

When someone dies

*Information for bereaved relatives and friends
on what to do and who can help*



Low Moor Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0BG
Tel: 01253 358881

Registered charity no. 511009

About Trinity

Trinity Hospice is a charity providing specialist palliative care for people living in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. Our mission is to provide compassionate care on the journey towards the end of life: by 2020 we want everyone on the Fylde Coast to have access to good end of life care; whether they are in the hospice, in hospital, in a residential nursing home or in their own home.

Palliative care focuses not on cure, but on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain and stress of a serious illness. Our aim is to improve quality of life for both the patient and their family and we care for people with serious and chronic illnesses such as cancer, cardiac disease and motor neurone disease.

Trinity's care extends to family and friends, because we know that seeing a loved one with a life limiting illness – and being bereaved – means things are never quite the same again. We will do our best to support you in whatever way we can and extend our sincere sympathy to you following your recent bereavement.

All our care is provided free of charge to those who need it, but only about a third of our costs come from central sources. The rest comes from a variety of sources: our individual and corporate supporters, legacies, gifts, grants and from our annual fundraising events. Without them, we could not maintain our services, even though demand grows year on year.

www.trinityhospice.co.uk

*Front cover photo of snow covered flowers in the Hospice Garden
by volunteer Debby Brown*

Information for bereaved relatives and friends on what to do and who can help

This is a very difficult and confusing time. This booklet aims to provide some useful help and advice as you cope with the death of someone you were close to.

There are a number of practical issues that need to be dealt with after someone dies. This booklet gives information on:

- The issuing of the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) by a doctor who looked after your loved one during their last illness.
- The registering of the death with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- Who can help you with arranging the funeral of your loved one.
- A little about some of the emotion you might experience after the death of someone you were close to.

Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD)

The Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) has to be issued by a doctor who has seen your loved one at some point in the two weeks before their death. If your loved one died at home you should contact your own GP as soon as possible to inform them. The doctor completes the certificate and this must be taken to the Registrar's office for the death to be registered.

(See page 7).

Until the death has been registered your loved one's body cannot be moved out of the area, although it may be possible to move the body to a local Chapel of Rest.

In some cases it may not be possible for the doctor to issue the Medical Certificate showing the Cause of Death. This may happen if the death was sudden, unexpected or the doctor is uncertain for some reason about circumstances or cause of death. If this is the case he/she is legally obliged to inform the coroner.

(See page 14).

Funeral arrangements

Contact a Funeral Director

You do not need to use an undertaker to organise a funeral and the disposal of your loved one's body, however many people choose to use the services of a funeral director, as it is such a distressing and confusing time for many.

You do not have to wait until the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) has been issued to make contact with a funeral director. You should take time before making a decision about using a funeral director, comparing services offered and likely costs. A list of local firms and addresses can be found in the telephone directory.

The funeral director of your choice will advise you of the options and discuss with you the arrangements you wish to make. The funeral is your opportunity to say your goodbyes in a way that is appropriate both for you and the person who has died. You may wish to choose who might lead the service (not necessarily a Minister of Religion), certain music or readings, and you or other relatives or friends may wish to take part in the service. You will also need to decide if your loved one's body is to be buried or cremated. These are not always easy decisions, so take time to consider the possibilities.

Viewing your loved one's body

It is completely up to you whether you would like to see your loved one again after they have died. Some find it helpful to spend some time with their loved one after death. It can also be helpful for family members who might not have been able to see the person who has died before their death.

If your relative has died in Trinity Hospice, viewing is possible at the hospice or at the Funeral Directors's Chapel of Rest. Please ask the staff at the hospice.

If your loved one died at Trinity our staff will arrange for the collection of their belongings and the death certificate.

If your relative has died in Blackpool Victoria Hospital, you may be able to view in the hospital Chapel of Rest. Please be aware, however, that viewing times are very limited at weekends.

Relatives can ring the switchboard on 300000 for the Chapel of Rest to arrange a time to view the body.

Tissue donation

Whether or not organs can be transplanted depends on how and where your loved one died. It may also depend on the cause of death, treatment received and whether they had any underlying medical conditions. The donation of internal organs such as the heart or kidneys may be possible if they died in hospital whilst on a ventilator to support breathing, but not if they died at home or elsewhere. It may, however, be possible to donate tissue such as corneas, heart valves, tendons, skin and bone, but this must be done within 48 hours of the death.

Please speak to a member of the medical staff or nursing team if you need more information. You can also ring the Organ Donor line on: 0300 123 23 23 or see www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Registering the death

This is a legal responsibility, and should usually be done within five days of the death unless the coroner is investigating the circumstances around the death.

