What happens next?

A guide for people following a suspected suicide



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Introduction

This booklet is for people who have just been told that someone close to them has died suddenly, and it may have been a suicide. It's here to offer support during this difficult time.

The impact of this is life-changing, and you may be feeling overwhelmed, confused, in shock and disbelief. People who have experienced these moments have said that their worlds were shattered, and they didn't know what to do next. They found it difficult to understand and absorb information, and they felt alone and isolated.

This booklet has been written with the help of people who have lived this experience. It will help you to find the support that you need, and to understand the official processes that will follow.

We understand that the days, weeks, and months ahead, are going to be difficult.

You may want to read through this booklet with someone who you trust, who can help you. You may need to read it several times.

There is an online resource called 'Help is at Hand Cymru' that has more information including sections on the wide range of feelings and emotions you might be experiencing (see page 22).

There is a list of organisations at the end of this booklet that can offer support to you, members of your family, and other people who are connected to the person who has died (see page 23).

Practical steps in the first few weeks

The Police may tell you about the death or come to your home if the person has died there. Later on, the Police or coroner's officer may ask you to **make a statement** to help with the coroner's inquest.

You will be contacted by a coroner's officer within a day or two. They will be able to answer any questions you have about the **coronial process** and advise you on next steps and, when the time comes, the registration of the death.

You may need to visit the local mortuary or care after death service in your local hospital if that is **where the person who has died now rests**. This is where you may need to arrange for yourself, or someone else to **identify the person who has died**.

You may already have a preferred family funeral director, or a funeral director may have already been involved to move the person who has died to the mortuary. You will need to **choose a funeral director to arrange the funeral**.

You will need to **notify different people** about the death, including government agencies, the person's employer, bank, benefits office, and others (see page 17).



Practical steps in the first few weeks

You may want to think about who you know, who you trust, and who you would like to support you in the next few days and weeks and ask them for their support.



They may not know how or when to offer help, so asking them is helping them to help you.

The national support service

In Wales, we have a service that offers support to people after someone close to them has died suddenly, and when the death may have been a suicide. This service is called the National Advisory Liaison Service (NALS).

The Police may refer you into this service. If you don't want them to do that, you can ask them not to. People in these situations often find it difficult to make decisions so it would be okay if you weren't sure.

The service will contact you within 72 hours of receiving a referral.

You don't have to accept the support that is offered when they contact you. You can also tell them that you're not ready and ask them to call you again at a different time.

They can guide you to different sources of support that can be provided one-to-one, to family groups, groups of colleagues or peers – whatever is preferred by you and is most appropriate to your situation. These services can be delivered wherever you are most comfortable. Contact with NALS is completely confidential and independent of any of the other processes taking place.

08000 487742

Where the person who has died might be

When a person dies, it is most likely that they have been taken to the nearest hospital mortuary. If you're not sure, contact your local coroner's office, or mortuary or hospital care after death service. Some of these services may only be open during office hours.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board		
Care After Death Service	**01443 802406**	ABB_Morthub@wales.nhs.uk

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	
University Hospital of Wales (UHW) Mortuary	**029 2184 4269**

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	
Prince Charles Hospital Mortuary	**01685 728410**
Royal Glamorgan Hospital Mortuary	**01443 443463**
Princess of Wales Hospital Mortuary	**01656 752496**

Swansea Bay University Health Board	
Morriston Hospital Mortuary	**01792 703250**
Care After Death Service	**01792 703114**

Hywel Dda University Health Board	
Glangwili General Hospital	**01267 235151** and ask for Mortuary and Bereavement Service
Prince Philip Hospital	**01554 756567** and ask for Mortuary and Bereavement Service
Withybush General Hospital	**01437 773539**
Bronglais General Hospital	**01970 623131** and ask for the Mortuary

Powys Teaching Health Board

Depending on location and circumstances, the person who has died will usually be taken to one of the following Mortuaries. The decision is made by the coroner's office in consultation with police and ambulance services.

