

# Help and Care in Bereavement

**Southport & Formby District General Hospital**  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, Merseyside PR8 6PN

**Ormskirk & District General Hospital**  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 2AZ



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## INTRODUCTION

We would like to offer you our sympathy and condolences at this sad time. Information contained in this booklet may need some explanation. Members of the bereavement team, a member of the chaplaincy teams or Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS) service will be happy to help you. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

When someone dies there are many decisions and arrangements that have to be made. Whilst it is impossible to cover every detail, we have tried to provide help and advice in this booklet on the main issues to be addressed when immediately following a death.

This booklet has been prepared to help you in these first difficult days following your loss. It covers both Ormskirk and Southport Hospitals. Arrangements are always made through the Bereavement Office based at Southport and you will be guided by one of our members of staff.

The NHS cares for many people at the end of their lives and that care does not end when they die. Bereavement services are a vital part of the service the NHS gives to those in its care and to their bereaved families and friends. Providing a high quality bereavement service which respects the dignity of the person who has died and their families is a key part of effective support for bereaved families.

## STEPS TO TAKE ...

### **1. Contact a funeral director**

You can contact a funeral director immediately. Doing so ensures that you have support and guidance.

### **2. Contact the hospital Bereavement Service to collect the medical certificate cause of death**

Speaking to the hospital Bereavement Service at this point also allows you to raise any questions you might have and arrange to view the person who has died if you so wish.

### **3. Collect property and valuables**

When you visit the hospital to collect the medical certificate you may also take the opportunity to collect any belongings from the ward and any valuables from the general office.

### **4. Register the death**

A formal process by appointment only, it is at this time you can obtain a copy of the death certificate and obtain the documentation required by your nominated funeral director (the “green” form). The address for each Registrar office can be found later in the booklet.

## **Bereavement Service information**

The Bereavement Service office is situated at Southport Hospital and the Bereavement Service staff can be contacted **Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm. Call 01704 704135.**

We do our best to ensure that all calls are dealt with as soon as possible, we do apologise if you unfortunately connect to an answering machine when busy. Please do leave a message stating your name, contact number and the name of the person who has died. We will respond to your message as soon as we can.

**Please note:** the Bereavement Service office is closed in the evenings, at night, during the weekends and public holidays. The office will not be attended until the next normal working day. It is possible for you to leave a voice message during these times.

We will need to ask you some questions including the occupation of the person who has died and whether you have made a decision about burial or cremation, to help us to ensure that the appropriate paperwork is completed for you.

## MEDICAL CERTIFICATE CAUSE OF DEATH

### **When a patient dies in hospital**

To enable a medical certificate of cause of death to be completed and then collected by the next of kin, bereavement officers follow a standard procedure. Notes must be obtained from the ward where the person died. This action is performed at the start of each working day.

The notes contain the information needed to contact the doctor[s] who will attend the Bereavement Service office to sign the medical certificate of cause of death. Doctors are not always able to attend when requested; some hours may pass before they can attend the Bereavement Service office.

On completion of the medical certificate, arrangements are made for you to collect the certificate from the hospital. An appointment can be made on your behalf at the local registration office. However, you may wish to make your own arrangements.

Please check with the Bereavement Service that relevant paper work is ready for collection before attending the hospital or making your own registration appointment.

## **Collecting the Medical Certificate Cause of Death (MCCD)**

At the main entrance of each hospital you will find a reception desk. Please inform a member of staff that you have come to collect a Medical Certificate Cause of Death and give the name of the person who has died. A member of the bereavement office will soon be with you and be able to answer any questions you may have.

Arrangements can be made for the collection of the MCCD at a mutually convenient time by contacting 01704 704135 for Southport and 01695 656184 for Ormskirk.

## **Collecting property and valuables**

Property will be kept for you on the ward if you do not collect it at the time of death. You may wish to collect any property or valuables belonging to the person who has died at the same time as you collect the medical certificate of cause of death.

Valuables (cash, keys or loose jewellery) will be transferred from the ward to the General Offices at the nearest opportunity for safe keeping; evidence of identification and a signature will be required in order for you to obtain such valuables.

## **CAN I VISIT THE PERSON WHO HAS DIED?**

Staff can help you to arrange a visit to the Bereavement Suite at the hospital. Funeral directors have their own facilities where you can also pay your last respects. Time with your loved one can take place on the ward for a limited time after death, after which visits can be made by appointment at the hospital or the funeral directors.

