

St Leonard's
Hospice

Caring for Local People



Bereavement support



Advice and support following
a death

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Our bereavement support is provided by the Family Support Team alongside trained volunteers.

We support people throughout York and the surrounding area.

Bereavement support at St Leonard's

Our Bereavement Support Team can give support for those who have been affected by the death of someone in the care of St Leonard's, or in the communities we serve across our catchment area. We provide safe and confidential opportunities for you to share, express, process, and understand your grief.

We do this through:

- Ongoing, planned, regular support
- In-the-moment telephone support, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm on 01904 708 553
- Memorial events throughout the year providing opportunities to reflect and remember
- Opportunities to share experiences with other bereaved people in small managed groups
- Online resources

We understand that every child, young person or adult is unique and we offer our support responding to people's personal circumstances, culture, faith, gender and disabilities.

We do not charge for our bereavement support services.



What is bereavement?

The death of someone you know can be an emotional experience. There may be intense emotions that are not easy to cope with. Most bereaved people come through grief with the help of family and friends. For some people, extra support can be helpful. Bottling up difficult feelings can have damaging psychological, emotional, and physical consequences. Grief is not an illness. It is not a weakness. It is not a sign you are going crazy. It is a healthy and necessary response and experience.

Remember, grieving is a normal and natural process. It may involve you needing to express your deepest feelings. It may also help you to eventually come to live with the reality that your relative, loved one, friend, or someone you knew has died. It could help you to find ways to adapt to your changed circumstances and life.

Grief is sometimes described as a journey. There are some feelings that are frequently experienced by many people who are bereaved, although not everyone experiences all of them.

Grieving can take many different forms, and different lengths of time for different people. Some people experience deep emotions, and others work through their grief in more practical ways.

You may experience all or some of the following:

- Shock, disbelief, denial
- Sadness and depression
- Anger and guilt
- Acceptance

Living with grief

Grief relates to five life areas that we all live in, to one degree or another:

- **Emotional**
- **Physical**
- **Mental/cognitive**
- **Social**
- **Spiritual**

Emotional responses can include
Sadness, anger, guilt, relief

Physical responses can include:
Fatigue, headaches, change in appetite, disturbed sleep patterns. It's a good idea to speak with your GP about any physical symptoms you may have.

Mental/cognitive responses can include:
Memory loss, poor concentration, indecision

Social responses can include:
Feeling withdrawn, loneliness, difficulty mixing with others

Spiritual responses can include
Loss of faith, unable to 'make sense' of things

As time goes on, your experience of grief may change. Grief may come over you in waves, with some days feeling better than others.

There are no timescales to grief.

Don't be rushed by the expectations of others. There are no rules.

Do try to look after yourself. Try spending a little time with others.

Do talk about the person who has died to people who understand.

Talking to children about death and grief

Many people find they naturally want to protect children from things they may find difficult. It is easy to presume that children will not understand death and bereavement, or that it will be too upsetting for them.

However, we can all too easily underestimate a child's ability to cope. Like adults, they too find it hard to understand and cope if they are not told what is happening. When information is kept from children, sometimes their imagination can make the situation far more frightening as they seek to make sense of what is happening around them. It can lead to them feeling confused, frightened and isolated.

Some simple things to do:

- Use simple, unambiguous language e.g. 'died' instead of 'fallen asleep' or 'lost'.
- Give them plenty of time to ask questions
- Share your own emotions too – by doing this children learn that it is good and healthy to express emotions
- Adapt your explanation to a child's age, development, and any special needs, and to your faith/cultural circumstances
- Offer children the opportunity to participate in the funeral, cremation or memorial, if they wish to do so.

How we can help

People don't always find it easy to talk about death. You may feel unable to express your deepest feelings and emotions with those closest to you. However, talking with someone can often be a great help. We can offer you a safe and confidential space to understand, express, and cope with your grief.

We believe that, with the right support at the right time, you can find a way to manage your grief and embrace a future where you can live and remember in a way that is helpful and positive. We can help you explore the new ways in which you can live with the changes that a person's death can bring.

If you think that having some time and space in which to have some one-to-one support would be helpful, then please contact us at the Hospice on:

01904 708 553

When you call us...

We will want to explore with you how best to support you. This might be through:

- A self-referral to set up one-to-one planned support with a member of the Bereavement Support Team
- In-the-moment support.

When referring yourself for one-to-one support we will arrange a mutually convenient time to take your referral over the telephone. This referral call will take around 45-60 minutes to complete. We will need to ask you, in some detail, about your current situation, your coping strategies, your support network and any further details that will help us match you to the most appropriate member of the Bereavement Support Team. This can be an emotional telephone conversation and is helpful for you to be aware of this and prepared for it.

