

Understanding the Death Registration Process



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Waterhouse Funeral Directors and Heathfield Funeral Directors have supported families through their most difficult moments since 1926 and 1988 respectively.

As a third-generation family business, we are deeply rooted in the community and committed to providing the personal, professional care your family deserves. This guide is designed to help you navigate the essential steps for certifying and registering the death of a loved one.

Our dedicated team are available to assist you 24 hours a day.



The Death Certification Process

Since 2024, all deaths in England and Wales have been subject to independent review by a medical examiner to provide families with greater accuracy and transparency. While any trained healthcare professional - such as a doctor, nurse, or paramedic - can confirm a death, the death cannot be formally registered until a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) has been issued.

This will follow the following steps:

The Doctor's Role:

A doctor who looked after your loved one will draft the certificate stating the cause of death. Under current regulations, a GP can complete this form based on their knowledge of the person's medical history, regardless of when they last saw them. There is no longer a legal requirement for the GP to physically attend or view the deceased after death before the certificate can be issued.

Medical Examiner Review:

Every MCCD is now independently reviewed by a medical examiner. They are senior doctors who were not involved in the patient's care. The GP will send the MCCD to the medical examiner's office with the deceased's medical history. The medical examiner will then review.

Next of Kin Notification:

A medical examiner or their office will then contact the next of kin. This is an opportunity to ask questions about the cause of death or raise any concerns.

Proceeding to Registration:

Once this review is confirmed the certificate (MCCD) is sent electronically (by the medical examiner's office) to the registrar. The medical examiner will then notify you when the paperwork has been transferred, you can then contact the Register Office to book an appointment and register the death in the usual way.



If the Coroner is Involved

In certain circumstances, such as an unexpected death or where the cause is unclear, the death may be referred to a coroner.

- The coroner's involvement is normally a formality and should not cause delay. Following an examination, they will issue a cause of death certificate for you to register the death of the deceased.
- Occasionally an inquest is deemed necessary. If this happens the deceased is normally released to your chosen funeral director, however the registration will only take place after the inquest has been completed, although an interim Death Certificate will be issued.
- The Coroner's Office will guide you through each stage of the process and advise you on all necessary procedures.

Registering the Death

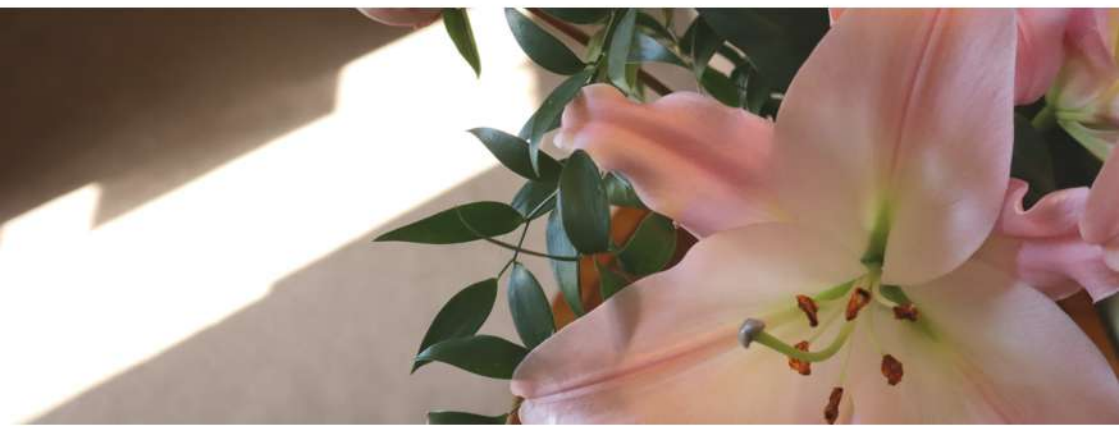
Once the registrar has received the electronic MCCD from the Medical Examiner's office, you must make an appointment to register the death.

When to Register:

By law, a death must be registered within five days in England and Wales. This period begins once the medical examiner or coroner has completed their review and released the necessary paperwork.

Where to Register:

You should normally register at the Register Office in the district where the death occurred. Further information can be found at the end of this booklet or by using: www.gov.uk/register-offices. Most offices require a pre-booked appointment, which can often be scheduled online or by phone.





Who Can Register:

- **Any relative of the deceased.**
- **A partner:** A long-term partner who was living with the deceased in an enduring relationship.
- **Someone present at the death:** This can include a friend, neighbour, or carer who witnessed the death or was present during the final illness.
- **The owner or person in charge of the building:** If the death occurred in a house, hospital, or care home, the person in charge of that building (e.g., a care home manager or hospital administrator) can register.
- **The person arranging the funeral (not a funeral director):**
If no relatives or friends are available, the person taking legal responsibility for the funeral arrangements (often the executor of the will) can register.

Information You Will Need:

The procedure for registering a death is a simple interview with a registrar who will require the following details about your loved one:

- **Full name** (including any maiden names)
 - **Date and place of birth and death**
 - **Last known home address**
 - **Occupation**
 - **Marital status**
 - If married, the **spouse's details** (name, date of birth, and occupation)
 - **National Insurance Number**
-

While not always mandatory, bringing a birth certificate or marriage certificate can help ensure all details are recorded accurately.



Documents You Will Receive:

- **The Green Form:**

This certificate allows the burial or cremation to proceed. It is usually sent directly to the funeral director by the registrar.

- **Death Certificates:**

You may wish to purchase several certified copies (currently £12.50 each) for banks, insurance, and other legal matters. Normally 3-4 copies are adequate as most organisations will need to see the original and then return. You are also able to obtain further copies at a later date.

- **Tell Us Once Service:**

To save you from contacting multiple departments individually, the registrar will offer you the Tell Us Once service. You will receive a unique code for the government's Tell Us Once service, which notifies multiple departments (such as the DWP or DVLA) simultaneously.

Registrars

The death should be registered in the county where it occurred. If needed, it can be transferred to a more local Registrar to the person registering, but this 'by declaration' process may take longer.

East Sussex

Tel: 0345 60 80 198

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/registration

HASTINGS

Hastings Town Hall, Queens Road, Hastings, TN34 1QR

CROWBOROUGH

Hookstead, Goldsmiths Avenue, Crowborough, TN6 1RH

EASTBOURNE

Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4UG

LEWES

Southover Grange, Southover Road, Lewes, BN7 1TP

Registrars

The death should be registered in the county where it occurred. If needed, it can be transferred to a more local Registrar to the person registering, but this 'by declaration' process may take longer.

Kent

Tel: 03000 41 51 51

www.kent.gov.uk/births-ceremonies-and-deaths

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The Amelia, Civic Way, Tunbridge Wells, TN11JN

TONBRIDGE

Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge, TN9 1TG

TENTERDEN

2 Tenterden Gateway, Manor Row, Tenterden, TN30 6HP



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Est. 1926.

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HEATHFIELD
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Est. 1988.

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Together in Life's Most Important Moments

We are here to provide gentle support
and clear guidance, every step of the way.

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Independent. Family-owned. Rooted in community.