To make an appointment please call the Bereavement Service Office 01704 704014 Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and an appointment can be arranged to view during these hours.

In some circumstances the on-call technician can be contacted out of hours via the hospital switchboard 01704 547471.

**I have been told that there are restrictions on visiting the person who has died. Why is this and what does it mean?**

Although you will normally be able to see your relative/friend, in very rare circumstances there may be restrictions for health and safety or evidential reasons. In such cases there is a requirement for the person who has died to be placed in an enclosed protective covering. This is usually for one of the following reasons:

- The doctor has reason to believe the person who has died had, or could have had, an infectious disease, which may remain infectious after death
- It is felt that the remains of the person who has died are in such a condition that to view them entirely would be too distressing for the bereaved. The implications of this would be discussed with you at the appropriate time and it would be your decision whether you wish to see them

In such cases, when you go to see your relative/friend they will remain in the protective covering, which will be opened, and you will be advised about close physical contact, such as kissing, and any other special precautions at that time.

You should also be aware that, in such cases, funeral directors have their own protocols and guidelines to follow. Therefore, embalming may not take place and viewing may be restricted. You should discuss this with your individual funeral director



- A Home Office post-mortem examination is required and it is important that potential evidence is not contaminated. In these circumstances, your relative/friend will be transferred to a specialist forensic mortuary. Once an examination has taken place you will be able to see your relative/friend

## REGISTERING THE DEATH

Once the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death has been issued, you must register the death with the Registrar of Births and Deaths within five working days if it has not been referred to the Coroner.

Deaths are normally registered in the district in which they occur. However, if for any reason you are unable to attend the district where the death occurred, please contact your local Registry Office for advice regarding the registration. **Please be aware that registering the death at a location other than that of the place of death you will encounter a delay to the process.**

The Registrar cannot register a death until the doctor has completed a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. As stated previously this is obtainable from the bereavement office.

### **The Death Certificate**

The Death Certificate (not to be confused with the Medical Certificate Cause of Death) is a certified copy of the entry in the register of deaths. You may wish to discuss with the Registrar how many original copies of certificates you require as banks, building societies and insurance companies require originals. There is a charge for certificates (you can pay by cash or cheque) you should be aware that the price increases after approximately one month after registration.

You will also be given (without charge) two other documents.

- Certificate of Burial or Cremation (the 'green' form) – this will be required by the Funeral Director (unless the coroner is involved)
- Social security certificate (Form BD8). This needs to be sent to the Department of Work and Pensions together with any benefit payment books. It may also be used for claiming such benefits as Widow's Pension. Form BD8 is provided free of charge.

### **Who can register the death?**

The person who registers the death should be any of the following:

- A relative of the person who has died who was present at the death
- A relative of the person who has died who was in attendance during illness
- A relative residing or being in the district where the death occurred
- A person present at the death
- A person making the funeral arrangements

When you attend to register a death you should take the following:

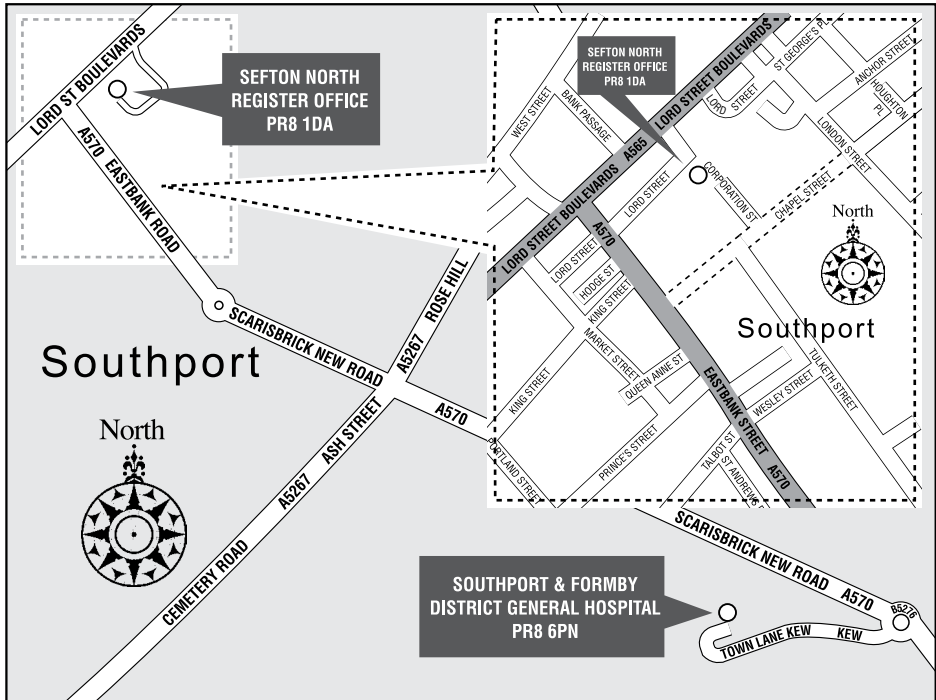
- Medical Certificate of Cause of Death

You will need to tell the Registrar:

- The date and place of death and the usual address of the person who has died
- The full name and maiden name if applicable of the person who has died

- The date and place of birth of the person who has died
- The occupation of the person who has died, the name and occupation of the spouse or registered civil partner if applicable
- Whether the person who has died was receiving a pension or allowance from public funds
- The marital status of the person who has died and date of birth of the surviving spouse or registered civil partner

# Registering a death in Southport



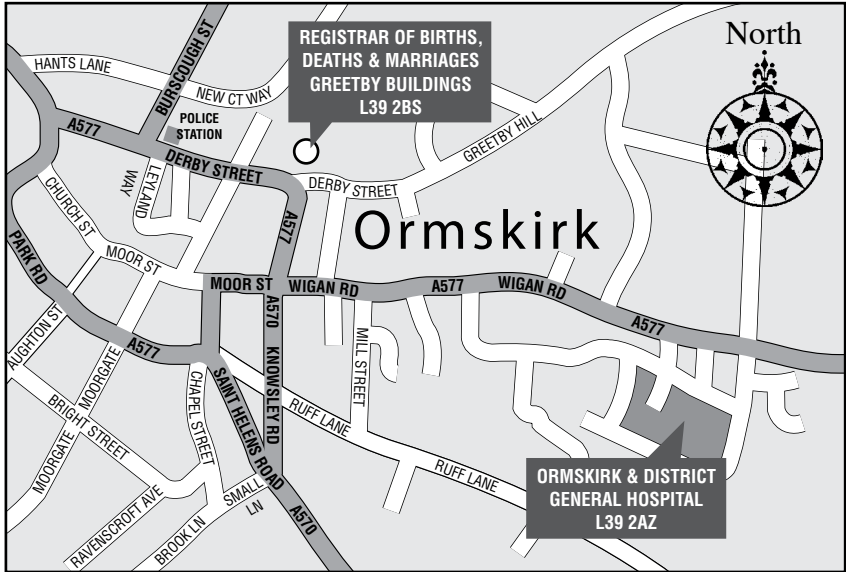
The Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages  
Sefton North Register Office  
Corporation Street  
Southport PR8 1DA

0151 934 2011 or 934 2013

Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri      9.15am - 1pm and 2pm - 4pm  
Tuesday                      9.15am - 1pm and 2pm - 5pm

Car parking is available on streets in the surrounding area.

# Registering a death in Ormskirk



The Registrar of Births, Deaths & Marriages  
Greetby Building  
Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
Lancashire  
L39 2BS

0845 053 0021 (Lancashire Council enquiry line 9am -5pm)

Mon-Fri 9.30am - 4pm

Limited parking is available at the Registry Office.

To be perforated

## THE CORONER

Some deaths have to be reported to the Coroner for legal reasons. This is usually when a Doctor is unable to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death. The Coroner is appointed by the Queen to investigate certain types of death. If a post-mortem is required, a slight delay may be experienced before the registration and funeral process can take place.

A death must be referred to the Coroner if:

- No precise cause has been established
- It follows an operation, or if it is possible that it could be due to a complication of surgery or anaesthetics
- It is not thought to be from natural causes
- It is due to an injury, however it happened, or if an accident or negligence is alleged
- It takes place within 24 hours of admission to hospital

If there is a need to contact the coroner, the coroner will then decide if the hospital doctor can issue the medical certificate of cause of death or whether a post-mortem is needed. Further information will be given by the Coroner's Officer on 0151 777 3480 or the Coroner's Clerk on 0151 934 2746 or 2749 for Sefton and 01257 246207 for West Lancashire.

### **Coroner's post-mortem examination**

The next of kin will be informed, but in these circumstances the post-mortem examination is a legal requirement and the consent of next of kin is not required. It is possible for the family to have a medical representative at the post-mortem, but most families do not feel that this is necessary. You should tell the coroner's officer as soon as possible if you think you need to arrange this – and explain your reasons.

