

What to do with a person's body after they have died. This is for situations where someone has: a close support network, or very few or no close contacts, and whether they: left clear instructions, or left no instructions.

## Is it time for a cuppa and a chat?

### First things first

- Confirm who is taking responsibility and who will coordinate arrangements
- It might help to have one person as the main contact, but decisions can be shared
- Address any disagreements early



### Check to see if any instructions have been left

Look for:

- A will, funeral plan, prepaid cremation/burial plan, written wishes, letters, religious guidance, organ or body donation paperwork

Wishes can include:

- Burial, cremation, woodland burial, direct cremation, religious ceremony, humanist or non-religious service, donation to medical science, no formal funeral, where ashes should go, music, readings, clothing, flowers or charity donations

### If there are clear instructions left

- Locate all paperwork
- Contact any named funeral director or provider
- Check whether costs were prepaid
- Inform family and close contacts about the wishes
- Follow the instructions where practical and legal
- Respect cultural or religious requirements if known

REMEMBER: funeral wishes are not always legally binding, but people generally try to honour them

### If there are no instructions AND a close support network

Family or close friends usually decide:

- burial or cremation
- type of service
- timing
- location
- handling of ashes (if appropriate)

### It might help if you...

- Discuss openly
  - Keep the arrangements manageable
  - Avoid any pressure to overspend
  - Focus on what feels respectful and appropriate
- Simple funerals are ENTIRELY acceptable

### If there are no instructions AND little or no support network

Possible people who could get involved are:

- Neighbours
- Friends
- Carers
- Social Workers
- Housing staff
- Local council
- Hospital staff



- Try to identify next of kin or emergency contacts, Hooper Probate Genealogy could help
- Check paperwork phone contacts or care records
- Inform the local authority if nobody can take responsibility

If nobody can arrange or pay for a funeral the local council may arrange a public health funeral. This usually includes:

- a simple burial or cremation
- minimal ceremony
- basic handling of ashes or remains

Friends or neighbours may still sometimes attend

### Asking for Help

Being the person responsible can feel overwhelming - irrespective of your relationship to the person who has died. Ask for help and support if you need it

Find more helpful websites: [www.opaal.org.uk/campaigns/](http://www.opaal.org.uk/campaigns/)