

Following a Bereavement

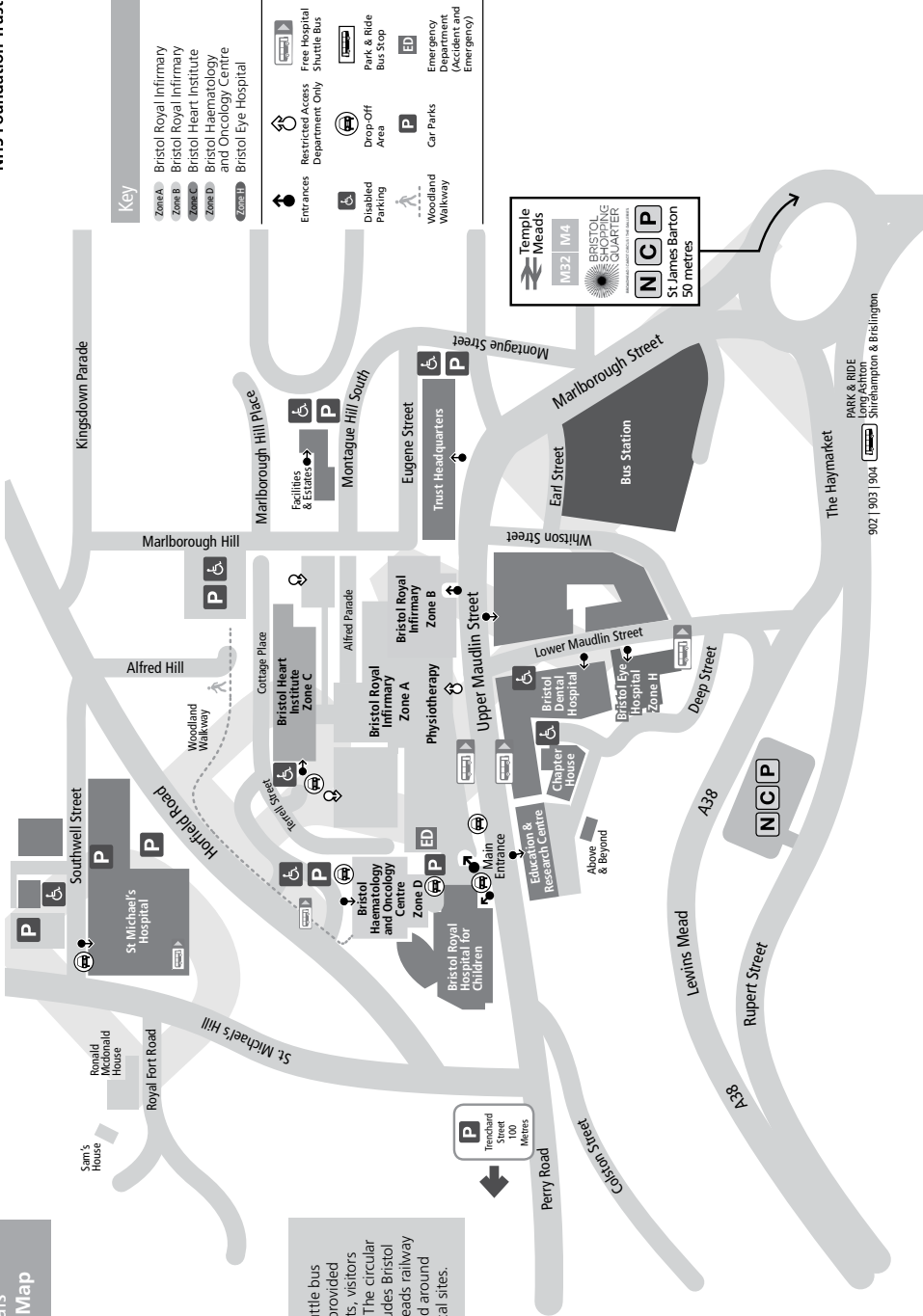
What you need to do



PATIENT AFFAIRS Bristol Royal Infirmary

A409, Level 4, Queens Building, Bristol, BS2 8HW

0117 342 9049/9048



A free shuttle bus service is provided for patients, visitors and staff. The circular route includes Bristol Temple Meads railway station and around our hospital sites.

This booklet is designed to help you cope with practical steps you will need to take over the next few days. It also looks at the emotional adjustment that you will have to face over the coming months, as well as the sources of help and support available to you.

