



## **WHEN CARING ENDS**

Whatever the reason for your loss, it can knock you off balance emotionally and physically. When much of your time and emotional energy have been focussed on caring for someone, often for many years, you may feel 'lost' when the caring role ends. No longer carrying the responsibilities that you had for such a long time may result in feelings of relief and sadness.

It is important to remember that although there are no magic answers, there are things that may help;

- Seek out support from others, find people who can understand your feelings of loss and allow you to express those feelings
- Take care of yourself, be sure that you eat well and get plenty of rest
- Postpone major life changes (wherever possible), such as moving house, to give yourself a chance to adjust
- Be patient, it will take time to accept your changed life
- Seek out professional help if your feelings of distress are too much for you to bear. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to ask for help.

Whether your caring role has ended due to bereavement or to a person moving into a nursing home, Signpost is here to help you.

### **When the person you care for needs to move into a care home**

The need to move into a care home can come about suddenly through a crisis or illness or it may be that after thinking long and hard about the caring that you have been doing, you decide you can no longer do it. You may have to make this decision no matter how much you love the person you are caring for.

Deciding on a care home is never an easy decision. For carers it is often a time of guilt, sadness and anxiety. Carers often feel that they 'have let down the person they are caring for'. However, deciding to hand over the task of caring does not mean that you don't care about them -you are not giving up caring, but are making different caring arrangements. The fact that a person is now in a residential or nursing home does not mean that you are no longer involved in their life or their care, your role may have changed but it is still as important. One of

the ways you can help is by making sure the home knows about any special needs so that they can be included in the care plan, and by checking that they are getting the care they need.

Your continued love and support will help the person keep their individuality and make them feel they are still a valued member of the family. You may also be able to become involved with the daily life of the care home by talking to other residents and becoming involved in social activities.

### **Following the death of a loved one**

People often mixed feelings when the person they care for dies, you may feel relief that the person's suffering and your caring responsibilities are over, but sad at the same time. You may feel guilty for feeling this way. There is no 'right way' to feel after the death of someone you have been caring for. Some people have shed their tears long ago and feel relief, others are overwhelmed with grief. Talking about your thoughts with someone you trust can be helpful and can help clarify your thoughts and feelings. Friends and relatives may be reluctant to talk about the person who has died for fear of upsetting you and you may have to tell them it's okay.

You may be a very private person and may not want to share your feelings and thoughts with someone else. There is no right or wrong way of dealing with your emotions, do what feels comfortable and helpful for you.

The death of someone is always a shock, even if the person has been ill for some time. The loss will bring emotions that are hard to deal with, but at the same time there are lots of arrangements that have to be seen to. Try, if possible, to get friends or relatives to help.

### **If the death occurs in hospital**

In this case, the hospital staff will contact the person named as the next of kin. The hospital doctor, if satisfied with the cause of death, will issue a medical certificate.

### **If the death occurs elsewhere**

If a person dies at home, their GP should be contacted. The GP who has attended the person must complete a medical certificate giving the cause of death. It is important to tell the GP if the deceased person is going to be cremated.

If the death was sudden or unexpected, the GOP should still be contacted, but the procedure afterwards may be different and the coroner may be involved. The GP will be able to give more information.

## **Registering a death**

The death must normally be registered within 5 days, unless the coroner is investigating the circumstances relating to the death, in the area where the death occurred. If the person died in hospital, the person registering the death will need to go to the Registrars office covering the hospital -the hospital will advise you which office you need to attend.

In Stockport there is an appointment system for registering deaths. You can contact the Registrars Office on 0161 474 3399. You will need to take the medical certificate of cause of death with you. It is also helpful to take the deceased person's birth certificate or passport and medical card. Once the death is registered you will be given a Certificate of Burial or Cremation, which will need to be given to the funeral director, and a certificate containing a benefits form which allows you to claim any arrears of benefits due to the estate of the deceased person and also to ensure that any correct benefits are paid to the widow/widower. You can purchase copies of the death certificate for a small charge. These will be necessary to send to any life insurance company, and will be required for a grant of probate or letters of administration. It can be helpful to purchase several copies of the death certificate.

## **Arranging the funeral**

It is possible for family and friends to organise the funeral, but many people prefer to entrust the organising to a funeral director. The funeral director can be very helpful in arranging the funeral and advising you on all the official processes. They will collect the person who has died from hospital or from home, and keep them at their chapel of rest until the funeral date.

Before a funeral can take place the funeral director must have the certificate of burial or cremation. You will need to check if the deceased left any instructions specifying the arrangements for the funeral in their will, or have made prior arrangements with a particular funeral director.

## **Paying for the funeral**

Funeral costs can be paid out of the estate of the deceased, however it may be some time before that money is available. If the deceased had money in a bank or building society, they are usually prepared to release money to pay funeral costs.

Even the most simple funerals can be expensive. The person who makes the arrangements with the funeral director may find that they are responsible for the cost even if they are not a relative.

## **The Pension Service**

The Stockport Local Office has officers designated to help you at this time. They can give you advice on:

- How your state pension and other benefits will be affected
- Additional benefits that may be available, including possible help with the funeral costs
- Help with completing any necessary claim forms.

For more information, phone them on 0161 429 2071.