Prince Charles Hospital Mortuary	**01685 728410**
Royal Shrewsbury Hospital Mortuary	**01743 261000** ext 1170
Hereford County Hospital	**01432 364166**

Betsi Cadwalladr University Health Board	
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd Bereavement Service	**03000 844123** bcu.bereavementoperationalcentral@wales.nhs.uk
Ysbyty Gwynedd Bereavement Service	**03000 850925** bcu.bereavementoperationalwest@wales.nhs.uk
Wrexham Maelor Hospital Bereavement Service	**03000 847570** bcu.bereavementoperationaleast@wales.nhs.uk

If the person has died in another part of Wales, the UK, or abroad, you may need to ask the coroner's officer or police officer to help you to find out where the person who has died currently rests.

Contact details correct at the time of publication – 2026.

Professionals you may meet

You will meet a range of different people, and this may vary across different parts of Wales. They will have different roles in managing a death, which may not be clear to you.

Don't be afraid to ask them questions about their role, or about the things you need to do next. They are there to help you or to tell you who can.

The Police

Police officers attend all sudden and unexpected deaths, wherever they happen. They will have either attended the home of the person who has died, or the site where the death took place. If the death happened away from home, the Police may have come to your home to inform you that the person close to you has died.

At the scene of the death the Police will instruct a local funeral service to move the person who has died to the local hospital mortuary service on behalf of the Coroner. They may ask you if you have a preferred funeral director for this. You will still be able to choose your own funeral director later.

At some point shortly after the death, the police or coroner's officer may ask you to make a statement about the person who has died to help the Coroner to investigate the cause of death. This statement could be read out later in court.

Coroner and coroner's officers

In England and Wales, the local Coroner must be notified of all unexplained deaths.

A coroner's officer will contact you. Although they are employed by the police or local authority, they work on behalf of the Coroner and report to them directly. They will manage the inquest process which delivers a conclusion on the cause of death.

To determine the cause of death there may need to be a post mortem. The coroner's officer will talk with you about this.

People who may have been caring for the person who has died

If the person died under the duty of care of a health service, social care residence, educational institution, or in custody, you would need to be in contact with those organisations on some of the practical issues.

You may have a range of feelings towards individuals or organisations if you think they have in some way failed in their duty of care.

They will also be experiencing a range of feelings if they think that their organisation has failed you in some way. This can complicate how everyone responds emotionally to events.

Llais Cymru can provide free and independent help and advocacy for families.

www.llaiswales.org / 02920 235558

Funeral Directors

Your local funeral director should be experienced in deaths by suicide with an understanding and empathy for the family and friends.

They will be able to guide you through the process of making funeral arrangements, understanding timescales and liaising with the relevant agencies for the paperwork.

The Coroner directly issues a cremation or burial order to a funeral director to enable the funeral to go ahead.

Once the person who has died has been ‘released’ from the care of the Coroner they will be transferred into the care of your chosen funeral director until the day of the funeral.

Personal belongings

The police may need to examine personal items to help them to identify the person who has died. They may also need these as evidence for the coroner inquest.

The officers will want to attend the address of the person who has died as soon as possible. Sometimes they take items belonging to the person away with them to examine.

Please avoid touching anything that the person may have recently handled until the police say you can. Sometimes personal items can be damaged during the forensic process and may not be returned in their original condition or returned at all. The coroner's officer can discuss this with you if you'd like to talk to someone.

Property can normally only be returned with the permission of the Coroner, and you may have to wait some time. You may have to collect them from the police station many months after the death. This can be a difficult time and a reminder of what has happened.

Visiting the person who has died

The mortuary team in the hospital will be caring for the person who has died and will do their best to help you.

If you have not had to formally identify the person who has died, but want to see them, you can speak to the mortuary team in your local health board to make an appointment. The mortuary team may have to check with the coroner's office before this takes place.