The staff of the University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust are committed to doing all that they can to help you at this time. Our sincere condolences go out to you.

Steps you will need to take

Step 1 **Collect the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. See page 1**

Step 2 **Register the death. See page 7**

Step 3 **Arrange the funeral. See page 14**

What you need to do

Following the death of your relative or friend, you should telephone the next working day after 10am to be given further information. Please do not come to the hospital until we have spoken to you by phone as paperwork may not be ready and your journey may be wasted. We hope to complete all necessary paperwork within two working days.

Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) (also Eye and Dental Hospitals)

Contact: **Patient Affairs**

0117 342 9049/9048

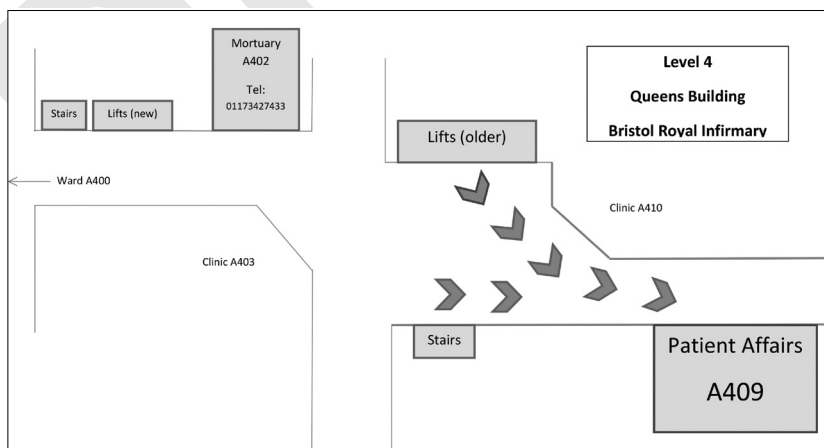
A409, Level 4, Queens Building

Bristol Royal Infirmary

Bristol BS2 8HW

Opening Hours: 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday

If your relative or friend died in either South Bristol Community Hospital or St Michael's Hospital then please refer to the contact details on the next page.



South Bristol Community Hospital

Contact: 0117 342 9836 or 0117 342 9833
Mon - Fri: 8.30am to 4.30pm

St Michael's Hospital

Contact: Ward 72: 0117 342 5272
Ward 78: 0117 342 5278

Most of the information in this booklet will apply to these hospitals, but there may be slight differences in the administrative process.

You are advised not to make a funeral date or Register Office appointment until you have spoken to us. However you can make initial contact with a Funeral Director (see page 14).

Hospital Switchboard: 0117 923 0000

Minicom: 0117 934 9869

www.uhbristol.nhs.uk



For an interpreter or signer please contact the telephone number on your appointment letter

For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please email patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk.



Contents page

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death.....	1
Patients' Property.....	2
Visiting the Deceased.....	2
Tissue Donation.....	3
The Coroner.....	5
Coroner's Post Mortem.....	6
Hospital Post Mortem.....	6
Registering a Death.....	7
Who can register a death?.....	9
At the Register Office.....	10
The Death Certificate.....	11
Tell us once.....	12
People you might need to inform.....	13
Arranging a Funeral.....	14
Useful hospital contact numbers.....	16

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

The Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is an important legal document, showing the cause of death. This has to be signed by the doctor who was responsible for the medical care of your relative or friend while they were in hospital. Doctors are not always able to complete the paperwork immediately, so it may be several days before the certificate is ready for collection. In some cases, they may need to contact the Coroner's Office which will delay the paperwork further (see page 5).

Please check by telephone with the Patient Affairs Office to find out when the certificate might be ready for collection.

Once you have been informed that the paperwork is ready, you will need to make an appointment at the Register Office to register the death (see page 7).

We suggest that you pick up the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death at least 30 minutes before your Register Office appointment.

If you have a concern about care

University Hospitals Bristol complies with the national guidance on 'learning from death' and has a process to review the notes of all deceased patients to assess the standard of care delivered. If a family member has concerns about the care delivered to their relative, then this can be raised with the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01173423604 or by writing to the Medical Director, at Trust Headquarters, Marlborough Street, Bristol, BS1 3NU.

We will then make contact with the family member and undertake a review of the notes, and offer a meeting to jointly discuss the findings.

