



*From love comes beauty*

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What to do when  
someone dies...

...and how to start  
planning a funeral

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## A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOLLY'S FUNERALS

At Holly's Funerals, we're passionate about changing the funeral industry to make it a better experience for everyone.

We advise and educate people about all their rights and options at death because we think it's important for families to get the best possible help and support at this time.

We'll always give you time and space so that you don't feel rushed into making important decisions without adequate time for thought and contemplation.

We provide a truly flexible and bespoke service. We'll help you achieve the funeral that's right for you. Whether this is a fairly traditional funeral or a more contemporary affair, we will help you achieve what's right for you.

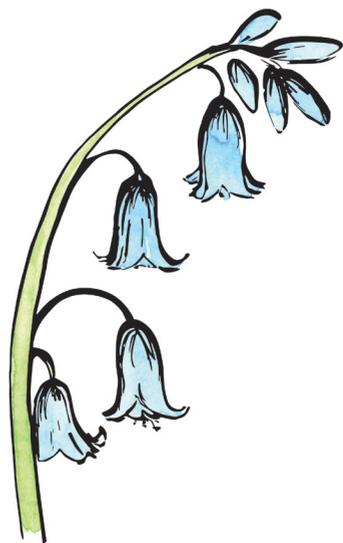
We won't ever try to sell you a standard, pre-packaged funeral.

We also support families to arrange and undertake home & DIY funerals if this is their desire.

We'll always communicate clearly and keep you informed and involved at all stages of the proceedings.

We are open and honest with our fees and always work in the best interests of our clients.

All our prices are available to see on our website and we are one of the very few funeral directors who do not make extortionate profits on coffins and other funeral related services.



## WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE DIES

Undoubtedly, when someone close to you dies, whether it's expected or not, you are thrown into a state of confusion, emotional upset and distress. You are in shock and the body will not function normally under these conditions.

Quite often, it's difficult to take on new information, to understand what might otherwise be quite simple instructions and to make rational decisions.

And yet, at this time, you are expected to understand what can be quite a complicated process, take on board a lot of new information and make some very important decisions. You can very easily feel overwhelmed and anxious.

For this reason, it's vitally important to get help and support from friends and family. It's important to look after your own health; to rest, to eat healthily and keep hydrated.

When you attend meetings, take someone with you who can help explain what is being said and who can speak on your behalf, if required. Ask questions and do not be afraid to ask people to repeat things or to put information in writing. Above all, do not be forced into making any quick decisions you may regret later.

Although it may seem overwhelming, it's always a good idea to do some research of funeral options before deciding on a funeral director. There is plenty of information available online.

We recommend two independently run information sites:

[www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk)

[www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk](http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk)

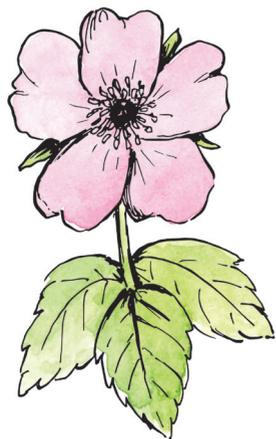


## WHAT TO DO FIRST

The rules regarding death are quite complicated and often misunderstood. If the person has died in hospital or in a care home, then hopefully the staff will be able to advise you.

What you need to do first depends on one main question:

- Was the death of the person expected or not expected?



## IF THE DEATH WAS EXPECTED:

You should phone the GP or medical practitioner who has been looking after them. They will need to certify death before the body can be moved.

Once the Doctor has certified death, you can either phone a funeral director or you can keep the body at home. If you choose to keep the person at home, then there are some simple, straightforward things that you can do to look after their body:

- Turn off any heating in the room.
- Remove any heavy quilts, duvets or blankets but keep the body covered with a light sheet, that covers the entire body, including the face.
- Open a window to let some air in.
- In warm weather, consider using a portable air conditioning unit or ice packs to keep the body cool.

