



each

East Anglia's
Children's Hospices

Practical things to do after a child dies



After the death of a child

There are some official processes that need to take place after a child's death. These are explained in more detail in the guide "*When a Child Dies: A Guide for Parents and Carers*" which is available to download by following the link www.ncmd.info/whatnext or scanning the QR code.

Please let us know if you would like this information printed.

A named professional from the Child Death Review Team will support you through these official processes and make sure you understand what needs to happen. You don't have to manage this alone.



whatnext

Taking care of practical things

In addition to these formal processes, there are some practical tasks that will fall to you. In the days after your child has died, you may feel shocked, numb, or overwhelmed. All these feelings are normal. Some people want to focus on getting practical things done, while others can't face them straight away.

There is no right or wrong way to feel. If these tasks feel too difficult, you might want to ask a family member or friend to help.

Registering your child's death

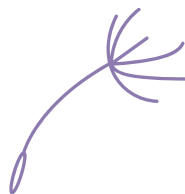
You will need to register your child's death by making an appointment at a registry office.

- If you have experienced the death of a baby and your baby's birth has not yet been registered, this will also need to be done within 42 days of the birth. You can do both registrations at the same visit if you wish.
- If you have been given a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, you must register the death within 5 days.
- If your child's death has been referred to the coroner, there may be a delay before you can register the death. You will be supported in this process.

When you are given the certificate, you should also receive information about where to register the death. You can find the relevant registry office by using the government's postcode search:

www.gov.uk/register-offices#results or scan the QR code below.

If you need help with this, please ask EACH for support.



Choosing a funeral director

If you haven't used a funeral director before, we recommend you use one who is registered with **National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD)**. You can use the following link to find funeral directors in your area

www.funeral-directory.co.uk or scan the QR code.



funeral-directory

You may also wish to refer to the **National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF)** for advice. www.saif.org.uk.

If using an independent Civil Celebrant, we suggest you check that they have signed the **The Funeral Celebrant Accord**.

If you require a Humanist Celebrant, we recommend checking they are a member of **Humanist UK**.

We suggest you:

- Speak to a few funeral directors, either on the phone or face to face.
- Choose the ones you feel comfortable with.
- Ask them to explain their services and give you a breakdown of costs. Funeral costs can vary, so it's best to ask for a written estimate before confirming arrangements.

Planning your child's funeral or celebration of life

You can begin planning your child's funeral whenever you feel ready.

The funeral can only take place once you have a death certificate or a form from the coroner.

If your faith, beliefs, or family traditions affect how soon the funeral should happen, please let the professionals supporting you know as soon as possible so they can pass this information on.

A funeral or celebration of life can be an emotional but deeply meaningful way to say goodbye. The choice of options available from funeral directors can sometimes feel overwhelming, so take time to think about what feels right for you, your child, and your family. You can talk through your ideas and options with your funeral director.

Help with funeral costs

The Children's Funeral Fund for England can help pay for:

- Burial fees.
- Cremation fees (including the cost of a doctor's certificate).
- A coffin, shroud, or casket (up to £300).

The Children's Funeral Fund is available to all families who have experienced the death of a child. If you have other funeral expenses, you may also be able to apply for a Funeral Expenses Payment.

Ask your funeral director for help with this or visit:

www.gov.uk/child-funeral-costs or scan the QR code below.



Some families may also be eligible for the 'Butterfly Fund' which provides a one-off payment of £300 to families following the death of a child from a life-limiting or life-threatening illness. Referrals to the fund are made on behalf of a family by a member of the care/support team involved in the delivery of palliative care to the child. Please ask us to support you with this.





Clothing you may wish your child to wear

Deciding how to dress your child after they have died can be a confusing and challenging process as you recall their personality and how they lived their life. When your child died, they may have been wearing clothing that was special to them or to you, and you may wish for them to wear this at their funeral. Many parents choose a favourite outfit, pyjamas, or something that feels most like their child. Your child may have chosen something themselves if they knew they were going to die.

After a child has died, their body can change. For this reason, it may be helpful to set aside the clothing you would like your child to wear for the funeral, so it can be preserved for that time. Changing clothing earlier can also make it easier to gently dress and undress your child when needed.

If your child is in our care, we can support you with changing or preparing clothing. If your child is in the care of a funeral director, they will also be able to help you with this.

Clothing made from soft fabrics or with some stretch or elasticity is often easier to manage. Some families prefer to use a burial gown – these are made specifically for presentation and ease of putting on a child. Most funeral directors can support with selection of these items.

Child benefit and other payments

You will need to let the Child Benefit Office know that your child has died.

You can find more information at www.gov.uk/child-benefit-child-parent-dies or by calling **0300 200 3100**.

Child Benefit is usually paid for up to 8 weeks after a child's death.

If you receive other benefits or have been given equipment or support for your child, you will need to contact those agencies too.

Tell us Once is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go. To use this service the death must either have been registered, or you have been given a death certificate or interim death certificate from the coroner. When you register your child's death, the registrar will talk you through how this works, or you can use the website. www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once

Motability vehicle and returning equipment

If you had a Motability vehicle leased using your child's Mobility Allowance to help them get out and about, this vehicle will need to be returned.

We understand this can feel like a lot to manage at a very difficult time, and there is support available to help you with this.

Motability recommends you contact them directly as a first step. This can allow you a little more time to organise the return of the vehicle and to talk through what happens next.

It is important **not** to complete the Motability section of the government's Tell Us Once form until you have spoken to Motability. If this section is completed before contacting them, the vehicle may be collected within two weeks. Motability can guide you on when and how to complete this part of the form, and may be able to agree extra time before the vehicle is returned.

You can contact Motability by:

- Calling **0300 456 4566**, If you are unable to speak to someone straight away, Motability will arrange to call you back, usually within a few days.

Using their online notification form to let them know your child has died. To download the form, use the link

[Notification of a customer passing away | Motability Scheme](#) or scan the QR code.



Returning specialist equipment and medicines

Your child may have used specialist equipment, such as a wheelchair, specialist bed, slings, or medical equipment like feeding machines.

- Your Occupational Therapist, or the EACH Occupational Therapist, can help arrange the return of wheelchairs to the wheelchair service.
- Specialist beds, slings, and other equipment can usually be returned to the community equipment store.
- Medical equipment is often collected by your community nursing team.
- Any unused medicines can be returned to your local community pharmacy at any time.

Social media and online accounts

If your child's photos are shared online, you might want to check your privacy settings so they can't be used without your permission.

If your child had their own social media accounts, you can choose to:

- Deactivate them.
- Turn them into memorial accounts.
- Leave them open.

Social media companies usually ask for proof that you're the parent or carer and a copy of the death certificate to make any changes.

Your child's GP and school are usually told very quickly by professionals involved in your child's care, but you may also wish to speak to them yourself. It can also help to let other organisations know, such as the child's dentist, optician, or any clubs your child belonged to, so that you don't receive unexpected letters or reminders.

If you find these calls too painful, someone close to you could make them on your behalf.



We are here to support you

We know there is a lot to think about at this time. You do not need to do everything at once, and it is okay to take things one step at a time. If you would like help with any of these arrangements, or simply need to talk things through, our team are here to support you.



Contacts

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