

Guidance & Support for the Bereaved following a death in the community

Information for Relatives and Friends

Community Bereavement Services

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Introduction

If you have been given this leaflet, you have experienced the death of someone close to you. May we offer our sympathy at this difficult and sad time. The NHS cares for many people at the end of their lives, and bereavement services are a vital part of the care provided for bereaved families and friends.

This booklet is designed to provide practical advice and help during early days of bereavement. We want to help you as much as we can and we hope that this booklet will provide you with helpful information and where this can be obtained, following a death within the community setting.

COVID-19

You may be finding it difficult at the moment because of the restrictions in place to try and stop the spread of Coronavirus. Grieving whilst being alone can mean that your feelings of loneliness and grief are stronger, and you may be left without someone to share your feelings with.

Bereavement care is crucial for the future wellbeing and mental health of individuals, and even more so with the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals may be cut off from their usual support networks. Therefore bereavement services could be a useful resource following a loss of a loved one. Bereavement services are still available to provide support, although due to the impact of COVID-19, face to face support is not always possible.

Some tips on how to deal with bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic are:

- Keep in touch with others, using the phone, text, internet or social media
- Look after yourself and get rest.
- Try to get some fresh air or sunlight each day.
- Keep to a regular routine.
- Ask for practical help if possible from friends, family or neighbours.
- Do not feel guilty if you are struggling.
- Talk to people about how you are feeling and about the person who has died.

What happens next?

The days following bereavement can be very difficult. However there are some formalities that must be dealt with promptly:

- The death will be verified by a GP (or a Registered nurse verifier, if the death was expected).
- The GP will complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death as soon as practically possible. However, if the death is unexpected or unexplained, it has to be reported to Her Majesty's Coroner.
- If the death does not need to be reported to the Coroner, and a Statement of Intent is in place (a Statement of Intent would be completed by the GP to confirm it is an expected death), you can contact the funeral director of choice to transport the deceased. This happens once death verification has taken place.
- You will need to arrange an appointment to register the death* (see the section 'Registering the death') at the Wigan register office. Only arrange this appointment when you have confirmation that the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is available for collection. Following the registration of death, the Death Certificate will be issued.

This appointment may be via telephone, due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Please note the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death is separate to the Death Certificate.

Arranging to see your relative / friend

If you wish to make the decision to see your relative / friend, this will more than likely be at the Funeral Director's Chapel of Rest. Other friends and distant relatives, who may have not been present at the time of death, may also wish to pay their last respects.

