or part of a funeral yourself. If you wish to do so, *The Natural Death Handbook* and other publications, and many internet sites, provide detailed advice, information and support. See **Further information** on page 34.

### **Wishes of the person who has died**

Did the person who has died state any wishes about their funeral, such as a preference for burial or cremation? They may have paid money for a burial plot or made and paid for their own funeral arrangements.

If not, it is the executor named in the will, or the person who takes responsibility for arranging and paying for the funeral, who makes decisions about the funeral. They must also decide if any wishes the person expressed verbally or in writing are practical, affordable and acceptable.

## **Having a separate burial or cremation, funeral and memorial services**

While you can have the burial or cremation at the same time as the funeral or memorial service (and many people do), you may prefer to hold these events at different times.

You may wish to have the burial or cremation as soon as possible (some religions require this) or keep it as a private event, and arrange a separate funeral, memorial service or other event at a later date.

Another possibility is to hold the burial or cremation with the funeral and hold a more celebratory event or memorial service some time later.

If the person was cremated, you may

decide to arrange for burial, committal or scattering of the ashes at a later date. If the person was buried, you may choose to be present when the headstone is erected. You might want to make a gesture such as planting a tree in their memory or dedicating a park bench to them (with the agreement of the relevant authorities or landowner).

Such events can provide a chance to reflect and an opportunity to say goodbye. But you don't have to choose all – or any. Only you know what is right for you and for the person who has died. Once you have taken their wishes into account, as far as you are aware of them and as far as you are able to, be guided by what you want and need to do and not what you feel you ought to do.

## **Where can I hold the service?**

Memorial and funeral services (apart from the actual burial or cremation) don't have to be held in a church or religious building or crematorium. Services can be held anywhere – for instance, your own home or garden, the home of the person who died, a community centre or hospice.

Most crematoria include the use of what is often referred to as the chapel in their costs. The room should be suitable for all religions and for people who have no religious beliefs. To ensure the setting will be appropriate on the day, especially if you have special requests, talk to the crematorium staff beforehand, or ask the funeral director to do so.

### **Do I need to place a death notice in the newspaper?**

You may wish to put an announcement about the death in the national or local newspapers. It can be an effective way to reach people who knew the person for whom you have no contact details. Include the date, time and place of the funeral and/or memorial event. Also mention the person's or your wishes about flowers or donations in memory to charity.

For security, it is best not to include a personal address. You may also wish to arrange for somebody to house-sit during the funeral if the person's home would otherwise be empty.

### **Who pays for the funeral?**

The funeral costs are usually paid out of

the estate (which includes money, shares, property and possessions). The funeral costs must be paid before all other debts and bequests are paid by the estate. If there is not enough money in the estate to cover the costs, the person organising the funeral will be obliged to meet the additional costs.

Some funerals are pre-paid – this is increasingly common. However, some pre-paid funeral plans only cover a basic funeral. Check with the funeral director to see what is included. If you choose extra services or items that were not included in the original plan or prepayment, the extra costs will have to be paid for in the same way as above.

Some funeral directors may ask for a deposit when you make the arrangements. This may be anything up to a few hundred pounds.

The funeral director's bill is usually sent fairly soon after the funeral. In general, you cannot access funds from a person's estate until probate (in Scotland: confirmation of the estate) is granted, which can take some months. However,

the major banks and building societies are generally prepared to release funds from the person's accounts to pay the funeral director's bill.

It may be possible to obtain a Social Fund Funeral Payment towards the cost of the funeral if you or your partner receive a benefit issued by social security such as income support, family credit, housing benefit or council tax rebates and if it is considered reasonable for you to accept responsibility for the funeral costs. Broadly speaking, the authorities will not make a funeral payment to you if there is someone with one of the following relationships to the person who died:

- a partner
- a parent or adult child who does not receive benefits
- someone who was in closer contact than you
- someone who is not receiving benefits and who was as close as you

If a funeral payment is made, the authorities will reclaim payment from the person's estate if there are sufficient funds.

The relevant forms and guidance on

eligibility are available from your local social security office. For England, Wales and Scotland you can also contact a Jobcentre Plus office. In Northern Ireland you can contact the benefit shop, or complete the online form at: **[www.dsdni.gov.uk/sf200.pdf](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/sf200.pdf)**

Please note that the maximum payment available is not generally sufficient to cover the cost of even a basic funeral. If you are using a funeral director, tell them at the very start before you commit to any arrangements if a Social Fund Funeral Payment will be the only money available. They will advise you accordingly.

