

## **Bereavement Support Guide for Professionals – Milton Keynes Local and National Services and Information during Covid-19**

Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms and they affect people in different ways. It is a difficult experience under any situation and is taking place under very challenging circumstances during the coronavirus pandemic. Those who experience loss during the coronavirus outbreak may experience increased trauma and may be cut off from some of their usual support network.

A bereavement from COVID-19 is likely to be a very challenging kind of bereavement for most people. Because of this, it is really important that people bereaved by any cause at this time are cared for and receive support, especially in the first days and weeks following their bereavement. We know, from research, that early self-care, care from people immediately around us, and care from others too, can mean that it is easier, over time, to make a recovery, with good mental health. We know, from the same research, that without early care, traumatically bereaved people are more likely to develop life-impairing illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

A death during the coronavirus pandemic potentially means:

- little time to prepare for a loved one's death, following a period of illness that they suffered.
- no time spent with a loved one before they died, due to infection risk.
- inability to say goodbye after death during this time of pandemic, when normal gatherings are not possible safely.
- people are grieving while often separated from loved ones who are also grieving but in other locations, as people are not moving around.
- many practical challenges, for example if the person bereaved was previously receiving care from someone who died, or they have responsibilities to care for others or to continue working.
- coping with a shocking bereavement at a time when the bereaved person, or others in their circle of family and friends, may also be ill.



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The NHS website has information on bereavement [www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/) and information on supporting mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/). Also people should be reminded that support is still available from their GP, NHS 111, NHS hospitals and mental health services, and that they can use telephone and online confidential listening and support services such as [Silverline](http://www.silverline.org.uk) (0800 4 70 80 90: for older people) and [Childline](http://www.childline.org.uk) (0800 1111).

[Our Frontline](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/ourfrontline/) is a resource to support frontline health, care, emergency and key workers. Our Frontline offers round the clock one to one confidential mental health and bereavement support, by call or text. Text FRONTLINE to 85258 or call 116 123 for a conversation with a trained volunteer or visit [www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/ourfrontline/](http://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/ourfrontline/) for online resources.

Below we have listed a number of local and national bereavement charities and organisations that offer guidance, advice, and support to deal with bereavement during this pandemic, both the practical and psychological aspects. There are also sections on funerals and suggestions for organisations that can support professionals and carers to consider the impact of the restrictions on end of life and palliative care. Finally, many faith groups and occupational groups have their own resources.

Organisation	Type of support	How to contact	Covid-19 specific information
<b>Adapted services: In compliance with current public health guidance, many local services are not providing face to face appointments (1:1 or group support) at the moment but may have put alternatives in place. As well as the information below, services' social media accounts promote key messages and updates on frequently asked questions or times of operation.</b>			
<a href="#">Milton Keynes Bereavement Service</a>	Local service provides support to those who have been bereaved and offers three free sessions of bereavement counselling over the telephone. After initial three sessions individuals can join a waiting list for further counselling if required.	Telephone: 07483308032 Email: <a href="mailto:mk.bs@virgin.net">mk.bs@virgin.net</a> <a href="http://www.bereavementservicemk.org.uk/">www.bereavementservicemk.org.uk/</a>	



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<b>Bereavement Advice centre</b>	Bereavement Advice Centre supports and advises people on what they need to do after a death. It provides information on the practical aspects of dealing with a death and information on grief.  Also provides support and resources for professionals.	<b>National Information</b> Helpline: 0800 634 9494 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm Website: <a href="http://www.bereavementadvice.org">www.bereavementadvice.org</a>	
<b>Cruse Bereavement Care (National)</b>	Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies; by telephone or email.	<b>National Information</b> Helpline: 0808 808 1677 (9:30-5:00 Monday, Friday. Extended to 9:30-8:00 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) Website: <a href="http://www.cruse.org.uk">www.cruse.org.uk</a>	<b>Coronavirus: dealing with bereavement &amp; grief</b> <a href="http://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief">www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief</a>
<b>The Good Grief Trust</b>	Crisis information and signposting to charities, support services and helplines that offer dedicated advice and information.  Provides useful information on bereavement and coronavirus. Provides virtual support for those grieving in isolation.	National Information Website: <a href="http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org">www.thegoodgrieftrust.org</a>	Information concerning bereavement and coronavirus. Including grieving in isolation. Offers: Support via Zoom visit <a href="http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/need-know-info/from-us-to-you/pop-up-good-grief-cafes/">www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/need-know-info/from-us-to-you/pop-up-good-grief-cafes/</a>



