



2wish

# When a Child Dies

A guide for Parents & Carers

Support for those affected by sudden death in young people

Registered Charity in England and Wales

Charity No: 1168140

Gweithio mewn  
partneriaeth gyda  
Working in  
partnership with



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## **Introduction**

This booklet aims to provide helpful information for parents and carers following the loss of a child. The death of a child is a tragedy for the family and the wider community.

Whether the death is expected or unexpected it is vital that all child deaths are carefully reviewed so that we may learn as much as possible, to try to prevent future deaths, and to support families, carers and friends.

Some organisations which offer support in bereavement are listed at the end of this booklet.





## Expected Deaths

It may be necessary for the Coroner to arrange a post mortem examination. Otherwise, you should be able to register your child's death quickly and proceed with your family's planned funeral and memorial arrangements.

If your child had a long term illness or life-limiting condition, and death was expected, it is likely that your family and the team supporting you will have made an appropriate 'care pathway' together. This might include an emergency care plan for your child. Local health and other professionals such as hospice or hospital staff will work with you and your family to support you.

**Information about your child will be shared  
with the child death review team.**

If your child had a long term illness or a life limiting condition, but was not expected to die at this particular time, then the death will be treated as an unexpected death.

## Unexpected Deaths

Professionals are required by law to report all unexpected deaths to the Coroner and the Police.

An unexpected death is one which was not expected in the previous 24 hours, or before the event that led to the death, for example a road traffic collision.

Unexpected child deaths start the Procedural Response to Unexplained Deaths in Childhood (PRUDiC) process





## Meetings Between Professionals

They will consider what happened to your child and review the care and support provided. You will be kept informed during this process by a professional whom you have met, perhaps someone you knew before your child dies. If you have any questions, or wish to share any information, speak to this professional. There may also be information that the professionals need from you because information from you is very important.

For both expected and unexpected deaths, professionals involved with your child may meet to talk to each other about why your child died.

It is important that all the professionals involved talk to each other to gather as much information as possible about your child's death.

## **PRUDiC**

Immediately following your child's death and throughout the PRUDiC process, professionals will offer support to you and your family and will signpost you to appropriate organisations that will be able to provide on-going bereavement support.

Under the PRUDiC process, professionals will have a series of meetings as described previously where they will share information about your child and family. If any safeguarding concerns are identified, the appropriate procedures will be followed.

This process sets out how professionals in Wales respond to the unexpected death of a child, to make sure the response is safe, consistent and sensitive to the needs of the bereaved family.

More information regarding PRUDiC can be found here:  
<https://phw.nhs.wales/PRUDiC>



## Child Death Review Programme

CDRP does not report on individual children or on anything that may identify a child. Information is used to; describe the patterns and causes of deaths including any trends, identify opportunities for prevention of future child deaths, identify avoidable factors that may be contributing to child deaths in Wales and share the findings to inform action.

Information held on their database includes personal details about your child, including name, address, date of birth, medical history, information concerning their birth (if relevant) and events leading to their death. It may also include personal details such as name, address, medical history of people known to your child such as parents/siblings, if the information is relevant to your child's circumstances.

The Child Death Review Programme (CDRP) collects information about all deaths of children in Wales or Welsh resident children who die elsewhere. The information is used by the CDRP to review what happened and to see what can be learned to prevent the same thing happening to another child or young person.

Information is used to review what happened and to see what can be learnt to prevent the same thing happening to another child or young person. CDRP does not look at who might be at fault or who is to blame. They focus on improvements for the future to help prevent the same thing happening to another child or young person. They can remove your / your child's details if you wish and if families and carers want particular information to be included they can contact CDRP.

reports can be found here: [www.publichealthwales.org/  
childdeathreview](http://www.publichealthwales.org/childdeathreview)

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:  
[ChildDeath.Review@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:ChildDeath.Review@wales.nhs.uk)  
Organisations which offer support and published

## **The Coroner And The Coroner's Inquest**

Further information about coroners and inquests can be found in the leaflet 'A Guide to Coroner's services for Bereaved People'

The Coroner may request a post mortem examination. If the cause of death remains uncertain an inquest is held. If the Coroner decides to hold an inquest you will be given details of when and where it will take place. The inquest will be opened within a few days of your child's death.

The Coroner is an officer appointed by the local authority to investigate unexpected deaths. The Coroner's job is to find out who has died and how, when and where they died.

to find this leaflet

You can use any search engine and search for...

"A Guide to Coroner Services for Bereaved People"

Or you can ask your supporting professional for a copy.



## **Post Mortem Examination & The Pathologist**

After the post mortem examination has taken place, and the Coroner has given permission, you can see and hold your child, and decide where you would like your child to be before the funeral. This includes the possibility of some time at home. If your family would like this, you can discuss it with hospital staff.

You can request your own representation at the post mortem.

If a Coroner is not involved, then a post mortem examination can only take place with parental consent. You should have a full discussion with health care staff to decide if this is the right decision for you and your family.