It is a personal choice whether to visit someone who has died. Some families prefer to wait until they are in the care of the funeral director before visiting. Mortuary, care after death teams, or your funeral director will be able to advise and support you, whichever decision you make.

Visiting where the person died

Some people may wish to visit the place where the death took place (if not at home), to piece together and understand what happened. Others may not wish to visit the site as they will find it too distressing. Both reactions are normal.

If you'd like to visit the site, you may need to seek the advice of the agencies who managed the scene beforehand. You may find that you have an unexpected emotional response to the visit, so take someone with you who cares about you and can provide support.

If someone has died in a very public place, media guidance suggests that it is important not to draw attention to the site. This is to prevent others from attending the same site to attempt suicide. This can be difficult if people want to leave a tribute to the person they have lost.

In these circumstances it might be that you can identify another place where you can safely visit and leave tributes.

Establishing the cause of death

When someone has died in unexpected circumstances, an examination of the person's body, or post-mortem may be carried out. This will be at the direction of the Coroner to establish a cause of death.

This will include whether the person had any existing disease, or whether there were medicines or substances in the body that may have contributed to the death. These may be noted on the final death certificate. This examination will not make a judgement on whether the death was by suicide.

The services involved will respect culture and faith, but there are also legal processes that are followed that may cause delays. If you have any religious or cultural concerns, please speak to the coroner's officer and faith leaders.

Letting people know

There may be people who you think need to know, or would like to know, what has happened. There may also be people you know who can contact others for you.

The GP of the person who has died should be informed about the death by the Coroner. You may wish to inform your GP for help and support for yourself or others. GPs can provide support at these times even if you are not ill or in need of medical services.

Your funeral director, solicitor and local authority may also be able to help. A bereavement support agency may also be able to support you with this. See list on page 23.

The UK Government **'Tell Us Once'** service allows you to report a death to many organisations through a single process.

The Coroner will give you an interim death certificate. You will need to take this to your local births, deaths, and marriages registry office. The registrar can complete the **'Tell Us Once'** service with you. Or they can give you a reference number so you can use the service yourself online or by phone.

After the inquest, the Coroner will register the death.

A copy of the death certificate in the UK may cost around £12.50.

Providing a statement for the Coroner

The police or coroner's officer will ask you to make a statement to help to build an understanding of the person who has died, and the circumstances of their death, for the coroner's inquest. This can take several hours. The statement could include:

- Name, age and date of birth
- Family make-up, for example, siblings or children
- Childhood and schooling
- Medical history and current illness or injury
- Occupation
- When you last saw them

You can ask for copies of any statements you make for reference at the inquest. The statements that you make may be used or read out at the inquest.

Financial and other support

There may be several financial issues that you find you need to address relating to the person who has died. These can include their:

- Financial commitments such as rent, mortgage
- Outstanding debts
- State benefit claims
- Utility bills, car-loan and insurance, phone contract
- Savings

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau may be able to help with many of these, including debt clearance.

You may also be entitled to benefits yourself in these circumstances to support you with funeral and other costs.

Covering Funeral Costs: Getting Help for Covering Funeral Expenses
https://thenbs.org/practical-support/covering-funeral-costs



The press and social media

There is often public interest after a sudden or unexplained death. Sometimes local media will contact the police for more information. Only brief details will be released about what happened, such as the time and date. Once the next of kin have been informed, if asked, the police may then release the gender and age of the person and the general area where they live.

The police don't give out the name of the person who has died. However, once the inquest has been opened and adjourned their name becomes a matter of public record and the media can publish this. Depending on the level of interest in the person, this can reach national media platforms.

Sometimes reporters will find out the address of the person who has died and may visit their home to speak to others who might live there. If you are visited by the press, it is your choice whether you speak to them or not.

Some families like to release a picture or make a public tribute to the person who has died. It is worth bearing in mind that the media may use social media such as Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram to find out more about the person who has died and use this information in their reporting.