Patients' Property

If the deceased patient has property or clothing on the ward or in the cashier's office which is not taken by relatives at the time of death, this will be available for collection from the Patient Affairs Office along with the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. You may like to bring your own bag for property rather than have it returned in hospital bags. Jewellery (eg wedding rings, earrings) is usually left on the deceased patient unless family request otherwise and will go to the funeral director where it is removed if requested. Please inform the Patient Affairs Office if you are expecting to collect property.

University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust does not accept responsibility for any items of clothing or property that are not handed in for safe keeping.

Visiting the Deceased Patient

It may be possible, with the exception of the South Bristol Community Hospital, to make an appointment to view the deceased patient in the hospital viewing room. Please telephone the Patient Affairs Office between 8am and 4pm or the mortuary direct on 0117 342 7433. Outside these times, please ring switchboard on 0117 923 0000 and ask to speak to the Clinical Site Manager. Alternatively, you may prefer to wait until the deceased patient is transferred to the funeral director.

In rare cases, for example, due to infection or forensic evidence, viewings may be restricted.

Tissue Donation

University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust Supports Tissue Donation – saving and improving lives

Tissue donation can help thousands of people each year. Donated tissue such as heart valves, bones, and eyes can save or dramatically improve the lives of many people suffering from illness or injury.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and their families, thousands of people every year receive life-transforming tissue transplants. University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust works in partnership with NHS Blood and Transplant to support the option of tissue donation. Almost anyone can be considered as a tissue donor. A specialist nurse from NHS Blood and Transplant may call you, or another family member, to discuss the option of donation for your loved one. The specialist nurse will provide enough information to enable you to make the decision that is right for you.

Throughout the donation, the donor is treated with respect and dignity. After donation our specialist team will ensure the donor remains a natural appearance. Tissue donation will not delay funeral arrangements.

If you wish to speak to a specialist nurse about tissue donation, please call 0800 4320559.

NHS Constitution

Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution

Deaths occurring in the Accident and Emergency Department

All of these deaths will be referred to the Coroner's office as the patient was in hospital less than 24 hours. In some cases a hospital doctor or the patients GP may be allowed to complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. In many cases a post mortem will be necessary.

The Coroner

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer. His office is responsible for investigating deaths in the following circumstances:

- All sudden and unexpected deaths
- Deaths where the cause is unknown
- Unnatural deaths for example accident or suicide
- Deaths that occur within 24 hours of an admission to hospital
- Deaths that occur during or shortly after an operation
- Deaths caused by industrial diseases
- Deaths involving a bone fracture
- Deaths from acute alcohol poisoning or drug related illnesses

This list is not exclusive and may be changed.

Once information is obtained by the Coroner's office from the medical staff, a decision will be made as to whether or not a post mortem is necessary. In many cases, permission will be given to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. However you should note that the procedures with the Coroner usually take 3 working days to complete before the certification can be released and in these circumstances an appointment with the Register Office cannot be made until all documentation has been completed and issued.

Coroner's Post Mortem

If the Coroner decides a post mortem (Autopsy) is necessary, this will usually take place within a week of the death at the Coroner's mortuary in Flax Bourton. The Coroner does not require the consent of any other person for this to take place. Funeral directors should be advised about the post mortem and are usually happy to proceed with funeral arrangements.

Following a post mortem there is no paperwork to collect from the hospital. You will be informed by the Coroner's Office when they have sent paperwork to the Register Office so that you can make an appointment to register the death.

Further information may be obtained from :

CORONER'S OFFICE

(Opening hours 7.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday)

01275 461920

Hospital Post Mortem

After a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been issued, the hospital doctors may occasionally ask your permission to perform a hospital post mortem. This is usually to find out more about the illness / disease that caused the death. A doctor will give you a full explanation of what may be involved in the hospital post mortem. You are then free to agree to or decline the request.