Who can register a death?

- A relative of the deceased
- A person present at the death
- The occupier of the premises where the death occurred if she/he knew of it happening
- The person arranging a funeral - this does not have to be a funeral director, but may be

What will the Registrar ask me?

The Registrar will ask you a number of questions in a private room. These will include:

- The date and place of death
- The full name and surname, and maiden surname if the person who has died was married
- The date and place of birth of the deceased
- The occupation of the deceased and if the deceased person was a married woman or widow, the full name and occupation of the spouse and if retired
- The usual address of the deceased
- If the person who has died was married, the date of birth of the surviving spouse

- Whether the person who has died was receiving a pension from public funds

It will be helpful if you have a birth certificate, MCCD, medical card etc. with you at that meeting.

The Registrar will enter all these details into a computer and will give you an opportunity to check that they are correct. This is a legal record and you should be sure you are happy with the information entered as mistakes discovered later can be very difficult to correct. The information will then be saved onto the electronic register and you will be given a copy of the entry. Further signed copies can be requested for a small fee. It can be a good idea to get extra copies, as they will be needed by banks, insurance companies etc.

At the same time you will be given a "green form" which enables you to arrange the funeral (if the coroner is involved different procedures may apply). You will also receive a form to complete around benefits.

Deaths to be registered in Blackpool

Deaths in Trinity Hospice must be registered in Blackpool. (See map on page 10)

Deaths at home in Blackpool (if you pay council tax to Blackpool Council) must be registered in Blackpool.

Deaths in Blackpool Victoria Hospital must be registered in Blackpool.

Blackpool Registrar's Office

The Register Office
Municipal Buildings
Corporation Street
Blackpool FY1 1NF

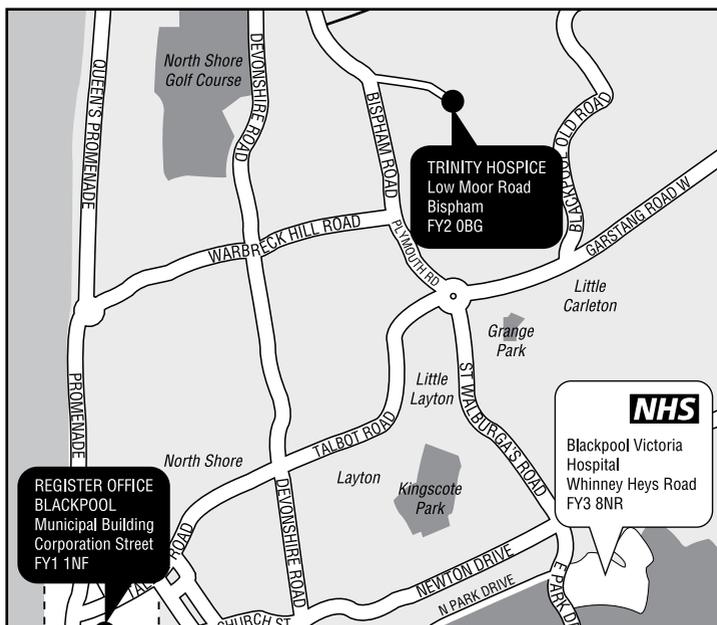
Opening times:
Monday - Friday
9am - 4pm

**BY APPOINTMENT
ONLY**

Tel: 01253 477 177

Please note that registration is at the Corporation Street office, not at the office on the Promenade, which is used for marriages and civil partnerships only.

Location of the Registrar's office in Blackpool



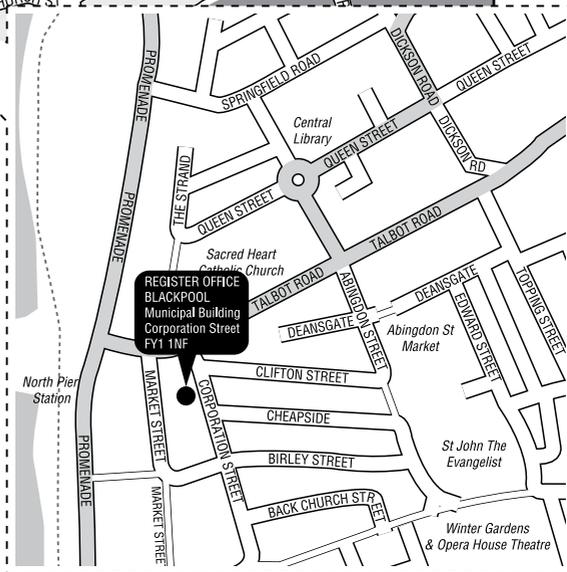
**REGISTER OFFICE
BLACKPOOL**
Municipal Building
Corporation Street
FY1 1NF