If you need to speak to someone urgently

We are not able to provide 'crisis' support and we do not provide a 24 hour helpline. However, if you feel you need to speak with someone urgently, you can call any of the support groups below:

SAMARITANS

The Samaritans

Listening Service
116 123 (24 hour)
Call costs vary from landlines.
Calls from mobiles may cost more.



Cruse Bereavement Care

National Bereavement Helpline 0808 808 1677
(Mon-Fri, 9.30am to 5pm, Tues-Thurs, 9.30am to 8pm)
Call costs vary from landlines.
Calls from mobiles may cost more.



Giving hope to grieving children

Winston's Wish Helpline

Bereavement support for those looking after bereaved children and young people
08088 020 021
(Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm Wed, 7pm to 9pm)
Calls charged at local rate.

What people say about bereavement support at St Leonard's Hospice

“ I found it very helpful to know I would have a specific time to talk about my loss. They were very empathetic and skilled in listening. ”

“ They made it easy for me to verbalise my emotions and make sense of my grief. ”

“ They helped me understand that what I was feeling was normal. I felt I could tell and ask them anything. ”

“ Excellent support when it was really needed as I felt I couldn't cope. ”

“ They were warm, supportive and so kind. They gave me space to be angry, sad, heartbroken and happy. ”

“ I felt completely at ease talking to my worker from the start. ”

“ It wasn't easy speaking over the telephone but over the weeks their gentle and professional presence was incredibly supportive. ”

“ I owe them a huge debt of gratitude for being such a wonderful listener and a source of support over the last few months. ”

“ They made it easy for me to verbalise my emotions and make sense of my grief.”

“ It was good to have someone to talk to who wasn't family. I found it a great help.”

“ Solid and supportive service, kind and compassionate.”

“ Thank you for all your support and understanding. Your listening skills are life affirming.”

“ They talked with me for an hour and helped me resolve the anger I was feeling.”

“ She was so easy to talk to, understanding and kind. She made me feel confident that I would feel better over time.”

“ I was aware that more support was only a phone call away if needed.”

“ It was a safe place where I could talk through everything, knowing I wasn't causing upset to those closest to me.”

“ Right from the start...I felt completely at ease talking to them.”

“ I would have really struggled without this service, as I had no idea what was happening to me.”

Practical arrangements following a death

If a person close to you has died as an in-patient in the Hospice we will forward the medical certificate directly to the registrar's office. They will contact you once the certificate has been received and make an appointment with you to talk through the next steps. Alternatively you can collect the medical certificate from the Hospice if necessary.

If you need to return to the Hospice to collect any personal possessions please call **01904 708 553** the morning after the death (or a Monday following a weekend) and make an appointment to return.

Occasionally there may be an unavoidable delay in the issuing of the medical certificate of cause of death. Sometimes, for legal reasons, the death has to be reported to the Coroner. The Hospice staff will advise you and keep you informed if this has to happen.

Following a death at home with Hospice@Home involvement

If the person close to you has died at home, you will need to contact the GP and then you will be guided through what to do next.

Registering the death

The death must be registered within five working days. You will need to make an appointment with **York Register Office**. Some people appreciate the support of a friend or relative. There is no charge to register a death unless a certified copy of the death certificate is purchased. You may need several copies for banks, building societies, solicitors and other official institutions that require proof that death has occurred.

You can register the death if you are:

- A relative of the person who has died
- Not related to the person who has died but you were present at their death
- The person instructing the funeral director

York Register Office is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm, with an out of hours service to meet cultural and faith needs for an immediate funeral. It operates on an appointment only basis.

It is located at 56 Bootham, York. YO30 7DA.
Telephone 01904 654477 or visit www.york.gov.uk

If the person has died outside of the York area you will need to contact the local Register Office. If you are uncertain of this information, the **York Register Office** may be able to advise you further.

When you speak to the Register Office

It would be helpful to have the following information to hand. Do not worry if not all the documents are available:

- Birth certificate of the person who has died
- Driving licence
- Council Tax bill
- Marriage or civil partnership certificate
- NHS medical card
- Passport
- Proof of address (e.g. utility bill)

The Registrar will ask about

- The date and place of death
- The full name of the person who has died and any previous names
- Their date and place of birth
- Their home address
- Their last occupation and whether they were retired
- The full name, date of birth and occupation of surviving or late spouse or civil partner

The Registrar will register the death and give you a **Certificate for Burial or Cremation** (or 'green form') to give to the funeral director, and a **Certificate of Registration of Death** (form BD8).

'Tell Us Once' service

When someone has died there are lots of things that need to be done, at a time when you probably least feel like doing them. One of these is contacting government departments and local council services that need to be told. The Register Office may provide a service called 'Tell Us Once'. If so, they will give you a unique reference code, as well as instruction on how to use it and who will be informed.