If you are not eligible for help from the Social Fund and there are insufficient funds to pay for a funeral, or if nobody is able or willing to arrange and pay for the funeral, the local council (or in some cases the health authority) has a legal duty to arrange for burial or cremation. This is usually arranged through the local council environmental services department but in Scotland it may be the social work department.

## Additional related expenses

If the will does not specifically provide for catering after the funeral or for a gravestone, you should ensure that all the residuary beneficiaries of the will agree to the expenses before you commit to anything. Residuary beneficiaries are any individuals, organisations or charities due to receive a share of the final estate after debts and specific bequests have been paid. If a residuary beneficiary does not agree, the person arranging for the catering or gravestone will have to pay that share. You may instead decide to pay for such items.

## Burial

Check the person's papers to see if you can find a document (possibly called a 'deed of grant') or receipt indicating that they arranged for a burial space in a churchyard, cemetery or other place, such as a nature reserve. The funeral director will need a copy of any such documentation.

The cost of using a burial place may vary depending on whether the person lived in that area at the time of their death – if they did not, it may cost considerably more.

Most churchyards are no longer open for burial because there is no more space.

Most cemeteries are non-denominational, so you will be able to hold most types of service in their grounds. Parts of some cemeteries have been legally consecrated by the Church of England. Check with the staff beforehand if this is important to you.

Alternative burial sites include woodland burial sites, nature reserves, meadow burial sites and woodland sections of public cemeteries – these are often referred to as natural burial grounds. Whether and how the burial space is marked can vary greatly, so do check beforehand about what is offered or allowed, especially if you want to be able to identify the burial space in future. If the burial space is on private land (such as private woodland or farmland), you may want to ask about the long term security of the land.

It is also possible to bury the person on their own land. There are some restrictions and requirements, but not as many as people might expect. See the Further information: **Information and advice**

**about funerals** section on page 34 for details of *The Natural Death Handbook* or the **AB Welfare and Wildlife Trust**.

In England and Wales a Certificate for Burial or Cremation or Order for Burial from the Coroner's office) includes a tear-off slip that must be returned to the Registrar soon after the burial. If you are using a funeral director they will deal with this. If you are organising the funeral yourself, check the guidance notes on the form and check with the official overseeing the land on which the burial takes place, for example, a vicar or land manager.

## Cremation

Certain forms need to be completed before cremation goes ahead. The names of the forms differ across the four countries of the UK, but the procedure is broadly similar.

A close relative of the person or an executor needs to complete an application form for cremation. The funeral director can give you one, or ask the crematorium if you are organising the funeral.

In addition, two doctors will need to complete cremation forms – there is a charge for this. If you are organising the funeral, contact the doctor who certified the death to ask them to start this process. If you are using a funeral director, they will contact the doctor. In both cases the first doctor should contact the second doctor. The procedure will differ if a Coroner or Procurator Fiscal is involved – if this is the case, they will tell you what to do.

If you are making the arrangements yourself, send all these forms (your application form and the doctors' cremation forms) together with the green form from the Registrar (see page 10) to the crematorium at least 24 hours before the service – check the deadline with the crematorium. If you are using a funeral director, they should ensure that all the forms are sent to the crematorium in time.

The crematorium staff will then arrange to review the relevant forms and authorise the cremation.

If you choose cremation there are some restrictions on what you put in the coffin because of regulations about emissions

– for instance, clothing made of artificial fibres, rubber-soled shoes and items such as soft toys may be discouraged. A funeral director or crematorium staff can advise you on this.

### **Disposal of the ashes**

The person may have specified where they wanted their ashes to be scattered or buried. If they did not express any wishes, or if their wishes were not practicable, you have a number of choices.

You can scatter the ashes in the garden of remembrance at the crematorium, or in a place which was special to the person or which has meaning for you, such as your garden or a place you visited together. In the UK you can generally scatter ashes anywhere, but if you plan to do so on private land you will need permission from the landowner.

Alternatively, you can arrange for the ashes to be interred (buried) in a churchyard or family plot in a cemetery, or kept in a mausoleum. Some people keep the ashes at home in a casket or urn.

If you wish to scatter the ashes abroad,

please note that some countries do not allow this while others have regulations about importing or scattering ashes. In addition, if you are planning to transport the ashes by plane, do check the specific airline's regulations beforehand.

### **Choosing a coffin or alternative**

A wide range of coffins is available. You don't have to choose an expensive one – don't be embarrassed about asking a funeral director to show you less expensive options.