You should also tell the coroner or coroner's officer if you have strong objections to a post-mortem examination on grounds of religion or culture. Do also speak with your own religious or cultural authorities as they will be familiar with the law and able to guide you.

Once the results of the examination are known, if an inquest is not required, a certificate to register the cause of death will be issued by the coroner's office, and sent directly to the Registrar's Office.

### **What happens at a post-mortem?**

The actual post-mortem examination is carried out by a doctor (pathologist), who is usually a consultant, with assistance from specially skilled and qualified medical technicians. It is carried out in room, rather like an operating theatre, under conditions that are very similar to an operation.

The staff are very experienced and are aware of people's needs at this time and treat each person who has died with dignity and respect, as they would expect for a member of their own family.

From time to time, professionals in training with a legitimate interest, such as medical students, police and student nurses view the examination as part of their training. If you have any strong objection to this, please inform the coroner.

The doctor may take small samples (approximately the size of a stamp and 5mm thick) of the major organs, so that they can be processed into paraffin wax blocks, from which glass slides will be made to look at more closely under the microscope.

These are known as tissue blocks and slides. If the post-mortem examination is conducted on behalf of the coroner,

then the doctor will only take samples that are related to the cause of death.

In most cases, the tissue samples will be treated with a chemical called formalin. Tissue samples will be made and processed into blocks and slides. You will be given choices about the arrangements that can be made for the fixed tissues and the blocks and slides once diagnosis is complete.

Whilst we would always recommend that the blocks and slides are kept on your behalf, you may make separate arrangements regarding the fixed tissue. You will be asked to sign a consent form detailing your wishes.

The choices that are currently available for both whole organs and tissue samples are as follows:

- You may choose to delay the funeral until the organ and/or tissue samples can be reunited with the body
- You may choose to have the organ and/or tissue samples returned to your funeral director for separate burial or cremation once the examination is complete. (please note that slides may not be able to be cremated)
- The hospital can dispose of the organ and/or tissue samples on your behalf

If you wish to know more details of the post mortem examination, please contact the Mortuary and Bereavement Service Manager on 01704 704014

### **Hospital post-mortem examination (consented post-mortem)**

The techniques used are identical to a coroner's post-mortem but the circumstances are different – namely that a doctor knows the cause of death and is able to issue a Medical



Certificate but feels that it would also be helpful to learn more about the condition from which the person died and the effects of any treatment given.

The doctor must ask the next of kin for signed permission to carry out this type of post mortem unless the person who has died had already given their signed consent. Whilst this consent is legally binding, in practice doctors will discuss the process with the family or executor before going ahead, to avoid causing additional distress. You are very much within your rights to object to this type of post mortem examination and will be given time to relect your decision.

### **Human Tissue Authority**

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) regulates the making of post-mortem examinations, the removal of tissues from the person who has died and the further storage of such tissues.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust acts under licence issued by the authority for all of these activities, and abides by the HTA codes of practice in all matters pertaining to consent, post mortem examination, removal, storage and disposal of tissue. Further information can be found at [www.hta.gov.uk](http://www.hta.gov.uk)

## HELPING OTHERS THROUGH TISSUE DONATION OR BODY BEQUEATHAL

Every year hundreds of lives are saved with the help of donated organs such as hearts and kidneys. But you may not realise that donated tissue such as skin, bone and heart valves can dramatically improve the quality of life for recipients, and even save lives.

Many people can be considered for tissue donation after death, most donors are people who expressed a wish during their lifetime to help others in this way. Often they will have carried an organ donor card and /or discussed their wishes with their family.

If tissue donation is something you would like to consider please inform the bereavement office who will contact a Tissue Coordinator to speak to you.

### **Organ donation**

Arrangement for organ donations have to be made prior to death.

### **Cornea donation**

This can be made after death, please ask staff to contact the hospital switchboard on 01704 547471 who will contact the on-call staff.

### **Body donation/ bequeathal**

This is the giving of a body for use in teaching anatomy to medical students. It may not always be possible to accept this donation. If you need advice, information is available from the University of Liverpool bequeathal office 0151 794 5442.

Expenses connected with the removal of the body and its cremation or burial are normally borne by the university. Provision is made for a simple funeral but next of kin will be expected to meet the extra costs arising from special funeral arrangements.

## **HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS**

Religious support and services are available to various denominations within the hospital (day or night). Please contact the ward staff, who can make the necessary contacts on your behalf.

