How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?
Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk
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Introduction

When someone dies, there are a number of formalities that need to be completed. At this highly emotional time, it is entirely understandable that you may feel confused or anxious about what you need to do. This is a brief guide that outlines who you must tell, and how to register the death.

Informing The Doctor

When someone dies at home, the first step is to inform a doctor in order for them to be able to verify the death. If it is an Out-Of-Hours doctor who does not know the deceased, then they will not be able to issue a medical Certificate of Cause of Death, but they will still visit your home in order to confirm the death.

Please remember that, at this difficult and upsetting time, there is no rush to do anything and you may want to call a friend or relative to come and be with you.

If the death happens in the middle of the night, then you may decide to wait until your own GP surgery opens on the next day and then to call them directly.

If the death occurs within normal surgery hours, then simply phone your own family doctor, who will come and visit you and explain to you about the process for collecting the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death from the surgery when completed.

If the death occurs outside normal surgery hours, then you should call 111. You will speak initially to a Call Handler, and it is important at this point to inform them that the death was expected, otherwise they will assume that it has been an unexpected death and will call the emergency services.

Many people are concerned about being able to afford the cost of a funeral. In certain circumstances, there are grants and benefits that can be claimed. These will depend on your individual circumstances, the age of the deceased and your relationship to them.

Information about who can claim, and how to claim, can be obtained from the Job Centre Plus - the number of your local office can be found in the phone book. If you have access to a computer, then further information can be obtained also from the Direct Gov website at www.directgov.uk
What Information Do I Have To Provide?

- Date and place of death.

- Full name of the person who has died and any other names used by them.

- Their name before they were married (if this was different) and any other names used by them.

- Their date and place of birth.

- Their occupation, and/or if they were married, widowed, or had formed a civil partnership, the full name and occupation of their spouse or civil partner.

- Their usual address and postcode.

- Date of birth of the surviving spouse or civil partner (if applicable).

- National Health Service Medical Card, if you have this.

- Whether they had been in receipt of a pension paid from Government funds, e.g. NHS, Civil Service etc.

The person registering the death will also be asked to provide details of their relationship to the deceased and also their name and address.

Once you have spoken to the Call Handler, you will be called back by a Clinician from Bucks Urgent Care (BUC), who will confirm all the details and make arrangements for a doctor to visit you at home.

At busy times, there can be a considerable delay between your telephone call and the doctor’s visit. We are aware that this delay can be distressing but ask for your understanding that the visiting doctor needs to balance the needs of all the patients who need visits for any reason.

The BUC doctor cannot issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death as they do not know the person’s medical history. However, they will inform your own doctor’s surgery and you will then need to call the surgery the next working day to find out when the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death can be collected.

We recommend checking the Medical certificate of cause of death for accuracy before proceeding further.

Contacting the Undertakers

Once the doctor has visited and verified the death, you can then phone the Undertaker or Funeral Director of your choice (if you have chosen to use one). You may have thought about and decided already which firm you would like to use, but, if not, there is a list available in the Yellow Pages or Thompsons Local directory.
If there was a syringe pump in place when the death occurred, the Community Nurse will need to come and remove it, after the doctor has visited, but before the Undertaker comes. The number to call will be in the community notes which were kept at the house. Alternatively, the Doctor may contact the Community team for you. Once you have called the Undertaker, they will visit and will remove the body to their Chapel of Rest. Undertakers will visit at any time by arrangement, but some may charge more for visits made out of normal office hours.

The Undertaker will be able to give you more support and information about the process of registering the death, and also about what to do next.

**Registering The Death**

By law you must register the death within 5 days, unless the coroner is involved (this is unlikely in the case of an expected death but your GP will give you more information and support should this be the case.)

Once you have obtained the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, you can then register the death. To do this, you need to make an appointment with the Registrar. You will usually be given an Information Booklet, and the Registrar’s telephone number is also given on the envelope which comes with the medical cause of death certificate.

Registering the death is free, and the process will take around 40 minutes to complete. **The death needs to be registered in the district in which it occurred.**

**Who Can Register The Death?**

You can register the death if:

- You are related to the person who has died.
- You were with the person when they died
- You live at the place where the person died and there is no known relative available to register the death.
- You are instructing the funeral director

You may bring a friend or relative with you when you see the Registrar.

The Registrar will see you in private and will ask you questions about the person who has died. You will be asked to check the information given and also to sign that it is correct.

**What Do I Need To Take With Me To Register The Death?**

The Medical Certificate showing the Cause of Death.

And, if you have them:

- The medical card or NHS number of the person who has died.
- The birth and marriage certificates of the person who has died.