Cardboard coffins are available, and are more robust and often more acceptable in appearance than the name suggests. You can drape a cardboard coffin, or decorate or paint it, but if the coffin is to be cremated, check with the crematorium about restrictions beforehand as very few types of paint are acceptable because of regulations about emissions.

Even if you are not using a funeral director, some funeral directors may be prepared to sell you a coffin. If not, it is possible to buy one directly from some manufacturers, funeral suppliers,

carpenters, and local authority cemeteries or crematoria.

Alternatives to coffins include bamboo or willow caskets and shrouds. Many of the alternatives to a traditional coffin are more environmentally friendly. Do check the price before you commit yourself – while some alternatives are much less expensive, others may cost as much as, or on occasion more than, a coffin. Whatever your choice you (or your funeral director) may want to check its suitability and acceptability before you commit yourself to the purchase.

It is sometimes possible to rent an outer wooden coffin to be used during the service, and buy a cardboard inner coffin to go inside it. After the service, just the inner coffin is cremated.

## Hearses

You are not required by law to use a hearse. If you are organising the funeral yourself and want to do so, you may still be able to rent a hearse or other suitable vehicle from a funeral director.

## Gifts in memory

A gift in memory of a relative or friend is a wonderful way to remember people you care for and, through supporting the work of a charity, you can make a real difference in their name. Many people choose to make a donation to Marie Curie Cancer Care in place of flowers at a funeral. You may choose to arrange a collection yourself or ask your funeral director to help organise this.

If you have chosen cremation, you can leave the flowers in the garden of remembrance but if you want, you can take them home.

## The service or event

### What to include?

The service is for the person who died and for the people left behind. It is important to consider the wishes and needs of both. Did the person leave any written guidance about the content of the service? Did they ever discuss the subject? If not, did they have any favourite hymns or songs, or poems and readings?

If you don't know their wishes and are

looking for ideas, you can seek advice and suggestions from family and friends as well as religious ministers or funeral directors. In addition, many books and websites have suggestions for funerals, including conventional and more alternative styles. Please see **Further information: Information and advice about funerals** on page 34.

Some people are not sure what is appropriate or allowed in a funeral or memorial service, especially if they do not hold religious beliefs or are not having a religious service. In a religious setting such as a church or churchyard, you may have to follow some guidelines or requirements (though you do not have to have a vicar to conduct a funeral in a churchyard - see **Burial** on page 19). A non-denominational setting such as a local authority cemetery or crematorium may also have guidelines but is usually more accommodating. Once you have taken any guidelines into account, do what you think and feel is right.

If you require a religious ceremony, or if you need advice about any guidelines or requirements for a service in a religious

setting, you should seek advice from a minister or a representative of that particular religion. They may be able to advise on the content of the service including any hymns, readings and music for the different stages of the service. If you are not a member of a religion, or do not regularly attend a place of worship, the funeral director (if you are using one) should be able to suggest a local contact.

If you require a non-religious ceremony, the funeral director (if you are using one) should be able to help with a local contact. The British Humanist Association can also provide advice - see **Further information: Advice on religious or secular services** on page 35.

It is not necessary to have a formal service at the funeral if the person who died did not wish to have one, or if you prefer not to. Some suitable music and a few carefully chosen words from you, another relative or a friend can be just as appropriate.

Alternatively, you can combine some religious or traditional elements with more informal and personal contributions. For

instance, a religious representative can start and end the service, and lead the mourners in prayer or reflection, while family and friends provide the eulogy (a speech about the person who has died) or take turns to speak about the person.

If you are planning to speak, it may be a good idea to write out what you want to say beforehand because your emotions might cause you to lose track of your words.

### **Music**

Music is often an important part of a service or event. It is generally used for the arrival of friends and family, for the committal (when the coffin is lowered into the ground in a burial or when it leaves the sight of the mourners in a cremation) and when people depart. In addition, many services include hymns or songs.

If you are using a funeral director, they should be able to advise you on suitable choices if you need help. Alternatively, books and websites can provide suggestions.

These days some crematoria and other

locations may ask you to choose music that they can download instead of bringing along your own CDs. However, if this presents a problem (for instance, if you want music that isn't available online, perhaps a personal composition or old record), ask if you can take your own.

### **Including children in the arrangements and service**

It can help children or young people if you include them in the arrangements for the funeral. Give them time to make choices about attending the funeral and how they want to be involved, and explain what will happen on the day. Remember that it's fine for them to see you upset since it helps them to understand the importance of what is happening. Do make sure it's clear who will provide support for them on the day.