Registering a Death

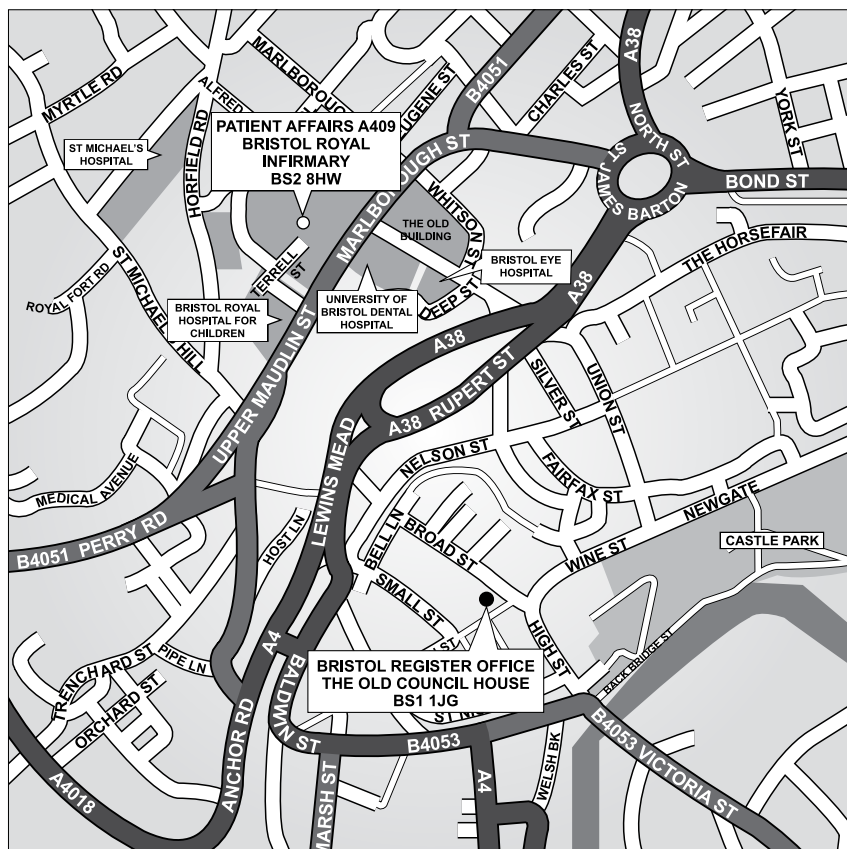
An appointment should be made to register the death by telephoning **0117 922 2800** or by visiting the Bristol Registry Office website at Bristol. Gov.uk/registeradeath once you have been told by the Patient Affairs Office that paperwork is ready.

If there has been a Coroner's post mortem, you will be told by the Coroner's Office when you may make the appointment.

The nearest Register Office to the hospital (10 minutes walk) is

**Bristol Register Office
The Old Council House
Corn Street
Bristol BS1 1JG**

**Opening Hours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
9am to 4pm
Wednesday 10am to 4pm and 5pm to 7pm
Saturday 9.45am to 11.45am (by special arrangement only)**



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There is also a Register Office at Southmead Hospital.
(Opening hours Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)
Please make clear which office you require when you telephone
for an appointment.

It is possible to make a declaration of someone's death at
any Register Office in England after obtaining the Medical
Certificate. The information is forwarded to the Register Office
in Bristol which will post death certificates to you. This will delay
registration and may delay funerals.

Who can register a death?

The people who are legally allowed to register the death are:

- A relative
- A person present at the death
- The occupier of the premises where the death occurred if he/she was aware of the death
- The person dealing with the funeral arrangements (but not the funeral director)

At the Register Office

When you go to register the death, you must take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death in the sealed envelope in which you were given it. This is not needed in cases of a Coroner's post mortem.

In addition, it is helpful but not essential to take:

- The deceased person's medical card
- Any war pension information
- Birth and marriage or civil partnership certificates
- The passport of the deceased

The Registrar will ask you to provide the following information about the deceased:

- The date and place of death
- Full name and surname and maiden name if appropriate
- Date and place of birth
- Occupation. If the deceased was a married woman or a widow, the full name and occupation of her husband
- The usual address
- If the deceased was married, the date of birth of the surviving widow or widower
- Whether the deceased was receiving a pension or allowance from public funds

This information should be given to the best of your ability. Your name will go on the Death Certificate as the informant.

The Death Certificate

This is a certified copy of the entry in the register of deaths. **Each one costs at the time of printing £4.00, for which you will need to pay the registrar by cash or cheque.** You will need to consider how many certificates you require as banks, building societies and insurance companies require certified copies (otherwise known as “originals”).

The Registrar will also give you a certificate for burial or cremation (known as the Green Form). This will be required by your funeral director.

If the deceased person was in receipt of a pension or benefits, you will be given a form to be completed and sent to the Department of Work and Pensions.