Social media platforms provide guidance on how to close or memorialise an account if you choose. You will need to contact the provider, and you may want someone to help you, as the process can be difficult.

The inquest

In most cases, the Coroner will open an inquest within a few days of the death, but the whole inquest process can take many months, and sometimes years.

Following the opening of the inquest, it will be adjourned, and a date will be set for the full inquest. Once the inquest has been adjourned, the Coroner will issue the **Coroner's Certificate of the Fact of Death**, often referred to as an interim death certificate.

You can use the Coroner's Certificate of the Fact of Death to tell organisations about the death and apply for probate.

An inquest is held to determine:

- Who died
- Where they died
- When they died
- The circumstances surrounding their death

All inquests in Wales are held at a coroner's court. Inquests are not held to establish blame. Sometimes a jury will be present at the inquest. Witnesses may be called at the inquest including family and friends, health and other professionals, and the police.

At the end of the inquest the Coroner will reach a conclusion which will be one of the following:

- **Open** (the Coroner or jury is unable to come to a conclusion as to why the person died)
- **Accidental**
- **Misadventure** (unintentional consequence of a deliberate act)
- **Suicide**
- **Narrative** (this is where the Coroner or jury writes a short factual statement outlining the circumstances of the death)

You don't have to attend the inquest unless you have been asked to give evidence. If you choose not to attend the inquest, you can ask the coroner's office to advise you of the conclusion.

The conclusion of the inquest will be sent by the Coroner to the registry office where the death will be registered. You can then obtain a copy of the final death certificate by the registrar. If there are any notes or messages left by the person who has died, and they are addressed to you, you can ask to have them along with any personal effects that were kept for the inquest.

Inquests are held in public and journalists may be present. If the journalist believes that the circumstances around the death are in the public interest, they can report the inquest in the local press.

Different people have different reactions to this. Some see this as positive, and others find it deeply distressing. Whether or not you choose to speak to a journalist is a matter for you. You do not have to speak to them.

The inquest process can interfere with the grieving process, and you may want to seek support and help during this time. (See page 23)

How we respond to people affected by suicide in Wales

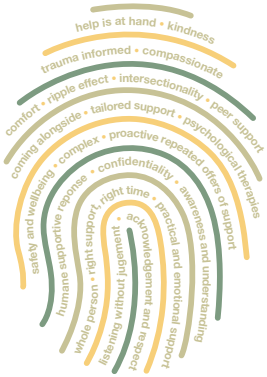
In Wales, we have developed national guidance on how we respond to people affected or bereaved by suicide.

In the guidance, organisations agreed to:

- Treat you, and the person who has died, with dignity and respect
- Be 'trauma-informed' and compassionate in the ways in which they communicate with you
- Respond to you in a timely and professional manner, recognising that everyone's circumstances are different, and how you respond to these circumstances might be different
- To provide an active offer of support through our National Advisory and Liaison Service, within 72 hours of receiving a referral

The report is available online: Responding to people bereaved or affected by suicide | GOV.WALES

Help is at Hand Cymru



In Wales, a resource called **'Help is at Hand Cymru'** is available online in Welsh and English for those who have been affected or bereaved following a sudden or unexplained death. It provides information about how you may respond emotionally to these events.

www.sshp.wales/en/help-is-at-hand/

Although the contents focus on those bereaved by suicide, it includes practical and emotional guidance for anyone dealing with a sudden bereavement.



Providers of suicide bereavement support in Wales

2wish supports those who have lost **children and young people aged 25 and under** for any cause of sudden death, including suspected suicides across Wales.