Children and young people may find it comforting to put something in the coffin such as a card, a toy, a picture they have drawn, a photo or a letter – adults may also want to put in something. If the coffin is being cremated, your funeral director (if you are using one) or the crematorium staff will be able to advise you about

what items may or may not be included. There are some restrictions because of requirements regarding safety and emissions.

## **Including someone with dementia, a mental illness or learning disability in the arrangements and service**

The grief of someone with dementia, a mental illness or learning disability is often misunderstood or ignored. They may struggle to understand the news that someone they loved has died. Do encourage them to ask questions about anything they don't understand.

They may well also forget that you have told them and you may need to tell them again and again that the person has died. However, you may feel it is inappropriate to keep reminding them of something so distressing since they may never be able to remember it and you may find yourself feeling grateful if they are spared some of the grief of losing someone.

Be guided by what they say and ask. If they are asking for the person who has died, you will need to say something

to explain why the person is not there, though there may be times when you sidestep the issue. Don't feel guilty if you do so – it can be very stressful for you to keep having to tell them. If they mention the person as though they are still alive, you may be able to join in the conversation and reminisce without reminding them that the person has died.

You may also wonder whether to spare them the funeral if they have forgotten someone close has died. Consider what they would do if they could choose for themselves – would they want the opportunity to say goodbye to a loved one? They may be able to take part in the rituals of the funeral and may grasp the significance of the occasion while it's happening. You may want to say something on their behalf if they cannot do so.

It may distress you to see them grieving if they have been unaware of their loss beforehand, but you may find it comforting afterwards that they were able to express their grief and share it with you for a short time.

## Coping with your grief

Grieving is a natural process that can take place after any kind of loss, especially the loss of someone to whom you were very close. Dealing with intense feelings of loss can be very distressing but it is normal – albeit very difficult and painful – to experience very strong reactions. Grief is not an illness. Your feelings are something you experience and not symptoms that have to be treated.

Look after yourself physically. Try to eat well and get plenty of rest. It is very easy to overlook your physical needs when you are busy dealing with everything that has to be done after a death or struggling with grief.

### Everyone grieves in their own way

Everyone reacts in their own way when they are grieving for someone who was very close to them. Each person and relationship is special and unique. Don't worry if you're not reacting the way other people seem to be, or if someone says you should be feeling or behaving a certain

way and you're not. The important thing is to allow yourself to feel and do what is right for you in your own time.

### Take your time to make choices

Your first reaction may include disbelief and confusion. You may find it impossible to take in what has happened. Even if you were expecting a person to die, the moment of death may have come as a shock, leaving you feeling unprepared and anxious or even angry.

There will be some practical things to attend to and decisions to make. Some things do have to be done quickly, but don't feel you have to rush into decisions if there is no need. Think about what you really want and take your time. You may find it helpful to talk to someone about practical issues. Don't enter into any financial or legal agreements unless you fully understand them and don't let others rush you into anything before you are ready.

### Intense feelings are part of grieving

People often find that the first two or

three months after someone has died are quite busy with practical things to attend to. It can be after this period that the full impact of your loss may be felt. You may be surprised by the intensity of your feelings. You may become forgetful and find it hard to concentrate. You may experience a whole range of feelings including physical pain and great sadness, isolation, helplessness, anxiety, relief and anger that the person has died.

You may be angry at yourself because you wish you had done things differently and now feel you have no opportunity to put things right and be forgiven. You may be angry at the person for dying. You may be angry at the world for your loss, or feel anger towards your god.

It is not uncommon to feel relief that the person has died and then feel guilty about feeling this way. There may be many different reasons why you would have such feelings – situations and relationships can be very complicated – but try not to feel guilty because they are also part of grieving.

You may also find that feelings return

about a previous loss which you thought you were over, or that you now grieve for a previous loss that didn't seem to affect you at the time.

Don't feel you have to hide your feelings if you don't want to. Talk about how you feel as much as you need to. You may find you need to talk through your feelings repeatedly.

Don't ignore your grief or try to move on before you feel ready. There is no right or wrong amount of time to grieve. Recovery is not a constant process – sometimes you will feel worse rather than better, but this is normal. You may also find that birthdays, holidays and anniversaries are difficult times, even when you thought you had moved on.

You may find it helpful to make some longer term plans so that you have something to look forward to in the future.