Tell us once and organisations you need to contact

You will need to report the death to various organisations and government departments. Bristol City Council runs a service called “Tell us once” which will help you to contact these departments. If you wish to use this service, inform the Registrar when you attend the Register Office and the options will be explained to you. You will be able to access this service by telephone or on line once you have registered the death.

You can choose which of the following organisations you would like to notify.

Local Councils

- Housing Benefit Office
- Council Tax
- Collection of payment for council services
- Libraries
- Electoral Services
- Blue Badges
- Adult Services
- Children’s Services
- Council Housing

Department for Work and Pensions

- Pension, Disability and Carers’ Service
- Jobcentre Plus
- Overseas Health Team

Revenue and Customs

- Child Benefit
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit
- Personal Taxation

Identity and Passport Service

- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Ministry of Defence, Service Personnel and Veterans Agency
- War Pensions Scheme

People, apart from close family and friends, you might need to inform

	Done		Done
Priest, Vicar, Minister or leader of other faiths		Electricity, gas, telephone, water companies, internet service provider. TV rental/ licence, premium bonds, hire purchase companies	
Hospital other than Bristol Royal Infirmary, dentist, optician		Post Office (redirect mail)	
Bank, credit cards, Building Society		Cancel any appointments (apart from Bristol Royal Infirmary and GP)	
Social Services (home help or care)		Day Centre transport	
Previous place of work/ place of work (occupational pension)		Deliveries, eg milkman, newspapers	
Executors of the Estate (Will)		NHS departments returning equipment	
Solicitor		Employer, trade union	
Insurance Companies, eg car, home, life, caravan		A child's or young person's teacher, employer or college if a close relative/friend has died	
Residential or Nursing Home		Anyone holding deceased's money	
Landlord, Housing agency			
Mortgage company/landlord			

Arranging a Funeral

Before going ahead with any arrangements, it is advisable to check whether the deceased person left a will and any instructions for the funeral. If you are not the next of kin (nearest relative) or executor, you should check with them that you have the authority to proceed.

Most funeral directors are members of one of two trade associations:

- National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD)
- Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF)

Member firms must provide you with a price list on request and cannot exceed any written estimate they give you without your permission.

Most people would probably require the funeral director to provide the following services as a minimum:

- make all necessary arrangements
- provide appropriate staff
- provide a suitable coffin
- transfer the deceased from the place of death to the funeral director
- care for the deceased prior to the funeral
- provide a hearse to the nearest cemetery or crematorium
- arrange for burial or cremation as appropriate

Embalming, viewing of the deceased, or providing a limousine for mourners are optional extras, discuss these fully with your funeral director and make sure you receive an itemised written quotation.

Funeral costs for the same services may vary considerably from one funeral director to another. It is advisable to get more than one quote to compare costs and services. Funeral directors should provide detailed price lists for you to take away.

Disbursements are fees paid to others, i.e. doctors (for cremation forms), a minister, newspaper announcements, flowers and crematorium. Ask the funeral director for a written quotation detailing all these fees.

In addition, it should be remembered:

- When you arrange a funeral, you are responsible for paying the bill;
- Funeral payments are recoverable from the deceased person's estate and banks are obliged to release money to pay for funeral costs when requested.

If you receive certain benefits from the Department of Work and Pensions you may be entitled to some assistance towards the funeral expenses of your relative. For further information, please contact the nearest Jobcentre Plus Centre.

A bereavement payment or bereavement allowance may be made in certain circumstances if you are the partner or spouse of someone who died whilst employed. These are dependent upon National Insurance contributions and other conditions. Please contact Jobcentre Plus to find out more.

Useful hospital contact numbers

Chaplaincy: 0117 942 6799

Bristol Royal Infirmary Social Work Dept: 0117 342 2783

Patient Support and Complaints Team: 0117 342 1050

By email: pals@UHBristol.nhs.uk

By post: Patient Support and Complaints Team
University Hospital Bristol,
Welcome Centre, Queen Building,
Bristol Royal Infirmary,
Upper Maudlin Street,
Bristol BS2 8HW

Other Hospital Services

The opportunity is available for you to return to the ward setting to meet with the ward manager or those involved in caring for your relative to discuss any issues you may have should you feel the need either currently or in the future.

Reference: University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
Bereavement Book

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Notes

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However, the hospital does not endorse any of the products or services they provide.

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