You can use this service to tell the following organisations about the death:

Local councils:

- Housing Benefit Office
- Council Tax Benefit/Support Office
- Council Tax
- Collection of payment for council services
- 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

HM Revenue & Customs:

- Child Benefit
- Tax Credits
- Personal Taxation

Identity and Passport Service:

- To cancel a passport

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency:

- To cancel a driving licence

War Pensions Scheme:

- To cancel a war pension

You will still need to contact these organisations to make any claims but you will not need to send them the death certificate.

Information you will need to use the 'Tell us Once' service:

To make sure the right information is given to any organisations that the Registrar contacts for you, and so that you get the most out of this service, it will help if you can bring along with you the following information about the person who has died:

- Their National Insurance number and date of birth
- Their driving licence or driving licence number
- Their passport or passport number
- Name and address of next of kin
- Name address and contact details of the person or company dealing with their estate
- Details of any benefits or services they were receiving, e.g. pension
- Details of any local council services they were receiving, e.g. Blue Badge.

Arranging a funeral

A funeral can be an important event to bring family and friends together, to celebrate and to share memories. It is usual to contact a funeral director soon after the death or once the death has been registered. You can contact them 24 hours a day, including weekends. Most funeral directors belong to their National Association, which has regulations and standards that must be followed. Other funeral directors may not be. However, all should be insured and follow codes of good practice.

More information can be found online at: www.gov.uk/after-a-death

If you use a funeral director you will need to give them the Certificate for Burial or Cremation ('green form') from the Register Office. They will discuss your wishes and can make all the arrangements for the funeral and burial or cremation, according to your own particular philosophy, faith and beliefs. If you have a minister or faith leader of your own, you may prefer to contact them yourself.

There are a growing number of funeral celebrants as an alternative to a minister of religion or faith leader, should you require this. Alongside a range of funeral celebrants are also Humanist celebrants who are not religious and do not hold beliefs about an afterlife. There can be a bewildering array of choices to explore, but a funeral director will usually be able to recommend a minister of religion, Humanist, or one of the many other civil celebrants with varying backgrounds, who will provide a ceremony to suit your needs.

The British Humanist Association offers advice on non-religious ceremonies and the Registrars in York can also provide a civil funeral.

If you do not wish to use a funeral director you can contact the **Cemeteries and Crematorium Department of the Council** to arrange a funeral yourself.

In planning the funeral service, where possible it is important to honour the wishes of the person who has died, as well as thinking of your own feelings and those of others.

The person who arranges the funeral is usually responsible for meeting the costs. These can be met from the estate of the person who has died or any funeral scheme they may have subscribed to.

Funerals can be expensive and, although basic costs tend to be similar, the final cost can vary considerably. Do not be afraid to mention your budget or obtain estimates from several funeral directors. Financial help may be available if you receive certain benefits. Contact the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) before making any arrangements.

Bereavement benefits

You may be eligible for some bereavement benefits, depending on your circumstances. Further information is available in a DWP booklet 'What to do after death in England and Wales' and online at www.gov.uk.

Probate and legal advice

If you have difficulty in dealing with the property of the person who has died, or with matters such as the guardianship of their children, it is advisable to get advice from a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau as soon as possible. If there is no Will, speaking with a solicitor may be helpful. Some solicitors are prepared to offer up to half an hour of legal advice free.

Further information is available at:

[www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance/ if-the-person-left-a-will](http://www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance/if-the-person-left-a-will)

[www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance/ if-the-person-didnt-leave-a-will](http://www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance/if-the-person-didnt-leave-a-will)

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Who needs to be told about the death?

You will probably want to let the family, friends, and neighbours know of the death right away. If the person who died was living alone, you may need to ensure that their home is secure and remove all signs that indicate that the house is empty. You may wish to collect spare keys from other relatives, friends and neighbours.

You may also wish to inform the following:

Priest, Vicar, Minister of Religion or Faith Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family Doctor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inland Revenue <i>(If you have not used the 'Tell Us Once' service)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dept. Works & Pensions (pensions, benefits etc) <i>(If you have not used the 'Tell Us Once' service)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential or Nursing Home Landlord, Housing Department Council Tax office <i>(If you have not used the 'Tell Us Once' service)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bank, Giro, Credit Cards, Building Society	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electricity, Gas, Telephone, Water Companies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Services (home helps, home care)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post Office (redirect mail)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools, College or University attended	<input type="checkbox"/>	Driving Licence Centre (D.V.L.A.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place of work (occupational pension)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Careline/Warden Call	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executors of the Estate (Will)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cancel any appointments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solicitor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrange the return of any equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance Companies	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Bereavement support at St Leonard's

The death of someone you know can be an emotional experience. There may be intense emotions that are not easy to cope with. Most bereaved people come through grief with the help of family and friends. For some people, extra support can be helpful.

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01904 708 553



www.stleonardshospice.org.uk/grief-enquiries@stleonardshospice.org.uk



185 Tadcaster Road, York YO24 1GL



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