NHS
Blackpool Victoria
Hospital
Winney Heys Road
FY3 8NR

**Blackpool
Registrar's Office**
The Register Office
Municipal Buildings
Corporation Street
Blackpool FY1 1NF

Tel: 01253 477 177

**BY APPOINTMENT
ONLY**



**REGISTER OFFICE
BLACKPOOL**
Municipal Building
Corporation Street
FY1 1NF

Deaths to be registered in Fleetwood or Lytham

Deaths at home in Wyre and Fylde (if you pay your council tax to Lancashire County Council) can be registered in Fleetwood/Lytham/Lancaster.

Deaths in any of the local hospitals other than Blackpool Victoria and Bispham Hospital may be registered in Fleetwood, Lytham or anywhere else in Lancashire (but not in Blackpool).

For all cases you must telephone to make an appointment. (See map on page 12)

Locations of the Registrar offices in Fleetwood and Lytham

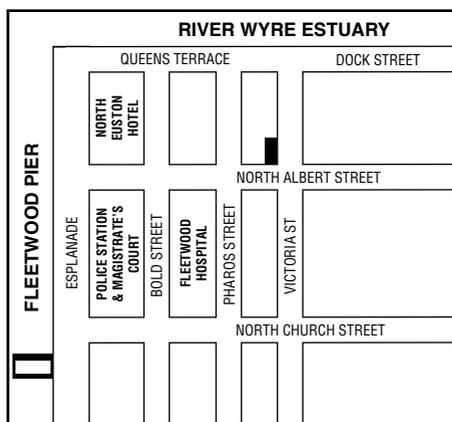
Fleetwood Registrar's Office

The Register Office
 Fleetwood Library
 North Albert Street
 Fleetwood FY7 6AJ

Tel: 0845 053 0021

Open:
 Monday - Friday
 9.30am - 1.30pm

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



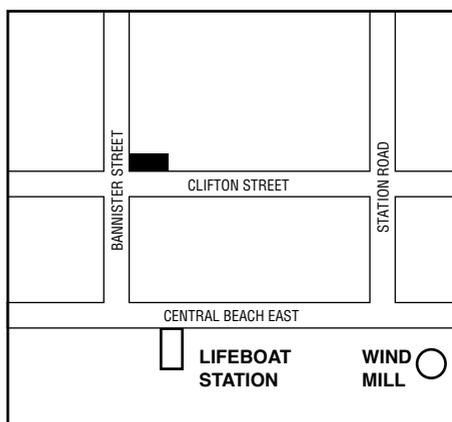
Lytham Registrar's Office

The Register Office
 Lytham Library
 Clifton Street
 Lytham FY8 5EP

Tel: 0845 053 0021

Open:
 Monday, Tuesday,
 Wednesday and Friday
 10am - 3.30pm
 Closed Thursdays

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



'Tell Us Once' service

To use 'Tell Us Once' the death must already have been registered. This can be done by contacting the Register Office. The Registrar will give you information about the service when you go to register the death.

You can also find further information from the Registrar or at **www.gov.uk/tell-us-once**

Tell Us Once brings together several organisations (see the list below) so that people do not need to notify them individually of the death.

Tell Us Once links information between:

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Local Authorities
- Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- Identity and Passport Service (IPS)

Other people you may need to inform

- Royal Mail
- Utilities
- TV Licensing
- Bank / Building society
- Library cards / season tickets
- Insurance companies
- Rental companies

A coroner's authorisation

If it is not clear about the cause of death, or where there is concern about the potential of a work related disease being involved, a doctor cannot issue a Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) without consulting the coroner.

If a death is referred to the coroner, a police officer working for the coroner will need to contact you, to prepare a report relating to your loved one's medical history. This is standard procedure and should not cause you any alarm. They may make contact with you by phone or visit you at home to talk through what had been happening to your loved one before they died.

In certain circumstances the coroner may authorise the doctor to issue a Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) with written clearance from the coroner without the need for any other investigations.

A death may not be registered until the Registrar has received written clearance from the coroner. It is the coroner's duty to ensure that there is a clear understanding around the cause of death. If there is any doubt a coroner may decide that a post mortem (examination of the dead body) is required to establish the cause of death.

Please do not hesitate to ask the Trinity team about anything that is unclear.

A coroner's post mortem

The coroner may decide that a post mortem is required to establish the cause of death. If this is the case your consent is not needed. You will be informed of the decision but cannot stop the post mortem being conducted.

Once the post mortem has been completed, you will receive a letter asking you to register the death. The coroner will send the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) directly to the Registrar. This process usually take a few days.

