

# ADVANCE PREPARATION

## for after death care at home

It is not always possible to plan things in advance, and not always necessary. Whilst your intuition and common sense will guide you, there are a few advance preparations which are worth considering to smooth the journey and minimise the surprises along the way.

Remember that if you choose you can do everything yourself preferably with help from those close to you – your family, friends and community. People like to help. Be sure to delegate and share the tasks involved to allow yourself time to take in what has happened. With a death outside the home, it may be an option to consider temporary use of a hospital mortuary or funeral home until you get organised. If you are planning to use a funeral director, be clear about exactly what you want them to do and how much it will cost.

**Inform involved health professionals** about your plans. They may be able to speed verification and certification of death to suit. A doctor may remove a pacemaker/ ICD if needed. Try to obtain information about any implants which may cause a concern for cremation.

They may also be willing to give you continence and disposable bed pads and waterproof dressings and/or help with washing/ dressing if you wish.

**If transporting someone from a hospital/ hospice/care home** check:

- (a) if they have protocols you need to prepare for (eg contacting the police – although this is not legally required);
- (b) if the death is unexpected, whether it is likely to be referred to the Procurator Fiscal, and

(c) whether they have staff who can assist with moving the person's body to your vehicle.

**Work out how you will cool their body.** Stock up with freezer blocks/gel packs if you are going to use them – get enough to allow for changeover. If this doesn't appeal then you can hire a room cooling unit from most Tool Hire shops.

**Prepare your Daisy Bag** Be sure you can get continence pads.

**Discuss plans** with family and others who will be involved after someone's last breath.

**Choose a coffin or shroud** – there are many online stockists. Ensure they meet any necessary criteria if you are planning a cremation or natural burial. It is best to wait until close to the time of death if possible to buy a coffin to ensure it is a suitable size. For natural or home burial, wrapping in a sheet or blanket can be a good option.

**Moving the body/ coffin around the home** – consider a trial run, ideally with the people who will be doing it, to make sure you can get around corners etc.

**Think about using a Funeral Director** – if you only want some services then be sure to find a flexible one, be clear about exactly what you want them to do and how much it will cost.

**Think about the funeral timing** – if people need to travel back long distances, or there is another need to delay a communal gathering, then consider having an earlier, perhaps private, burial or cremation ceremony separate from a later memorial service or ceremony, perhaps with the ashes, at the grave or in a local hall.