The hospital chapel, situated on the ground floor, is open and available to patients and visitors for prayer and as a place just to sit in peace and quiet.

## MAKING FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

You can contact a funeral director 24-hours a day, including weekends. Your chosen funeral director can make all the necessary arrangements and can also advise you on all the procedures and documents you will need as well as the timing of the funeral service. They will come to your house if you prefer. They will answer any questions you may have on burial or cremation.

Your own Minister, priest or religious leader and the hospital chaplaincy service may also be of great help during this difficult time.

Funerals are expensive. Although basic costs tend to be similar, the final cost can vary considerably. Do not be afraid to mention your budget. Financial help may be available if you receive benefits, or if the person who has died has no next of kin. You can contact the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Most funeral directors belong to the National Association of Funeral Directors and/or Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors and/or the British Institute of Funeral Directors. These associations have their own codes of practice that must be followed to ensure consistent levels of service and standards.

### **I feel I need some more help understanding the cause of death and would like to talk. Who can I contact?**

Bereavement is often a difficult time where you may experience many emotions ranging from disbelief and shock to guilt and anger. These are all quite natural feelings to experience but you may feel the need for someone to talk to.

If you have any unanswered questions about the care or the cause of death, then you can make an appointment with the consultant in charge of your friend or relative's care, or the ward where your friend or relative was a patient.

## Local organisations available to help you

### **Citizen's Advice Bureau**

24 Wright St, Southport  
01704 531456

11 Duke St, Formby  
01704 875078

### **Royal British Legion**

for families of ex-servicemen  
and women  
Whitehouse Lane, Formby  
01704 877477

### **The Samaritans**

32 Union St, Southport  
01704 538038

### **Alder Centre**

Alder Hey  
Children's Hospital  
0151 252 5391

## National organisations available to help you

### **The Bereavement Register**

The Bereavement Register is a free service that helps put a stop to direct mail sent to people who have died.

We all receive direct mail from companies offering us their products and services. In life this can be an irritation but when we die it can be extremely upsetting for the family we leave behind – a daily reminder of their loss.

If this direct mail falls into the hands of fraudsters, upset could so easily turn to anguish. Impersonation of the deceased is a growing problem in the UK and personal details contained within direct mail items can be used to make purchases or even open accounts.

[www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk](http://www.the-bereavement-register.org.uk)

**Cruse**

National charity set up to offer free, confidential help to bereaved people.

0208 940 4818

**SANDS (Stillbirth and neonatal death charity)**

28 Portland Place,  
London, W1B 1LY

020 7436 5881

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

**Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)**

Provides benefits and services for a wide range of people.

0845 6060265

[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

**Directgov**

A wide range of advice and services from the Government including:

- Claim Bereavement Payment, Bereavement Allowance or Widowed Parent's Allowance (form BB1). You may be able to get a one-off payment or regular payments if you have been bereaved
- Funeral payments – get help covering funeral costs. If you're on a low income and need help to pay for a funeral you're arranging, you may be able to get a Funeral Payment from the Social Fund. You might have to repay some or all of it from the estate of the person who died

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Death/WhatToDoAfterADeath/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Death/WhatToDoAfterADeath/index.htm)

### **The Way Foundation (Widowed and Young)**

The Way Foundation provides a self-help social and support network for men and women widowed under the age of 50, and their children.

[www.wayfoundation.org.uk](http://www.wayfoundation.org.uk)  
0870 011 3450

### **Support after Murder and Manslaughter (SAMM)**

Help, through befriending, for people who have suffered the loss of a child, relative, or friend of any age, as a result of murder or manslaughter.

0151 207 6767 (answer phone when office is closed)  
[www.samm.org.uk](http://www.samm.org.uk)

### **Roadpeace**

Roadpeace offers a practical and emotional support service to the bereaved and injured through road traffic accidents.

0845 4500 355  
[www.roadpeace.org](http://www.roadpeace.org)

PO Box 2579  
London  
NW10 3PW

### **Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project**

Offers advice and support to people bereaved by the death of a same-sex partner through a telephone helpline, provide advice on suitable clergy for the funeral, funeral directors and solicitors for any legal matters.

General inquiries    020 7833 1674  
Helpline             020 7403 5969 (Tuesday and Thursday  
7.30pm to 10pm)

## FEEDBACK

At the beginning of this booklet we made a statement that is at the heart of our bereavement service ...

The NHS cares for many people at the end of their lives and that care does not end when they die. Bereavement services are a vital part of the service the NHS gives to those in its care and to their bereaved families and friends. Providing a high quality bereavement service which respects the dignity of the person who has died and their families is a key part of effective support for bereaved families.