A hospital post mortem

The doctor who has written the Medical Certificate of the Cause of Death (MCCD) may ask your permission for a post mortem examination to assist in medical knowledge and teaching.

Whether you grant permission is your decision. You will be given further information and, if you do decide to permit it, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

If at any stage you are unclear about what is happening, or would like further information, please ask. We appreciate that at such a difficult time it is sometimes hard to understand or remember information.

Financial assistance to help with funeral arrangements

Leaflets are available from the Registrar's office.

Benefit advice about Funeral Grants (payable to the responsible person if in receipt of qualifying benefit) may be obtained from The Social Fund - telephone 0845 688524 during office hours. For advice on Bereavement Benefit (may be payable to the widow(er) / civil partner if the deceased was under 60), telephone 0845 6088524.

Bereavement Service Helpline Tel: 0845 60 60 265

Pension/allowance arrangements

Any queries regarding pensions and allowances can be directed to the Pension Service - telephone 0845 6060265.

If the deceased was in receipt of a war pension, you need to telephone the Veterans Agency on Freephone 0800 1692277
Local Tel: 01253 333494

You will need the pension information and National Insurance numbers of the deceased and next of kin.

Address:

The Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP.

NHS equipment

If your loved one was registered with a Blackpool GP, then any NHS beds must be returned, please contact the District Nurses at your surgery to organise this. Other equipment used during your loved one's illness is their property and you are free to dispose of it as you feel appropriate.

If your loved one was registered with a North Lancashire GP the equipment may have been issued via NHS loan stores. Please telephone 01253 651525 to arrange collection.

Alternatively equipment prescribed for your loved one via the retail model (small items of equipment) remains their property and you are free to dispose of it as you feel appropriate.

Wheelchairs issued by Preston Specialist Mobility Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC) need to be returned to them. Please telephone 01772 716921 to arrange collection.

If you are not sure about what to do with any piece of equipment please ask a member of the Trinity staff.

Grief: When someone dies

The death of someone you love can be a devastating experience, often causing stronger emotions than most people have ever felt before.

Feelings

Even if you knew your loved one was dying, there is still a sense of shock when the death occurs. You may feel cold, numb, empty and unreal for a time. Following this you may experience such emotions as anger, panic, guilt and sadness. This may also be accompanied by periods of restlessness, especially at night when it may be difficult for you to sleep. You may also react by becoming irritable or critical of yourself and others, or by feeling unable to attend to routine matters or to think straight, which can lead to feelings of despair. All these are natural reactions to bereavement, and are not a sign that you cannot cope any more.

Grief is a very individual process, and we each react differently. What is important is that you allow yourself time to grieve and to come to terms with your loss, in the way that is right for you.

Support

You may prefer to organise things by yourself, but you may also want to consider the help of relatives or a close friend. Often they want to help share the burden, but are waiting for you to ask them.

During this time you may need extra support. Do not be afraid to speak about your feelings to someone. Other people may be afraid to speak about your loved one for fear of upsetting you. You may need to let them know when you want to talk. Tears are a natural way of releasing emotions; do not be embarrassed by them.

Grief takes time and effort. You may already be very drained physically and emotionally if your loved one had been ill for a time. If you feel unwell, or are concerned about physical symptoms, go to see your GP.

There are also various organisations locally who can offer further support and counselling for you. Some of these are listed at the end of the booklet. If you are not sure please speak to a professional about what is happening to you.

You will have good days and bad days, but in time, the pain will ease, and you will find yourself able to remember your loved one without becoming distressed. You never 'get over' a bereavement, but you gradually adjust to the loss, and start to live anew.

Some people may feel unable to grieve after a death; perhaps because they are caring for someone else and feel that they 'have to be strong'. The grief may then be released when a subsequent loss or event occurs, which may even be relatively minor, but is the trigger for emotions to be expressed. Sometimes this can be many years after the original loss.

When two bereavements occur relatively close to each other, the grief may be compounded, and the feelings more extreme. Grief does take time; it needs to be allowed to happen.

- If, however, you are concerned about a grief reaction in yourself or in someone close to you, please seek further support from the organisations listed in this booklet

Staff at Trinity are more than willing to spend time with you and will try and support you. Our Chapel is always open for quiet reflection and we can arrange for our hospice chaplain to see you.

Talking to children about death

Adults often feel the need to protect children from death. They may feel children will not understand or that they will be too upset. However, we can often underestimate a child's resources and ability to cope. Children often find it harder if they are not told what is happening, because they may be frightened by imagined events. Children should be told the facts in a simple manner, using appropriate words e.g. 'dead', 'death', rather than 'lost' or 'asleep'. Give them time to ask questions (which may be very direct) and offer plenty of reassurance.