## **Grieving within a family**

Your family and friends will also be experiencing grief which will be unique to them. It can be upsetting if one family

member feels very angry while another feels intense sadness and needs to cry, or if one person needs to talk about their feelings while another wants to say very little. Try to acknowledge these differences. Sharing your thoughts and feelings can lessen the loneliness and bring you closer together.

## Supporting children who are grieving

Generally, children under four or five years old do not understand that a person who has died will not come back. Children and young people often need to be reminded of this again and again.

Children experience the passage of time differently from adults and can therefore appear to overcome grief quite quickly. However, children in their early school years may need reassuring that they are not responsible for the death of a close friend or relative as they often blame themselves for one reason or another. This is something that anyone who is bereaved may experience, but it is particularly common for this age group.

If you are caring for grieving children, it is

important to share your grief. Even very young children experience grief and need to be given the opportunity to express their feelings. You may want to protect your child from the pain of grief but, as one mother said: "It isn't a choice of whether she will hurt or not, but whether I will know about it".

Children often know more than adults realise and they need honest information to help them make sense of what has happened. If you are unsure about how to support your child then it may be helpful to talk to your GP, health visitor, practice nurse, social worker, support group or someone else with experience in such matters.

Some Marie Curie Hospices have children and young people's workers who may be able to offer advice and support. All our hospices can provide you with the following booklets about helping children:

- ***Helping children when someone close dies***
- ***Questions children may want to ask when someone close to them has died***
- ***Teenage grief – things you might want to know***

If you are not in contact with a Marie Curie Hospice, the booklets are available for download from the Marie Curie Cancer Care website. See **Further information: Bereavement organisations and information** on page 35 for details of how to order copies.

## Where to go for support

During the coming weeks and months you may need help and support from others – it can be very hard to manage bereavement alone. If you are worried about your feelings, it may also help to talk them through. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; it takes courage and strength.

Many people find that their close family and friends are a tremendous help, so do make sure you keep in touch with them. Even if they themselves are grieving, they may want to be close to you to support and care for you.

Within your circle of family and friends, you may find that someone isn't as supportive as you might have expected or hoped. For instance, perhaps they seem to avoid you, or change the subject whenever

you mention your loss or your feelings.

Everyone reacts differently to another person's grief just as everyone reacts differently to their own loss. It may be that they simply don't know what to say, or are worried that if they mention the subject they will upset you. It can be very difficult for someone who hasn't experienced bereavement to understand how strongly it can affect you, or to realise just how long you will be affected. On the other hand, perhaps it brings back memories of a loss of their own so they are too distressed to talk about the subject at all. Perhaps they feel the need to fix things or do something when there's nothing that can be done or fixed at the moment.

If someone isn't supportive in the way you need, it doesn't mean they don't care about you. There may be many different reasons for their reaction. If you feel an important relationship is being affected by this, you could raise the issue or ask a trusted third party to do so.

Alternatively, you may decide to look to them for a different type of support. For instance, someone who doesn't feel

comfortable discussing how you feel may be delighted to provide practical support such as babysitting or helping with a DIY job. Or someone who feels they have to do something or 'fix' things may be reassured that simply listening to you can help while other actions aren't necessary (and might not help at this point).

Sometimes you may have to leave the issue unresolved – or deal with it when your loss is further behind you.

It may also help to talk to someone outside your family and circle of friends. You could contact someone else who you trust - a minister of religion, or your GP or practice nurse. They should be able to recommend a local bereavement support group or counsellor. See **Further information: Bereavement organisations and information** on page 35.

If the person who has died was cared for by a Marie Curie Hospice, the hospice will contact you within eight weeks of the death to offer you bereavement support. However, if you would like support sooner, do not hesitate to contact the hospice (which should give you its

contact details with this booklet). Most Marie Curie Hospices have social workers, chaplains, a family bereavement support team or other bereavement support services for advice and information.

If the person who has died was cared for by another local hospice, try contacting the hospice to see what support or information they can offer. They may recommend other support services in the area.

## Administration of (or dealing with) the estate

If the person who is named as the executor in the will agrees to act, they have legal responsibility for administering the estate of the person who died – for instance, settling debts and paying out legacies.

More than one executor may be named. The executor may be yourself, a relative or friend of the person who died, and/or a solicitor (occasionally a bank is named). If the solicitor is involved in administering the estate, they will charge for this. However, not everyone who is named as an executor has to act as executor when the time comes.