Please note there may be changes to usual practice due to COVID-19 pandemic

Registering the death

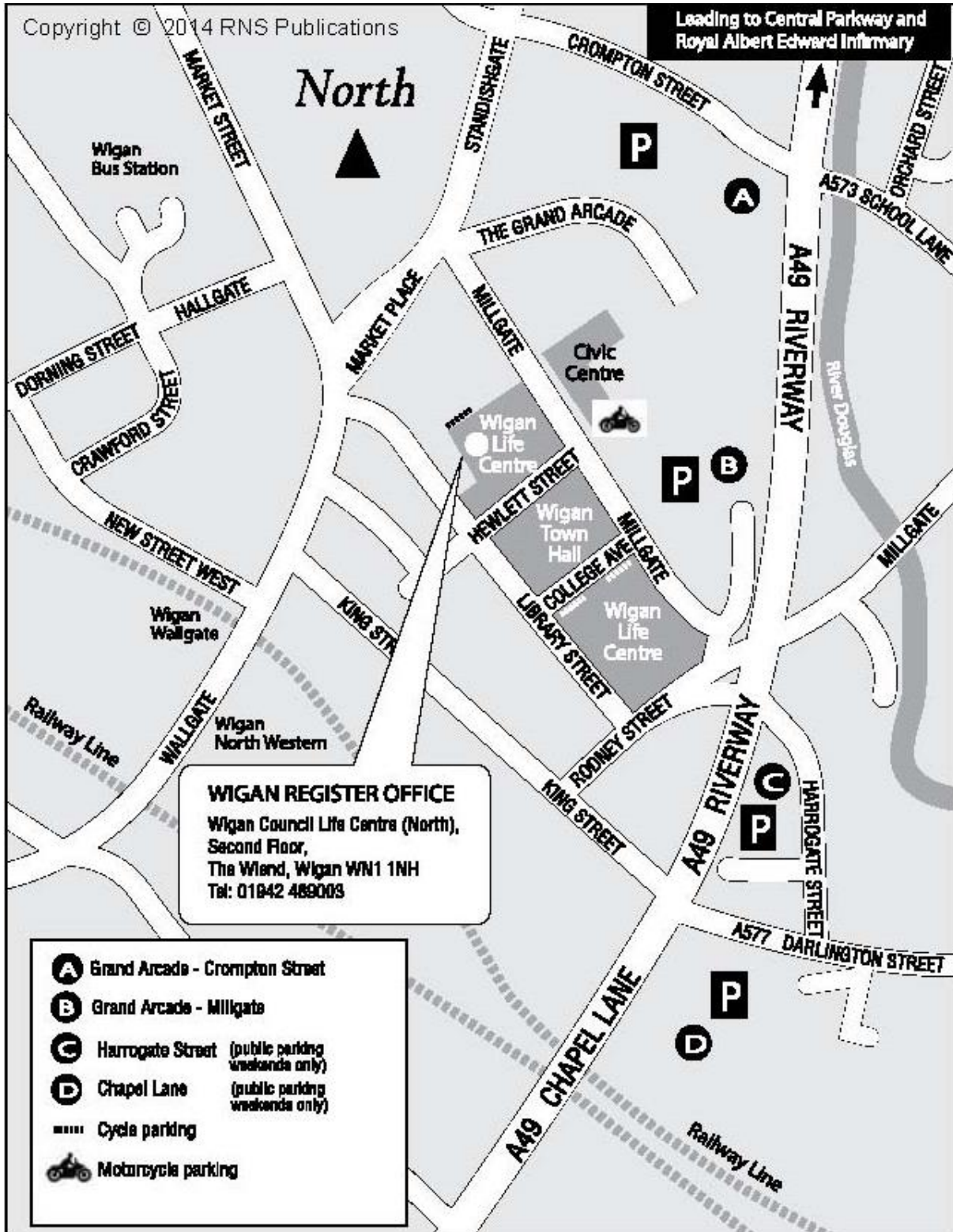
To book an appointment to register the death at the Wigan Register Office, you can use either the Wigan on-line booking system at www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Births-Marriages/Deaths, or book through your Wigan MyAccount.

If you do not have access to a computer, please ring 01942 489003 for appointments.

Please note the death cannot be registered without a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD), or the Coroner's paperwork.

Wigan Register Office

Wigan Register Office is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, excluding Bank Holidays. Wigan Register Office is located at Wigan Life Centre (North), Second Floor, The Wiend, Wigan, WN1 1NH (see map).



Who can register a death?

- A relative of the deceased.
- Someone present at the death.
- The person making the funeral arrangements (but not the Funeral Director).
- Please note if English is not your first language, you may prefer to take someone with you to help.

More information on registering a death and what documents you may need to bring to the appointment is available at www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Birth-Marriage-Deaths.

What will the registrar give you?

- A Certificate of Burial or Cremation. This certificate should be given to your Funeral Director as early as possible.
- If you require any copies of the death certificate, you can pre-order and pay for these at the time of booking on-line; if you do not book on-line, you can purchase these at the time of the registration. Please ensure you have a valid credit or debit card with you to pay for any certificates.

Tell Us Once

As part of your appointment, you will be offered the Department of Works & Pensions (DWP) Tell Us Once service. This service will notify many different organisations that are signed up to the scheme, making it easier and simpler to sort out the deceased persons affairs. If you do not wish to use this service, please advise the registrar on the day of your appointment. More information about the scheme and any documents you may need to produce at the death registration appointment can be found on the Wigan Council website www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Births-Marriage-Deaths.

How H M Coroner can become involved

If the death is referred to H M Coroner

In some instances, there is a legal requirement for the Doctor to refer a death to the H M Coroner.

What does the Coroner do?

A coroner makes enquiries into the deaths that are reported to them. It is their duty to find out the medical cause of death, if it is not known, and to enquire about the cause of death if it was due to violence or was otherwise unnatural. The Coroner will instruct the doctor to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death if there is a known natural cause of death, or instruct a post mortem where a cause of death cannot be provided. If the post mortem provides a natural cause of death, the Coroner will issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of

Death; an inquest will be held where an unnatural cause of death is provided, and interim paperwork will be issued so that a funeral may take place prior to the inquest.

Are all deaths reported to the Coroner?

No. In most cases the deceased's own G.P is able to give a cause of death. Unexpected deaths are usually reported to the coroner by the police, and the GP will also report the death to the coroner.

