

Bereavement following Major Trauma

Support and guidance following
the loss of a loved one



You're not alone

Our Bereavement Services and Day One Trauma Support are here for you with, you do not need to face this on your own.

Bereavement Services Team

You can contact the Bereavement Services team using the details below:

- Leeds General Infirmary **0113 392 3560**
- St James's University Hospital **0113 2064162**

Our phone lines are open between 8:30am and 4:30pm Monday to Friday with an answerphone outside these times. Alternatively email us anytime:

- Leedsth-BereavementTeam@nhs.net

**Bereavement Services
Trust Headquarters Ground Floor
St James University Hospital
Beckett Street
Leeds
LS9 7TF**

Practical steps

When someone dies, there are some formal processes to go through. The Bereavement Services team will help guide you through each stage.

Death certificates

Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD)

In most cases a hospital doctor who has been treating the person who has died will issue a MCCD. You need this in order to register the death, we aim to complete this within two working days after a death. Our staff will advise the GP surgery of the death and cancel any future appointments with Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

If the death is referred to the Coroner

Sometimes doctors need to refer a death to His Majesty's Coroner (HM Coroner). HM Coroner is an independent judicial office holder working on behalf of the Crown. HM Coroner looks into deaths that were unexpected or of an unknown cause.

A Coroners officer will gather information about the person who has died, including information about how they died. The coroner will need to decide if the hospital can give out a MCCD, or if more investigation is needed. If your relative's death is reported to HM Coroner we will tell you and the reasons why. If your relative's death is reported to HM Coroner you will be contacted by one of their officers.

Registering death

Once you have had your appointment with the Bereavement Office, you will need to register the death as soon as possible. All deaths should be registered within 5 days from when the person died (this does not apply if there have been unavoidable delays).

Leeds Register Office, Merrion House, Merrion Way, Leeds, LS2 8BA

If a death has been referred to HM Coroner and a post mortem/or an inquest has been decided on, HM Coroner's office will advise you about registering the death.

Understandable feelings

The death of a loved one, especially in sudden or traumatic circumstances, can leave you feeling overwhelmed, confused, and heartbroken.

Grief is a deeply personal experience, and there is no “right” way to feel or respond.

This leaflet is here to offer support, guidance, and practical information to help you through the days and weeks ahead. You may find yourself facing a wide range of emotions: shock, sadness, anger, guilt, or even numbness. These reactions are all natural, and you are not alone.

Please know that it’s okay to ask for help, whether from professionals, family, friends, or support groups. There is no timeline for healing, and reaching out is a sign of strength.

While nothing can take away the pain of your loss, we hope this information offers some comfort and guidance as you begin to cope and find your way forward.

Understanding your emotions

Everyone grieves differently, you might notice emotions that change quickly or come in waves, the following are just some you may experience in the hours, weeks, months and years after a bereavement.

Shock

You may feel numb, disbelieving or in physical shock. People can feel intense physical and emotional reactions, such as difficulty breathing, silence, vocal outbursts, trembling, or an inability to move.

You might dream that your loved one is still alive or momentarily expect them to walk through the door, these feelings are natural and understandable.

Anger

It can feel unfair and senseless, you might look for someone or something to blame. This is a normal way the mind tries to make sense of the loss.

Feeling overwhelmed

You may feel disoriented or bewildered, struggling to fully grasp that the loss has occurred. It is not unusual to speak about the person as though they are still alive or to momentarily expect their return. This response is a natural part of processing the reality of loss.

Worries about the future

It may feel as though previously made plans have been upended, leading to a sense and uncertainty about the future. It is natural to experience anxiety about what lies ahead. Try to take each day one at a time, you do not need to have all the answers right now.

Taking care of yourself

Grief can be exhausting, emotionally and physically. Try to care for yourself during this time.

Allow yourself to grieve

Acknowledge your emotions without judgement and understand that grief is a process that varies in duration and intensity. Give yourself permission to feel sadness, anger, confusion and moments of peace.

Eating and drinking

Staying hydrated and eating is important. Try comforting drinks such as tea, coffee, hot chocolate or juice. Try and eat small and nutritious snacks that are easy to prepare.

Stay active

Try getting outside for a short walk, or other gentle exercise that suits you.

Take time for yourself

Taking time for yourself is important especially during a difficult time. Try sitting somewhere peaceful, spending time with family or pets, playing music or just resting your eyes. Do things you find restful often and take time for yourself regularly.

Limit stressors

Reduce commitments where possible and avoid overwhelming or emotionally draining situations if they are not essential.

Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques

Use breathing exercises, meditation and find moments of peace. Being mindful can help centre your thoughts and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

Day One Trauma Support

We would like to share our condolences for your bereavement. You don't have to face the days ahead without support, we want to offer support when the time is right for you.

Day One Trauma Support is a national charity offering practical, financial, emotional and legal signposting support to those affected by catastrophic injuries, including bereaved families.

Our help is:

- Compassionate – from people who understand
- Confidential – you choose what you share, when you're ready
- Free of charge

We can help with:

- Travel or accommodation costs
- Legal signposting so you understand your rights
- Guidance around paperwork and processes
- Talking things through at your own pace, including access to professional counselling

When you're ready

Our support doesn't have to begin today. We're here now, next week, or whenever you're ready to reach out – for as long as you need us.

Tel: 0300 303 5648

Email: support@dayonetrauma.org

Website: dayonetrauma.org

Remembering your loved one

Many families tell us that, in time, they find comfort in doing something to honour their loved one. If you ever wish to create a lasting tribute in support others facing catastrophic injury, you can find gentle ways to do so at:

- <https://dayonetrauma.org/get-involved/in-memory>

Notes

You may wish to use this space to write down names, dates or questions to ask the bereavement team.

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What did you think of your care?

Visit: www.leedsth.nhs.uk/patients/support/feedback-complaints/friends-family-test/

Scan or click the QR code - Your views matter

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