A post mortem examination, also known as an autopsy, is an examination after death by a doctor called a pathologist. Post mortem examinations for children and young people will be carried out by a specialist pathologist which may mean that your child is moved to another hospital.

## Registering Your Child's Death

Once the death is registered you can obtain a death certificate.

If a post-mortem examination has taken place then the Coroner is responsible for sending the relevant paperwork to the Registrar. If an inquest is required the death cannot be registered until after the inquest, but the Coroner can give you a certificate confirming that your child has died. When the inquest is over the Coroner will tell the Registrar what to put in the register.

If your child's death has been reported to the Coroner you cannot register the death until the Coroner gives permission. The Coroner may decide that the cause of death is clear and ask a doctor to give you a medical showing the cause of death. You can then go to the Registrar and register the death.

If you are given a medical certificate showing the cause of your child's death by your GP or a hospital doctor you can take it to the Registrar and register the death.





## When Can You Have Your Child's Funeral?

If you have religious or other requirements that may affect the timing of your child's funeral, please discuss these with hospital staff. They will alert the Coroner who will try to accommodate your wishes, though it may not always be possible.

You can start to plan the funeral at any time but you can only hold it once you have the death certificate or other appropriate from the Coroner. You may wish to discuss possible choices with your chosen funeral director, and take time to consider the type of service most meaningful for you and your family.

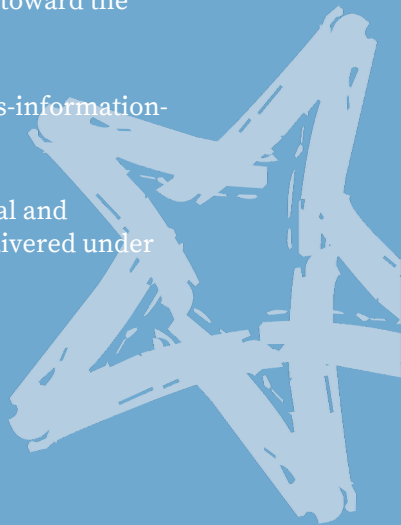
## Support With the Cost of a Child's Funeral

[www.gov.wales/child-funeral-and-other-related-costs-leaflet](http://www.gov.wales/child-funeral-and-other-related-costs-leaflet)

In addition to this, families in Wales who have registered the loss of a child under the age of 18 are entitled to receive a £500 contribution toward the funeral and related costs.

[www.gov.wales/child-funeral-and-other-related-costs-information-html](http://www.gov.wales/child-funeral-and-other-related-costs-information-html)

In Wales, local authority and community council burial and cremation fees for children under the age of 18 are waived under an existing agreement.



## **Bereavement Support**

### **Help Is At Hand**

[www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk/resource/help-is-at-hand/](http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk/resource/help-is-at-hand/)

A resource for people bereaved through suicide or other unexplained death, and for those helping them.

### **2wish**

W: [www.2wish.org.uk](http://www.2wish.org.uk)

E: [support@2wish.org.uk](mailto:support@2wish.org.uk)

T: 01443 853125

### **Bliss**

Support for those affected by sudden death in young people.

W: [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)

T: 020 73781122

### **Childhood Bereavement Network**

Support, including after bereavement, for the family of a premature baby.

### **Child Death Helpline**

Information and advice about local and national services to support bereaved children and young people.

W: [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

For anyone affected by the death of a child of any age from any cause.

W: [www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk](http://www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk)

T: 0800 282986



## **Bereavement Support**

### **Cruse**

Cruse is the UK's largest bereavement charity.

### **Hope Again**

W:

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) T:

0808 8081677

W: [www.hopeagain.org.uk](http://www.hopeagain.org.uk)

T: 0808 8081677

### **HM Coroner – guide to coroners services**

Cruse has a dedicated website designed for young people which aims to support them after the death of someone close.

[services-and-coroner-investigations-a-short-guide](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-coroner-services-and-coroner-investigations-a-short-guide)

W: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-coroner-](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-coroner-services-and-coroner-investigations-a-short-guide)

### **The Compassionate Friends**

W:[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

T: 0345 1232304

### **The Lullaby Trust**

Support for bereaved parents, siblings and extended family.

W:[www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk)

T: 0808 802 6868

### **Road Peace**

Support and advice for anyone following the sudden death of a baby.

W: [www.roadpeace.org/](http://www.roadpeace.org/)

T: 0800 1601069

The national charity for road crash victims.

## **Bereavement Support**

### **SANDS**

Supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby.

### **Winston's Wish**

W:

[www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk) T:

0808 1643332

W: [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

T: 08088 020021

### **CBUK**

The leading childhood bereavement charity.

For support when a child grieves or when a child dies.

W: [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

T: 0800 0288840

### **BRAKE**

### **The Good Grief Trust**

The road safety charity.

W: [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

T: 0808 8000401

Help and Hope in one place.

W: [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)



## Contact us

If you feel you would like further support or information about the services we offer, please call or email:

[support@2wish.org.uk](mailto:support@2wish.org.uk)

01443 853125

[www.2wish.org.uk](http://www.2wish.org.uk)

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