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<b>SUDDEN</b>	Supports people bereaved by sudden death	<a href="http://www.suddendeath.org">www.suddendeath.org</a> and helpline Call 0800 121 6510 or you can talk to us by email at <a href="mailto:suddenhelpline@brake.org.uk">suddenhelpline@brake.org.uk</a>  Right now, due to COVID-19, are open Monday to Wednesday between 10am and 2pm.	Extensive additional resources for coronavirus <a href="http://suddendeath.org/covid-19-bereavement">http://suddendeath.org/covid-19-bereavement</a>
<b>Winston's Wish</b>	Provides support for those caring for children affected by the death of a parent or a sibling and to the children themselves. Information available for professionals supporting families.  Remote and digital delivery. Provides information on supporting children with bereavement during coronavirus including funerals, talking to children and managing grief in isolation.	National Information Helpline: 08088 020021 (9am-5pm) ASK email support: <a href="mailto:ask@winstonswish.org">ask@winstonswish.org</a> Crisis Messenger: Text WW to 85258 (24/7) Website: <a href="http://www.winstonswish.org.uk">www.winstonswish.org.uk</a>	Information on children and bereavement during coronavirus including how schools can support children <a href="http://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/">www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/</a>
<b>Child Bereavement UK</b>	Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.  Premises are now closed; bereavement support practitioners are working remotely and bereavement support offered by telephone or digital means. Face-to-face groups and drop-in	Milton Keynes Phone: 01908 550895 Phone: 0800 02 888 40 Email: <a href="mailto:support@childbereavementuk.org">support@childbereavementuk.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org/">www.childbereavementuk.org/</a>	<a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-children">Coronavirus –supporting bereaved children</a> <a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-children">www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-children</a>



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	support services are currently postponed but local practitioners can discuss other means of offering support.		
<b>TCF (formerly The Compassionate Friends)</b>	Support by telephone and befriending for those dealing with a loss of a child. Please note that this charity supports people irrespective of the age of the child at the time of death i.e. the child may have reached adulthood.  Support provide by phone and online. Online support groups.	National information Helpline: 0345 123 2304 Every day of the year 1000-1600 and 1830-2230 Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk">helpline@tcf.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.tcf.org.uk">www.tcf.org.uk</a>	Information on grieving loss of a child to coronavirus <a href="http://www.tcf.org.uk/content/loss-during-covid-19--pandemic/">www.tcf.org.uk/content/loss-during-covid-19--pandemic/</a>
<b>Way Foundation (Widowed And Young)</b>	Provides a self-help network across the UK to those who are bereaved through losing their partner/spouse when aged 50 or under, together with their children.  Phone and online support to members.	Website: <a href="http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/">www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/</a>	Online support during coronvirus including coping with the lockdown <a href="http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/coronavirus/">www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/coronavirus/</a>
<b>Sands</b>	Sands is the stillbirth and neonatal death charity. Throughout the UK, supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby, working to improve the care bereaved parents receive. Provides information for NHS professionals.  Telephone and online support being provided.	National Information Freephone Helpline 0808 164 3332 Email: <a href="mailto:helpline@sands.org.uk">helpline@sands.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.sands.org.uk/support">www.sands.org.uk/support</a>	Information for families & professionals <a href="http://www.sands.org.uk/support-you/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/">www.sands.org.uk/support-you/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/</a>



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<b>SOBS</b>	A self-help organisation which exists to meet the needs of those bereaved by the suicide of a family member or anyone close to them.  Support given by email, online and phone.	National Information Helpline: 0300 111 5065 9am-9pm Monday to Friday with Saturday and Sunday cover during this pandemic. Email support: <a href="mailto:email.support@uksobs.org">email.support@uksobs.org</a> Website : <a href="http://www.uksobs.org">www.uksobs.org</a>	
<b>Support After Suicide Bereavement Service – Mind BLMK</b>	Suicide bereavement support service. Offers 1-2-1 support and counselling for those living in MK who have recently been bereaved by suicide. Support delivered by suicide bereavement specialist by telephone or digital means. Direct referral pathway from Thames Valley police but also accepts self/professional referrals.	Milton Keynes – Victoria Sharp Phone: 0784 240 5045 Email: <a href="mailto:Victoria.Sharp@mind-blmk.org.uk">Victoria.Sharp@mind-blmk.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.mind-blmk.org.uk/how-we-can-help/milton-keynes/milton-keynes-bereavement-by-suicide-support-service/">www.mind-blmk.org.uk/how-we-can-help/milton-keynes/milton-keynes-bereavement-by-suicide-support-service/</a>	

## Funerals

Witnessing the funeral of a loved one plays an important role in helping bereaved families move through the grieving process and not being able to attend can have an impact on long-term health and well-being.