2wish.org.uk
Phone: 01443 853125
info@2wish.org.uk

Sandy Bear provides services to **children and young people** who have experienced all kinds of bereavement including through suicide across Wales.

www.sandybear.co.uk
Phone: 01437 700272
admin@sandybear.co.uk

Jacob Abraham Foundation works to raise awareness of mental health and suicide, including bereavement **support after suicide** in **southeast Wales**.

www.jacobsfoundation.org.uk
Phone: 029 2240 4736

Enfys Alice provides a bilingual volunteer support service to those who have experienced bereavement by suicide across **North Wales**.

www.enfys-alice.co.uk
Phone: 07496 925401
enfysalice@felin-fach.co.uk

The DPJ Foundation supports those with poor mental health in the **agricultural sector across Wales**, including when there has been a death by suicide in the farming community

www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk
Phone: 07984 169652
kate@thedpjfoundation.co.uk

The **Jac Lewis Foundation** is based in **west Wales** and provides mental health and wellbeing support in the community.

jaclewisfoundation.co.uk
Phone: 03301 336510

Powys Suicide Bereavement service provides support to people bereaved by suspected suicide or suicide in **Powys**.

www.pthb.nhs.wales/bereaved-by-suicide
postvention.PTHB@wales.nhs.uk

Self-care

If you need help for your own wellbeing or mental health, these free helplines are available:

C.A.L.L.

Bilingual 24/7 Community Advice and Listening Line offers emotional support and information on mental health in Wales, and local support agencies.

CALL 0800 132 737
Llinell Gymorth Iechyd Meddwl ar gyfer Cymru
Mental Health Helpline For Wales

Call: 0800 132 737 Email: call@helpline.wales

NHS 111 Wales Press 2

For urgent mental health support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You will be placed in direct contact with a mental health professional in your area of Wales.

GIG 111 Cymru PWYSO 2
NHS 111 Wales PRESS 2

Samaritans Cymru

Whatever you're going through, you can call the Samaritans any time.

SAMARITANS SAMARIAID

Call: 116 123 (24/7) Email: jo@samaritans.org

Welsh language line: 0808 164 0123
(every day, 7pm - 11pm)

SHOUT

Free, confidential 24/7 mental health text service.

Text SHOUT to 85258

Text SHOUT to 85258

Online sources of information

What to do when someone dies: step by step (GOV.UK) (this does not include an inquest process)

UK Government Guide to Coroners Services (GOV.UK)

Inquest help and advice for deaths in state custody and care (Inquest)

The Coroners' Courts Support Service (England and Wales)

Online sources of information

Find a register office in the UK (GOV.UK)

Advicelink Cymru, Citizens Advice Bureau

0800 702 2020

Bereavement Support Payments: how it works (GOV.UK)

When a death is reported to a coroner (GOV.UK)

Details correct at the time of publication - 2026

Contacts list

Police Officer (Officer in Case*)	
Coroner's Office	
Funeral Director	

*Police forces do not normally provide Family Liaison or Victim Support services in the event of suspected suicide deaths.

Checklist of people to contact



‘Tell us once’ service
What to do after someone dies: Tell Us Once - GOV.UK

Organisation	Contact details	Tick
Employer or workplace		
Bank		
Mortgage company or landlord		
School, college or university		
Social club or groups		
Car insurance		
Doctors or GP		
Utility companies		

Notes

People who have worked together to produce this booklet:

Care After Death Services, Swansea Bay University Health Board
Consultation responders
Coroner's Offices
Health Board Bereavement Leads
Individuals and families with living experience of bereavement by suicide
National Advisory and Liaison Service (NALS)
National Multiagency Support After Suicide Implementation Group
Police Forces (Dyfed Powys/South Wales/Gwent/North Wales)
Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF)
Suicide and Self-harm Programme, NHS Wales Performance and Improvement
Suicide Bereavement Support Agencies across Wales
Support After Suicide Partnership (SASP)
Welsh Government Police Liaison Unit

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GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Perfformiad a Gwella
Performance and Improvement

Hunanladdiad a Hunan-niwed
Suicide and Self-harm
CYMRU | WALES

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