

The first days

United Kingdom

Nothing on this sheet has to be done today, with one exception: registering the death has a deadline, and it is near the top for that reason.

Straight away

- ☐ A doctor confirms the death
In hospital or a care home the staff arrange it. At home and unexpected, call 999.
- ☐ Tell the people who would want to hear it from you, not from someone else
- ☐ Arrange care for anyone who depended on them
Children, an elderly partner, pets.
- ☐ Look for written wishes
A will, a funeral plan, an organ donor card, a letter left with papers.
- ☐ Secure the home if it is now empty

Registering the death

- ☐ Get the medical certificate of cause of death
If the death was sudden or unexplained it goes to the coroner first, and registration waits for them.
- ☐ Register the death at a register office
Within five days in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; within eight in Scotland. The clock starts at the death, not at the certificate.
- ☐ Buy several certified copies of the death certificate while you are there
Banks and insurers want an original each, and copies bought later cost more.
- ☐ Use Tell Us Once if it is offered
The registrar gives you a reference. It tells HMRC, DWP, the DVLA, the passport office and the council in one go.

In the first few days

- ☐ Choose a funeral director and call them
- ☐ Decide burial or cremation, and where
- ☐ Agree the date, so you can tell people something definite
- ☐ Ask the funeral director what they need from you
There is a worksheet for this beside these forms.

In the first weeks

- ☐ Tell their employer, and any pension provider
- ☐ Claim on any life insurance
- ☐ Tell the banks, and stop any direct debits and standing orders

- ☐ Redirect the post
- ☐ Find out whether you need to apply for probate

Scotland differs in more than the deadline, and Northern Ireland has its own register offices and forms. Your funeral director works with the local office every week and is the fastest person to ask.

This sheet is a prompt, not legal advice, and it cannot know your circumstances.