If you feel that we could improve the service you encountered please do tell us.

We are always interested to hear what you have to say, if you wish to make any comments, either good or bad. You can contact the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) on 01704 704714 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email [soh-tr.info@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.info@nhs.net). Alternatively you can contact the Mortuary and Bereavement Service Manager on 01704 704135 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email [soh-tr.bereavement@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.bereavement@nhs.net).

We feel it is important to find out about the care you and your family received at the time of, and the time leading up to your loved one's death.

We realise this questionnaire may well bring back some strong memories. If you feel upset or distressed, please do not feel that you have to continue with the questionnaire. Taking part in this is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to take part or answer some of the questions, you do not need to give a reason.

If you decide to take part, please complete the questionnaire and return it to the address at the bottom (please note the pages are perforated).

*please tick box*

Were you encouraged to spend time with your loved one, privately, before and after they died?

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you feel you were given enough time with your relative/friend?

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Were you offered the support of the Hospital Chaplaincy or a Minister/ Priest of your choice?

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Was there sufficient information given to you about the hospital chaplaincy team?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you feel the level of spiritual support was appropriate for your needs?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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Did you find the support offered by the chaplaincy team useful?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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Were you satisfied with the handling of all personal property and valuables?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

Were you advised on how to contact our Bereavement Care office and the next steps to take?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

Did you feel the bereavement suite was a suitable environment for your needs when visiting your relative / friend?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

Is there anything we could improve on?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---------------------------------	--------------------------------

.....  
 .....

Was this booklet helpful?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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Was there any experience you found unhelpful?

.....  
 .....

Is there any other information that could be included?

.....  
 .....

**Thank you for completing this form. Please detach and return to:  
 Bereavement Services Office Southport and Ormskirk Hospital,  
 Town Lane, Kew, PR8 6PN** (A more comprehensive feedback form is available upon request by contacting the Bereavement Office on 01704 704135)

## FUNERAL DIRECTORS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Tel No</b>
Ball, J W	95 Bispham Rd Southport	(01704) 228632
Broadbents & Seddon (NAFD)	33 Liverpool Rd, Birkdale	(01704) 550055
Brookfield M J (NAFD, FAS, FPA)	73-75 Shakespeare St, Southport	(01704) 532106
	254 Liverpool Rd, Birkdale	(01704) 550011
Cookson Tyrer (NAFD, FAS, FPA)	2 Smithy Walk Burscough	(01704) 897770/ 892264
Coyne Bros (NAFD)	3 Old Mill Lane Formby	(01704) 873899
Dean Bros Ltd (SAIF, NAFD)	Deans Court 76 Gores Lane, Formby	(01704) 872023
David Edgar	27 Piercefield Rd Formby	(01704) 871099
Devonport Funeral Services (NAFD)	Birleywood Digmoor Skelmersdale	(01695) 731199
Gibbs Funeral Director (SAIF)	Clarence Mews 6A Clarence Rd	(01704) 551666
Johnson H & Sons (SAIF)	1a Ralph's Wife's Lane, Banks	(01704) 505252
	147 Roe Lane, Southport	(01704) 227067

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Tel No</b>
Hardman H & Co (NAFD)	Elizabeth House 57a Cottage Lane Ormskirk	(01695) 581769
	Greenways House 258 Moorfield Lane Scarisbrick	(01704) 892191
	Marlborough House Witham Rd Skelmersdale	(01695) 722122/ 720012
Howards Funeral Directors (NAFD)	Grove House 19a Banastre Rd Southport	(01704) 500086
Hunters of Ormskirk (NAFD)	128b Burscough St Ormskirk	(01695) 572997
Hull W H (NAFD, FAS, FPA)	81 Church Rd Tarleton	(01772) 812409
Moisters of Southport (NAFD, FAS, FPA)	25a Sefton St, Southport	(01704) 501501
	8 Marshside Rd, Churchtown	(01704) 227430
	8 Station Rd, Ainsdale	(01704) 575282
Porter H (NAFD, FAS, FPA)	111A Bispham Road	(01704) 212714
Skelmersdale Funeral Service (NAFD)	29/31 Sandy Lane Skelmersdale	(01695) 559868
Tyrer John & Sons (NAFD, FAS, FPA)	22c Wigan Rd, Ormskirk	(01695) 577244
William Charles & Son	16 Derby Street West, Ormskirk	(01695) 577 200