It is helpful for adults to share feelings with children, such as feelings of sadness. By doing this they learn that it is natural to feel sad when someone dies. Children may like to draw pictures as part of their way of saying goodbye.

After the funeral

Settling the deceased person's estate can be confusing, time consuming and distressing. If you have been named executor in the will, you will have responsibility for carrying out the person's wishes. This will include ensuring that further expenses, debts and taxes are paid from the deceased person's estate. It will also mean arranging that possessions and other assets are disposed of appropriately and in accordance with the deceased person's will (if they have one).

It is wise to avoid making hasty decisions about the future. The length of time will vary for each individual, but gradually you will realise that you are more able to cope with your bereavement. Then will be the time for thinking about plans for the future.

Remembering your loved one

The Book of Remembrance is kept in the Chapel at the hospice. There is no charge for an inscription in the book, which can be seen on any day of the week. Ask at Reception for a form to fill in.

Trinity also hosts an annual Light Up a Life service in the gardens - an opportunity for bereaved families and friends to pay tribute to their loved one. Lights can be dedicated in their memory.

For more information see the Trinity website www.trinityhospice.co.uk or call 01253 359362.

Creating a lasting legacy

You may want to honour your loved one by making a gift to Trinity Hospice, and there are several ways in which you can do this. Many people ask for donations in lieu of flowers, others ask us for special donation envelopes to be distributed among mourners. If you would like to consider something more long term, a tribute fund or regular giving scheme can be set up in memory. We don't ask anyone – patient or relative – to make a donation, but we rely on the goodwill and generosity of the community to enable our work to continue and to keep our care free of charge to all.

I will wait for you

I will wait for you...

Though we never had a chance to say goodbye

Remember me...

When winter snows are falling through a quiet sky

I'll remember you

When, in our darkest hour,

You held my hand and prayed I wouldn't go,

But a silent voice called out to me;

My time had come, and I had to travel home...

Since then, I know your life has never been the same,

For I visit you each day:

So many times I've felt your pain:

I've watched you cry:

And I've heard you call my name...

But now, further along life's road I stand

In a timeless world, just beyond your sight,

Waiting for the day when I can take your hand and bring you across to this land of Golden Light...

Till then, remember me, you understand and try not to cry.

But if you do:

Let your tears fall

For happiness and joy we knew,

And for the special love we shared,

For love can never die.

Stephen O'Brien

Useful contact numbers

Linden Centre at Trinity Hospice

Offering bereavement support, information, counselling and listening

01253 595552

Trinity Hospice can help with the removal of unwanted household items, which can be sold in our charity shops. We have a free collection service on the Fylde coast.

Telephone **01253 591710**

Stepping Stones

Non religious bereavement support group supported by Trinity Hospice but open to all. Contact the Linden Centre for details on

01253 595552

Bereavement Advice Centre

Probate, tax and benefits free helpline

0800 634 94 94

Carers Centre

Norman House, Robson Way, Blackpool FY3 7PP

01253 393748

Citizens Advice Bureau

01253 308400

CRUSE Bereavement care

0844 4779400 9.30am- 5pm

(Local) **01772 686668**

Patient Relations Team

Aims to advise and support families and carers on health issues

01253 655588 / 01253 655589

The Samaritans

(Local) **01253 622218**

(National) **08457 909090**

The Bereavement Register

Helps stop unwanted junk mail to the deceased

0800 082 1230

The Way Foundation

Helps the under fifties who have lost a partner

0300 012 4929



www.trinityhospice.co.uk

Low Moor Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0BG

Tel: 01253 358881

The Trinity family of services

- Brian House Children's Hospice
- In-Patient Unit
- Day Therapy Unit
- Clinical Nurse Specialists
- Lymphoedema Service
- Complementary Therapy
- Learning and Research Centre
- Linden Centre
 - support/counselling for grief and loss

Keep in touch

Many people want to keep in touch with Trinity, and we would be happy to add you or your friends and family to our database so that we can keep you updated with our future events. Simply send your name and contact details to Trinity, for the attention of Linzi Young. We will not share your details with any third parties.

Information contained in this booklet was correct at the time of printing. However, regulations and/or local circumstances may change and readers are advised to check details with the Registration Service. Whilst every care has been taken in compiling this publication, Trinity Hospice cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies.

This booklet is for general information only, and is not a complete statement of the law.

Trinity Hospice cannot endorse any products or services mentioned by our advertisers, but is grateful for their support in the production of this booklet.