The death will be reported to the coroner if it has resulted from or occurred in any of these circumstances:

- The cause of death is not known or is uncertain.
- The deceased was not been reviewed by a doctor during their last illness.
- The doctor treating the deceased had not seen them, either after death, or in the 14 days prior to their death.
- The death occurred whilst a patient was undergoing an operation, did not recover from the anaesthetic, or has died within 30 days of the procedure.
- The death was caused by an industrial disease.
- The death was violent, unnatural, or occurred under suspicious circumstances.
- The death of any baby or child under the age of 18.
- The death is drug or alcohol related.

The Coroner may be the only person who can certify the cause of death.

For further information regarding Coroner's procedures, you can contact H. M. Coroner's Office which is open Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) 9am to 12:30pm and 1pm to 4pm and is located at:

H M Coroner's Office

Greater Manchester West
Padderborn House
Civic Centre
Howell Croft North
Bolton
BL1 1JW

Telephone: 01204 338799

Arranging a funeral

The organising of a funeral can be done as soon after death as you feel comfortable. The deceased may have left instructions regarding their wishes for the funeral arrangements; you do not need to wait until you have registered the death. However, do not feel you have to rush, take time to think about what you want. Every family is different: you may wish to organise and arrange the funeral yourself, hold a Civil Funeral or use a funeral director who will look after all the arrangements on your behalf.

You can find information about organising a funeral yourself via the internet or contact information for your local Funeral Director from your local telephone directory, or via the internet.

Please note there may be changes to usual practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funeral directors will manage the funeral arrangements and give advice and support. These factors may influence your choice:

- Location of the firm's premises.
- Range of services provided.
- The way you are treated by the staff.
- Cost.
- Recommendation of those who have used the service.
- Ownership (small family business or large firm).

Remember, that with any funeral, a funeral provider only gets one chance to get it right. Don't be forced to make any decision with which you are uncomfortable.

Paying for the funeral

If you are organising a funeral, you are responsible for paying the bill; you should check how you are going to pay for it. If you are finding it difficult to pay for a funeral that you have to arrange, you may be entitled to receive a Social Fund Funeral payment from the Department for Works and Pensions, providing you or your partner receive means-tested benefits.

Who needs to be told about the death?

You will most likely wish to inform family, friends and neighbours of the death right away. There are also other people / services who may need to know. There is a list below:

Contact	Done ✓
Family Doctor	
The Benefits Agency (pensions, benefits)	
Bank, Giro, Credit Cards, Building Society	
Social services (care agency)	
Place of work (occupational pension)	
Executors of the state (wills)	
Insurance Companies (Life, Car etc)	
HM Revenue & Customs	
Electricity, Gas, Telephone, Water Companies	
Dentist / Optician	
The Bereavement Register (reduce unwanted mail – see useful contacts)	

Things that will need to be returned	Done ✓
Pension / Benefit Books	
Driving Licence	
Passport	
NHS Equipment on Loan	
Drugs and Medication to your local or Hospital Pharmacy	
National Insurance Card	
Blue Badge Parking Disc	