If you are the executor, you may want to administer the estate yourself. If you prefer not to, you can instruct a solicitor to do so instead – they do not have to have been named as an executor. They will charge for their work. Alternatively, you may want to deal with certain matters yourself and leave others to the solicitor – for instance,

you might sort out the possessions of the person who died and deal with simple paperwork while the solicitor draws up estate accounts.

Administering an estate does not have to be complicated, and it is entirely possible for a lay executor to administer a straightforward estate if they wish. A number of leaflets and books provide detailed advice. These include:

**Help the Aged** offers a summary sheet ***Guide to Estate Administration***. This is available from the Legacies Department – phone: 020 7239 1965.

***What to do after a death in England and Wales*** (booklet D49 – Department for Work and Pensions) contains a section *Probate, property and possessions*. This booklet is given to you by the Registrar or visit: [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk) and search the publications catalogue for DWP1027 (English version) or DWP 1027W (Welsh version)

***What to do after a death in Scotland: practical advice for times of bereavement*** (Scottish Executive) contains a section

*Possessions, property and children*. This booklet is given to you by the Registrar or visit: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk) and search for *what to do after a death in Scotland*.

## Pensions, tax and benefits

### Yourself

You may qualify for a Bereavement Payment, Widowed Parent's Allowance or Bereavement Allowance. Your local benefits agency should be able to advise you on eligibility and procedures for these. They should also be able to provide advice on changes to your benefits or pension situation.

Please see **Further information: Financial and practical advice** on page 37.

### The person who has died

The surviving spouse of the person who has died or the executor(s) needs to deal with the following:

If the person who died received any state or private pension or benefit, you will need to inform the local social security office. They will advise what needs to happen and which form needs to be completed. This form will have been given

to you when registering the death.

You also need to enclose any order books, payable orders or giro cheques. You may want to photocopy or take a note of any social security or pension numbers before you return the paperwork.

You should not cash any of the pensions or benefits of the person who has died. Any money due will be sent out to the next of kin or executor after the social security office has received and processed the paperwork.

You will need to notify the local tax office about your change in circumstances. To help you understand the tax liabilities that may arise when someone dies, visit: [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) and search for *What to do about tax when someone dies*.

## People and organisations to inform

A very good list of 'things to send back' and 'people to tell' can be found in ***What to do after a death in England and Wales*** (booklet D49 – Department for Work and Pensions) in the section *Probate, property and possessions*. This booklet is

given to you by the Registrar in England and Wales. Many of the items on the list will be applicable UK-wide, even if the terminology differs for a few.

Some people to tell who may have been involved with the healthcare of the person who has died are:

- GP (unless they already know)
- District Nurse if applicable, to cancel nursing care and any other services that were being provided
- local social services department if services such as meals on wheels, home helps or home care were being provided
- NHS or Red Cross if equipment was loaned to the person who died
- any hospital the person who died had been attending

## Further information

Following are details of further sources of information. These include a number of national organisations, some of which will be able to provide you with details of local contacts where appropriate. If you received this booklet through a Marie Curie Hospice, you may also receive information on local contacts with this booklet.

This booklet only has space to include a limited number of organisations. Please visit: [www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers) for further information about bereavement issues and for links to additional useful websites.

## Trade associations for funeral directors

**National Association of Funeral Directors**  
0845 230 1343  
[www.nafd.org.uk](http://www.nafd.org.uk)

**The National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors**  
0845 230 6777  
[www.saif.org.uk](http://www.saif.org.uk)

## Information and advice about funerals

**Natural Death Centre**  
0871 288 2098  
[www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)

Offers advice and information on funeral arrangements, in particular inexpensive, DIY and green funerals and woodland burial grounds. Publishes *The Natural Death Handbook*, a comprehensive guide to DIY funerals.

**AB Welfare & Wildlife Trust**  
01423 530900 or 01423 868121  
ab-welfare-wildlife-trust@burials.  
freeserve.co.uk (not for urgent enquiries)

A national charity offering free and sound advice on the law around dying, collecting and transporting bodies, burial and cremation, green funerals, burials in private land and nature reserves. It also offers practical help with deaths within a 25-mile radius of Harrogate and can arrange burials in nature reserves near Harrogate.

**Funerals UK**  
[www.funeralsuk.com](http://www.funeralsuk.com)

Provides advice on wills and funerals,

and information on companies which can provide a wide range of services for both conventional and more alternative funerals.

## Advice on religious or secular services

### Christian

You will find churches of all major Christian denominations in your local Yellow Pages directory.

