

## Help is at Hand support guide

There is a booklet that is available to view for free online that provides guidance and support to people bereaved as a result of suicide. This guide was created by other people who have been affected by someone taking their own life. The "Help is at Hand" booklet can be found online here: **www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/help-is-at-hand/** or by typing "Help is at hand support guide" into an internet search engine.

## Caring agencies

No one can be prepared for a sudden death. Even the most capable of people say they felt completely unable to cope at the time.

For many, family and friends will be your main support, especially in the immediate period after someone has died. However, you may wish to contact some of the following organisations, particularly if you would find it helpful to talk with others who have experienced similar bereavements.

**The Compassionate Friends** supports bereaved parents and their families after a child dies.

**Tel: 0845 123 2304**  
**www.tcf.org.uk**

**The Way Foundation (widowed and young)** aims to support young widowed men and women as they adjust to life after the death of their partner.

**Tel: 0300 012 4929**

**The Samaritans** listen to people who are angry, depressed and suicidal any time - night or day.

**Tel: 116 123 (free phone)**  
**www.samaritans.org**  
**Email: jo@samaritans.org**

**Cruse Bereavement Care** is a confidential bereavement service.

**Tel: 01242 252518 or 0844 477 9400**  
**www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk**

**Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)** offers emotional support, help and information in a number of ways, and can direct you to the nearest local SOBS support group.

**Helpline: 0300 111 5065**  
**www.uk-sobs.org.uk**

**Farming Community Network (FCN)** bereavement support and advice to those particularly involved in the farming community.

**Tel: 03000 111 999**  
**www.fcn.org.uk**

**HertsHelp** provides access to a variety of support organisations in Hertfordshire.

**Tel: 0300 123 4044**  
**Email: info@hertshelp.net**  
**www.hertshelp.net**

Your GP is there to support you as well - please think about making an appointment to see your doctor.

If there is anything that you do not understand or anything else you wish to know please contact the coroner's officer on the number overleaf.

# Supporting you after a traumatic bereavement

What happens next and where you can get help and support



HERTFORDSHIRE

CONSTABULARY



## A message from Charlie Hall, Chief Constable of Hertfordshire Constabulary:

"On behalf of my staff and officers, I would like to extend to you my deepest sympathies for your loss.

"You may be feeling a wide variety of emotions at this traumatic time, and questions may arise in the coming days about what happens next.

"This leaflet provides you with some information about the formal procedures that take place in the days and weeks ahead. It also gives details of organisations that can offer advice and support relating to bereavements that I hope may be of assistance to you and your loved ones."

## Coroner Service

After initial contact has been made by the police, responsibility will be handed over to the coroner service. A coroner's officer may contact you requesting any information required by the Coroner.

The coroner's officer will advise you regarding a post-mortem examination - if one is necessary - death certificates and matters concerning the burial or cremation.

The contact number for the Hertfordshire Coroner Service is **01707 292707**.

## Post-mortem examination

The Coroner may require a post-mortem to be carried out. A post-mortem is a medical examination carried out by a specialist doctor called a pathologist. The purpose is to establish the cause of the person's death.

## Formal identification

It is a legal requirement for the Coroner to ensure that the person who has died is properly identified. On most occasions this identification will be done formally by the next of kin, a relative or a close friend of the family with a police officer. However other options are available and will be considered if necessary.

## Inquest

The purpose of the inquest is to establish who died, where they died, when they died and what the circumstances were of the person's death. The inquest is not about attributing blame to any party.

An inquest will usually be 'opened' by the Coroner soon after the death. There is no need for you attend this first hearing. It is the legal way for the Coroner to formally identify the person who has died. The inquest will then be adjourned, while further enquiries are made prior to the full inquest taking place. The family will be informed as soon as possible of any inquest date.

## Can I see the person who has died?

You may wish to see the person who has died. We will do what we can to help you with this. This will need arranging through the coroner service and could take some time. Being told what injuries someone close to you has suffered is likely to be very distressing and disturbing. If their injuries are severe you may need to think carefully about going to see them. It may help to take someone else with you. Each case is different and this will be discussed with you.

## Can I see where they died?

If you wish, we will also do what we can to help if you want to visit the place where they died. This will be done through the police officer or member of police staff who has been appointed to your case.

## The media

The police do not routinely publicise sudden deaths, but will confirm basic details if asked to do so by the media. The person's name is not released by police unless the next of kin has given permission.

Reporters may ask the police press office if someone from the family, or a close friend, would speak to them as part of a tribute story. If you wish to speak to the media, the police press office will be able to assist.