The Government has made it clear that it wants bereaved people to still have that opportunity, and therefore gatherings for funerals can continue – but only if they take place within strict social distancing guidelines and other limitations, whilst retaining the respect and professional care for the deceased.



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The guidelines for arranging and conducting funerals and who can attend are being amended regularly and will depend on a number of factors but there are professionals available who can support family and friends to understand what will be possible. For example, if a death occurred in hospital there will be a Bereavement Services team, and the funeral directors will be able to give advice. The funeral directors, crematoria and cemetery websites and social media feeds will most likely have information related to COVID-19 arrangements.

Recently relaxed guidelines aim to facilitate the opportunity for people to attend a funeral as long as they are not symptomatic and for those who are or who fall into a very high risk group or who cannot attend for other reasons, there may be an option to have a funeral or committal recorded or relayed through a filmed link. Families are advised to work with funeral directors to arrange a small, immediate family funeral service now and a larger memorial service or celebration of life at a later date.

For wider groups and friends, an opportunity for a funeral procession to pass through a community might be another way of allowing people to pay their respects whilst maintaining social distancing. On-line memorial pages are also a possibility and are usually free. The funeral directors will support you to make these arrangements.

The National Association of Funeral Directors has COVID-19 advice, resources, support and guidance for funeral directors and bereaved families during the Coronavirus pandemic: <https://nafdcovid19.org.uk/>

Government advises :

- Restricting the number of mourners at funerals to as low as possible, so a safe distance of at least 2 metres can be maintained.
- Only members of the deceased person's household or close family members should attend. If these are unable to attend close friends could attend.
- Any individual displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend.
- Those who do attend will need to adhere to social distancing, including when travelling to and from the funeral.
- Mourners who are self-isolating for 14 days due to someone in their household being unwell with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) but are not symptomatic themselves should be facilitated to attend the funeral in person should they wish to do so, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission.



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- Mourners who are clinically vulnerable or in a shielded group should also be facilitated to attend, with processes put in place to minimise the risk of transmission.

Current at 19<sup>th</sup> April: For further advice : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

Funeral Directors	Enter your postcode at <a href="https://funeral-directory.co.uk/">https://funeral-directory.co.uk/</a> National Association of Funeral Directors, 618 Warwick Road, Solihull, B91 1AA 0121 711 1343 or <a href="mailto:info@nafed.org.uk">info@nafed.org.uk</a> National Society of Allied & Independent Funeral Directors <a href="http://www.saif.org.uk">www.saif.org.uk</a> Other directories are available e.g.
Funeral Celebrants	Enter your postcode at <a href="https://www.iocf.org.uk/find-iocf-celebrant/">https://www.iocf.org.uk/find-iocf-celebrant/</a> Institute of Civil Funerals, 186a Station Road, Burton Latimer, Northants, NN15 5NT 01480 861411 - <a href="mailto:info@iocf.org.uk">info@iocf.org.uk</a> Other directories are available.
Religious Celebrations	Contact your local church, or other faith group.
Natural Death Centre	For information about Woodland/Environmental Friendly Burials <a href="http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk">www.naturaldeath.org.uk</a> (01962 712690)
Funeral Costs (The Social Fund)	If you are on certain benefits you may be able to get payment from the Social Fund to help pay from the funeral. Please contact the local Job Centre Plus. (search 'JCP Social Fund How to claim'). In some circumstances Benevolent funds are available e.g. for ex Service Men and Women and for the Police and Fire Service. (Search for the specific occupational group)

### Palliative and End of Life Care

If you or someone you know is approaching the end of life, you may be worried about how coronavirus may affect your treatment or care.



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**Macmillan Cancer Support** <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus/end-of-life-care-and-coronavirus>

Confidential telephone support 0808 808 00 00 (7 days a week, 9am - 5pm), online chat and email. (with local teams available too)

**Marie Curie- For anyone affected by terminal illness** ( advice for health and care professionals)

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/professionals/palliative-care-knowledge-zone/proving-good-quality-care/covid-19>

Marie Curie have created a new coronavirus section to bring together the latest guidance on palliative and end of life care. It includes information that might help front line workers in primary care, community care or in a residential home setting.

If you are a professional looking for specific information and support please call Support Line on 0800 090 2309.(includes bereavement support)

**Marie Curie** For people living with a terminal illness or those caring for them <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/coronavirus>



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