

Sun Rising

Natural Burial Ground and Nature Reserve



Practical Steps when Someone Dies

For Burial at Sun Rising with updates relevant during the Coronavirus Pandemic

For many, the death of someone close is an unfamiliar event. Even if this isn't the first time you've had to manage such a situation, there may be changes and restrictions because of the current pandemic. We hope this guide will make it easier. The language used is straightforward, to encourage you to go through each step with strength and clarity.

When Someone dies in a Hospital or Hospice

When a loved one dies in a hospital or hospice, or is pronounced Dead On Arrival at hospital, in normal circumstances you should be given some time with them before they are taken to the mortuary. During the pandemic, however, this may be restricted. You are likely to be assigned a Patient Affairs Officer or Bereavement Officer who will let you have your loved one's belongings. Ask them if you have any questions: they'll be able to explain the next steps and what you can expect.

If there is no doubt about the cause of death, your loved one will remain in the hospital or hospice mortuary until you have registered the death, then made arrangements for their collection. If there is some doubt, they may be moved to a larger hospital where they can be assessed by a medical examiner who liaises with the Coroner's office. See *Registering the Death* below.

When Someone dies in a Care Home, Nursing Home or Small Hospital

Most care homes, nursing homes or small local hospitals do not have their own mortuary facilities. This means that when your loved one dies, it will be necessary for them to be collected that same day. Before the death occurs, the staff are likely to have asked you which funeral director you will be using. If you are using Sun Rising's own Simple Arrangement Service, let them have our telephone number: 01295 688488.

Depending on restrictions imposed during the pandemic, you may or may not be given time with your loved one. There will be a delay while the person authorised to complete the necessary forms is able to attend: this will be a nurse or doctor who can confirm the cause of death and state whether it was expected. Once they have done this, the staff will be keen to call the funeral director to arrange collection. If you are using Sun Rising's own Simple Arrangement Service, we will want to know that you are happy for us to collect your loved one and may ask to speak to you before arrangements are made. If there is any doubt about the cause of death, your loved one will be taken to a hospital mortuary to be assessed by a medical examiner.

When Someone dies at Home or Elsewhere

When someone dies unexpectedly at home (or elsewhere), call 999. When the ambulance arrives, the paramedics will assess what has happened. It is likely that your loved one will be taken to the nearest large hospital, where the medical examiner will attend to establish

the cause of death. It is likely that the next person you hear from is a Coroner's Officer. See *Registering the Death* below.

If the death at home is expected, you are likely to have a Home Nursing or hospice team already making regular visits. In preparation, before your loved one dies, you may like to ask one of the team whom you should call when the death occurs: there may be a nurse on the team who is authorised to complete the Cause Of Death assessment, or it may be necessary to call your local GP.

Once the nurse or doctor has been, your loved one can be collected. This is arranged by calling your funeral director, or if you are using Sun Rising's own Simple Arrangement Service, calling us. You may feel uncomfortable having your loved one at home once they have died, in which case collection can be as soon as possible: it is sensible to anticipate a two-to-three hour wait. However, you may like to have some quiet time with them, or need to wait until other family members have arrived to say their goodbyes. Ask the nursing team, the funeral director or us, for guidance to ensure any problems are avoided. The nurses may be happy to wash the body before collection, and you may be able to help should you wish; if there are risks because of COVID-19, there will be restrictions as to how much you (or they) can (or should) do.

Registering the Death

In normal times the next step would be to collect the Medical Certificate from the hospital or local surgery. However, during the pandemic, this is sent directly to the Register Office. When you are sure that the Medical Certificate has been sent, you will then need to call the Register Office in order to arrange a further telephone appointment with the Registrar for registering the death. You'll be told in advance what you will need to have to hand. The law states that a death must be registered *within 5 days*, usually by the next of kin, but there may be delays during busy periods.

Prior to the pandemic, the Registrar would give you a *Certificate of Registration*, known as 'The Green', which you would need to give either to your funeral director or to us. Now, however, 'The Green' is emailed direct. If you are using Sun Rising's Simple Arrangement Service, give them our email address: office@sunrising.co.uk. The Registrar will then send you several copies of the *Death Certificate* which you'll need for tying up financial and other areas of your loved one's life.

Arranging the Funeral

When it comes to arranging the funeral, you can either engage a funeral director or use our own Simple Arrangement Service.

While you may feel comfortable with a more traditional funeral, remember you have choices. Nowadays it is possible to have a funeral that is a very individual reflection of the person – whether that be a service in church and a quiet committal, or a celebration of life with eulogies, tributes, music and poetry, or a gathering around the coffin with a bottle of wine, a Beethoven symphony and informal sharing of memories, followed by a picnic on the grass. Most funerals at Sun Rising have the service in the roundhouse. There are also local venue options for the funeral service or for a gathering afterwards.

During the pandemic, the number permitted to attend a funeral may vary. Please ask for the latest information.

Call us for more information or if you have any queries: 01295 688488.