In some circumstances, the GP may refer the death to the Coroner for a second opinion. In these cases, the Coroner will arrange for the body to be taken to the local hospital until the case has been examined.

## IF THE DEATH WAS UNEXPECTED:

You should phone 999 and tell the emergency services.

In most cases, both the Police and Paramedics will attend and you should not move the body, unless instructed too.

It's likely that the Coroner will need to be involved to investigate the cause of death. In these circumstances, the Coroner will arrange for the body to be taken to the local hospital until the case has been examined.

## WHEN THE CORONER IS INVOLVED

There are many reasons why a case may be referred to the Coroner and this happens more regularly than people often realise.

Once the case has been referred to the Coroner, it is out of the hands of the hospital, the care home or GP and, although they try to review cases quickly, there are no guarantees to the timescales involved.

The Coroner's Office will communicate directly with the next of kin and keep them informed of progress.

Basically, there are 3 possible outcomes:

- The Coroner will decide that there is no need for referral and will request the hospital or GP to issue the death certificate,
- The Coroner will request a post-mortem examination to establish cause of death,
- The Coroner will request an inquest to examine the reasons for death.

In some cases, there will be both an inquest and a post-mortem.

Whilst the involvement of the Coroner need not hinder the preparation and planning of the funeral, it's sensible not to make any fixed plans until the Coroner has issued a release notice. If you've already chosen a Funeral Director, you should tell the Coroner's Office who this is and whether the body is to be buried or cremated.

## REGISTERING THE DEATH

Under normal circumstances, you are expected to register the death within 5 days (8 days in Scotland). You'll then get the documents you need for the funeral.

You can get more information about this from the UK Gov website, ([www.gov.uk/after-a-death](http://www.gov.uk/after-a-death)) or from your local County Council or Citizen's Advice Bureau or Gateway.

If the death has been referred to the Coroner, then these timescales do not apply and you will be given instructions by the Coroner's Office.



## CHOOSING THE RIGHT FUNERAL DIRECTOR FOR YOU

There is no legal requirement or obligation to use a funeral director in the UK.

That said, although things are changing, the funeral industry is geared against individuals planning and undertaking DIY funerals. In fact, until recently, it was very difficult even to buy a coffin in the UK unless you were a funeral director and many crematoriums still will not deal directly with the public.

However, it's still true that most people need to use a funeral director to help them arrange and manage the funeral and to look after their loved one.

But, like with any service provider, it's important to do your homework and make sure the funeral director you choose is the best match for your needs.

Here is a list of potential questions you should consider asking:

- Do you have all your prices available online?
- Do you provide a truly flexible service or do you just provide set packages?
- How many funerals do you attend per day?
- Will the person who arranges the funeral also be the funeral director who attends on the day of the funeral? Can I meet them?
- As well as the Professional Fee for your services, do you make additional profit on coffins, flowers and other funeral goods?
- Do you have both male and female funeral directors?
- Can you give me a comprehensive quote before I commit to your services?
- Can I come with you when you go to collect my relative?
- Is there any limit to the amount of time I can spend with my relative?
- When I spend time with my relative do they have to be in a coffin?
- What is your policy on embalming, and why do you think it's necessary?
- Where will my relative be kept whilst you are looking after them? Can I see the facilities?
- What's the name of the person who will be responsible for their care?
- Would you support me to help wash and dress my relative if I want to?
- Are you able to help me if I want to make most of the arrangements myself?
- Can I be present when you place my relative in their coffin?

Whilst this is by no means a definitive list, asking these types of questions should give you a very good indication of the firm and the people you are dealing with.

If you would like more information about this topic, or any other funeral related advice, please feel free to contact us without obligation.



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Holly's Funerals Limited  
Coombe Lane, Tenterden • Hartley Dyke, Cranbrook  
T: 01580 389 184

For more information please visit  
[www.hollysfunerals.co.uk](http://www.hollysfunerals.co.uk)