### United Synagogue

020 8343 8989

[www.unitedsynagogue.org.uk](http://www.unitedsynagogue.org.uk)

### The Muslim Council of Britain

0845 262 6786

[www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

### The Buddhist Society

020 7834 5858

[www.thebuddhistsociety.org](http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org)

### British Humanist Association

020 7079 3580

[www.humanism.org.uk](http://www.humanism.org.uk)

A national organisation that can provide a representative for non religious funerals as

well as advice on organising the ceremony.

### Interfaith Seminary

08444 457004

[www.theinterfaithseminary.com](http://www.theinterfaithseminary.com)

A national organisation that can provide representatives to help plan tailor made ceremonies, with or without a spiritual element.

## Bereavement organisations and information

Your GP or practice nurse should be able to recommend a local bereavement support group.

### Cruse Bereavement Care

Day By Day Helpline: 0844 477 9400

(9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Young persons' helpline: 0808 808 1677

(9.30am-5pm, Monday to Friday)

[www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

A national charity with branches throughout the UK, offering help to all those who have been bereaved, through counselling, social contact and advice on practical matters.

### **Cruse Bereavement Care (Scotland)**

01738 444 178

[www.crusescotland.org.uk](http://www.crusescotland.org.uk)

### **The Bereavement Advice Centre**

0800 634 9494

(9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)

[www.bereavementadvice.org](http://www.bereavementadvice.org)

A national organisation offering advice on all aspects of bereavement, from registering the death and finding a funeral director to probate, tax and benefit queries.

### **The Compassionate Friends**

National helpline: 0845 123 2304

(open 10am-4pm and 6.30pm-10.30pm)

[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

An international organisation of bereaved parents offering friendship, support and understanding to other bereaved parents. Includes parents of adult children who have died.

### **Childhood Bereavement Network**

020 7843 6309

[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

A national organisation aimed at

improving the quality and range of bereavement support for children, young people, their families and other caregivers. Offers information about support services.

### **Marie Curie Hospices**

Our hospices provide bereavement support for people whose partner or family member has died in a Marie Curie Hospice.

We also offer the following booklets for children:

- *Helping children when someone close dies*
- *Questions children may want to ask when someone close to them has died*
- *Teenage grief – things you might want to know*

If you are not in contact with a Marie Curie Hospice, the booklets are available from Marie Curie Cancer Care on 0800 716 146 or downloadable from [www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers)

### **Bereavement Advice Centre**

Helpline: 0800 634 9494

(9am-5pm Monday to Friday)

[www.bereavementadvice.org](http://www.bereavementadvice.org)

A national organisation offering advice on all aspects of bereavement, from registering the death and finding a funeral director to probate, tax and benefit queries.

## Counselling

Your GP or practice nurse should be able to recommend a counselling service.

### **BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy)**

01455 883316

**[www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)**

BACP provides a factsheet about choosing a counsellor and can provide details of local counsellors, including those who have specialised training around bereavement and those who may be able to provide free or low cost counselling or offer concessions.

## Financial and practical advice Benefits

Your local benefits agency should be able to provide you with information about bereavement benefits and any changes to your benefits or pension. For contact details look for the benefits agency display advert in the business section of the phone book.

Your local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office should be able to provide you with information about bereavement benefits or other benefits. For contact details look for employment service in the business section of the phone book or visit: **[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)**

### **Citizens Advice**

**[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

Trained counsellors will give advice on problems and contact details for other local groups which will help. Look in the telephone directory for local offices.

### **HM Revenue and Customs**

**[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)**

You will need to notify the local tax office about your change in circumstances. To help you understand the tax liabilities that may arise when someone dies visit: **[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)** and search for *what to do about tax when someone dies*.

### **Interpreters**

Social Services should be able to advise you on the availability of interpreters.

## **Help the Aged**

Freephone 0808 800 6565 or 0808 808 7575 in Northern Ireland  
(9am-4pm Monday to Friday)

**[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)**

Help the Aged's advice line can help with advice on benefits and entitlements.

## **About Marie Curie Cancer Care**

### **Making a real difference**

Marie Curie Cancer Care is a long-established and well-respected charity committed to making a real difference to the lives of people with cancer and other terminal illnesses. Our work centres on the following key activities:

### **Marie Curie Nursing Service**

Marie Curie Nurses make it possible for people with terminal cancer and other illnesses to stay in the comfort of their own home at the end of their lives rather than go into hospital or a hospice. Our nurses generally work through the night allowing families and carers to rest, knowing their loved ones are in safe hands.