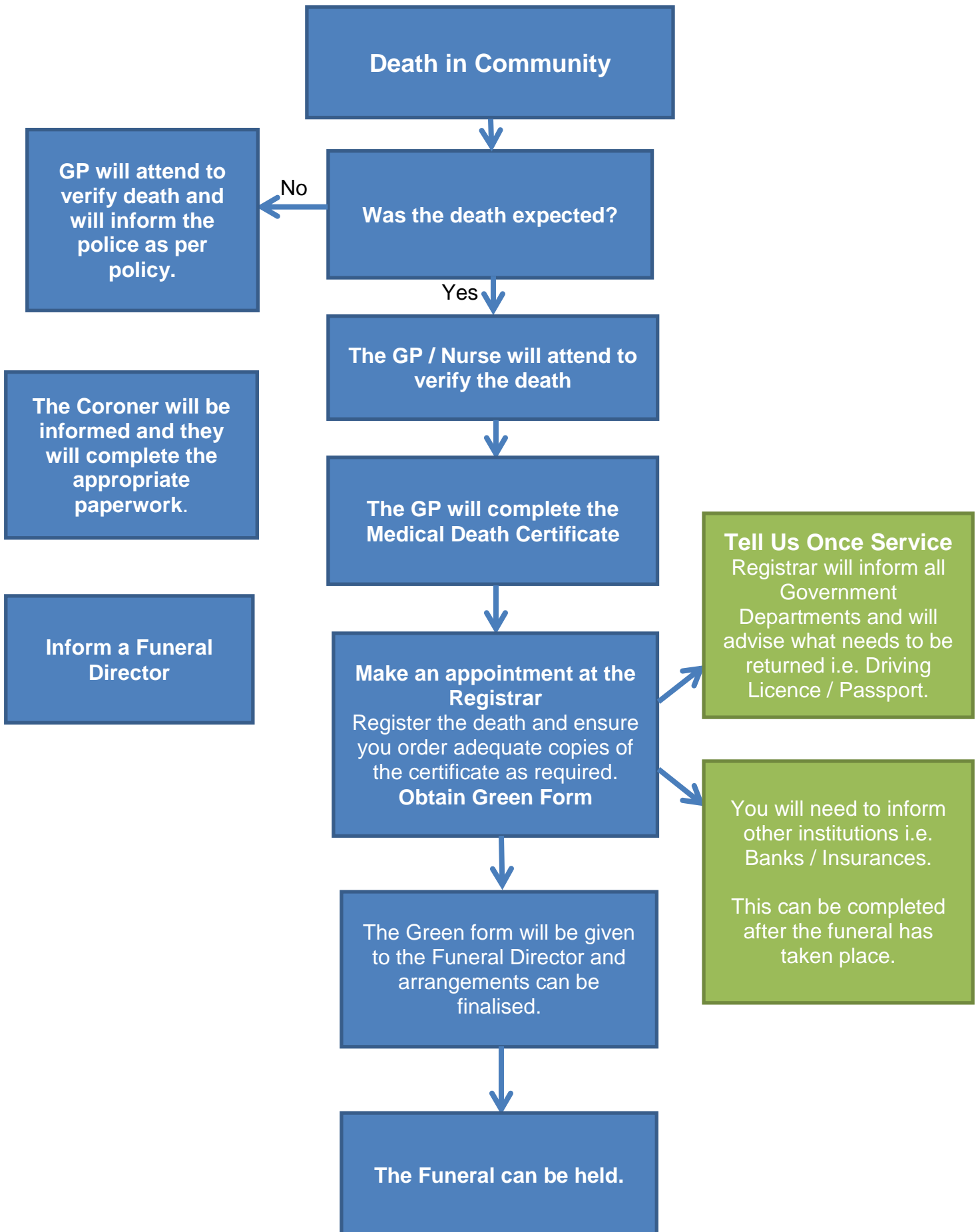
Children and grief

We often protect children from the facts of death. Children of all ages feel grief and distress, and we often underestimate a child's resources and ability to cope.

Talk to children as soon after a death as possible, be open and honest with them, explaining facts in a simple manner, using appropriate words such as dead, rather than asleep.

It is helpful to be open with children and share feelings of sadness; by doing this, children will learn that it is natural to be sad and to cry when someone dies. Children often like to draw pictures or write stories as part of their way of saying goodbye. You will find further advice on the following website.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/children-and-bereavement/>



Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Local Support:

Age UK

Pennyhurst Mill
Haig Street
Wigan
WN3 4AZ
www.ageuk.org.uk/wiganborough/
Tel: 01942 615880

Department for Works and Pensions

www.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 731 0469

Citizens Advice Wigan Borough (CAWB)

Wigan Life Centre
The Wiend
Wigan
WN1 1NJ

Magnum House,
33 Lord Street,
Leigh.
WN7 1BY

Tel: 08082787801
www.cawb.org.uk

The Samaritans Wigan

73 Dicconson Street,
Wigan.
WN1 2AT
www.samaritans.org.uk
Tel: 03300945717

Wigan Family Welfare

Wigan Churches' Association for Family Welfare
www.wiganfamilywelfare.co.uk
Tel: 01942 867888

Carers Loss & Bereavement Counselling Service

Tel: 01942 828771

Stop Mail – Helping reduce junk mail

www.stopmail.co.uk
Tel: 0808 168 9607

National Support:

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.cruse.org.uk
Tel: 0808 808 1677

Young Persons Freephone Helpline

www.hopeagain.org.uk
Tel: 0808 808 1677

The Compassionate Friends (UK)

Supporting bereaved parents and their friends
www.tcf.org.uk
Tel: 0345 123 2304

Child Bereavement

www.childbereavement.org.uk
Tel: 0800 028 8840

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

www.uk-sobs.org.uk
Tel: 0300 111 5065

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: <https://www.wwl.nhs.uk>

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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Call 111 first when it's less urgent than 999.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

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www.veteransgateway.org.uk