The Marie Curie Nursing Service has over 2,000 nurses covering 95 per cent of the UK from remote villages to the big cities. This service is free to patients irrespective of their circumstances.

To find out more about this service, phone  
**Marie Curie direct:**  
0800 634 4520 (Freephone)

## Hospices

The charity funds nine hospices across the UK offering specialist care in a relaxed and comfortable environment. The expertise of Marie Curie Cancer Care's specialist staff reaches beyond the hospice into the community linking with GPs and social services departments. Hospice day service programmes and home visits mean that people can remain at home for as long as possible if they wish.

## Marie Curie Research

Marie Curie Cancer Care scientists focus on how the body's cells should normally operate; what causes these processes to go wrong and lead to cancer; and how better treatments can be developed.

Our pioneering programme of palliative care research is showing how we can better care for people affected by cancer and other terminal illnesses.

## Support us

Marie Curie Cancer Care's services are always free but we can only continue to do this through the generosity of our supporters.

## Donations

There are many ways to make a donation. You can make a one-off donation or set up a monthly direct debit from your bank account. If you are a UK taxpayer you can add an extra 28 per cent to your donation at no extra cost via the Gift Aid scheme.

Find out more about donating:  
0800 716 146 (Freephone)  
[www.mariecurie.org.uk/donate](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/donate)

## A gift in your will

Last year, gifts that supporters left to the charity in their wills, allowed us to provide a million hours of nursing care. Without these special gifts, we cannot meet the challenges of the future.

Find out how you could include a gift to Marie Curie Cancer Care in your will:  
0800 716 146 (Freephone)  
[www.mariecurie.org.uk/wills](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/wills)

## Events

Run, trek, swim or cycle, our supporters do it at home and abroad. Whether taking part in memory of a loved one or as a personal challenge, they make a real difference. Events range from exhilarating abseiling and overseas adventure activities, to sponsored walks, tea parties and bridge tournaments. There is something to suit everyone.

Take part in events in your area or abroad:  
0800 716 146 (Freephone)  
**[www.mariecurie.org.uk/events](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/events)**

## Volunteers

Volunteers operate right at the heart of the Marie Curie Cancer Care and are critical to its success. Volunteers work throughout the charity in shops, offices, hospices, fundraising, through to the trustees who govern the charity. Their skills, dedication and sheer hard work are absolutely vital in keeping this charity's services running.

Our annual Great Daffodil Appeal in March relies on its volunteer street collectors. Each individual can make an

enormous difference. Just one hour of your time as a collector can help fund a few hours of nursing care.

Find out more about volunteering:  
0800 716 146 (Freephone)  
**[www.mariecurie.org.uk/volunteers](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/volunteers)**

## Supporting the choice to die at home campaign

Marie Curie Cancer Care believes everyone should have the right to choose where they are cared for if they have a terminal illness. Research shows most people want to be cared for in the familiar and comfortable surroundings of their own home. A significant minority would choose to be cared for in a hospice or nursing home. However, more than 50 per cent of cancer patients receive end-of-life care in hospital – the place they would least want to be. The charity is campaigning across the UK for more choice around place of care.

To add your voice to the campaign email: **[campaign.mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:campaign.mariecurie.org.uk)** or to find out more visit: **[www.campaign.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.campaign.mariecurie.org.uk)**

## Feedback about this booklet and our services

This booklet has been developed in consultation with readers who have experienced bereavement.

If you have any comments about this booklet or our services please write to:

Patient and Family Champion  
Marie Curie Nursing Service  
Marie Curie Cancer Care  
89 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TP  
champion@mariecurie.org.uk

We are very grateful to John Bradfield of the AB Welfare & Wildlife Trust, who reviewed the booklet in a professional and personal capacity and provided invaluable feedback. The Trust's pioneering work has been praised in parliament and is referred to extensively in ***The Natural Death Handbook***, which acknowledges his expertise in this field.

## **Marie Curie Cancer Care – Nursing**

Marie Curie Cancer Care provides high-quality nursing, totally free, to give people with terminal cancer and other illnesses the choice of dying at home, supported by their families.

## **Marie Curie Cancer Care – Hospices**

Marie Curie Hospices actively promote quality of life for people with cancer and other illnesses and provide support for their families, completely free.

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## **Need a large print version of this booklet?**

View a Word version of the Bereavement Booklet on our website and enlarge the text to suit your needs. Visit: [www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/patientsandcarers) then: information and publications if you are bereaved.

If you do not have access to a computer, please phone: 020 7599 7250 and ask us to send you a version printed in a size to suit you.

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