National Policing Improvement Agency Circular

NPIA 02/2009	
This circular is about:	**Guidance on Funeral Arrangements for Serving Police Officers and Police Staff**
From:	**Workforce Strategy**
Date for implementation:	**14 August 2009**
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Copies are being sent to:	**Clerks to Police Authorities,** **H R Directors, Occupational Health Departments**

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Guidance on Funeral Arrangements for Serving Police Officers and Police Staff

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1. Introduction

1.1 The following guidance has been developed to assist police force welfare departments involved in the organisation of funerals for serving police officers or police staff members. Each funeral will be a unique event. The circumstances surrounding the death, the wishes of families of the deceased and the local provisions of each police force will vary. As such, this guidance does not attempt to outline the detailed processes forces should follow but rather provide advice on the aspects of the funeral in which the police force may be engaged.

1.2 The death of a serving police officer or member of police staff can have a profound effect on colleagues and police forces as well as the relatives of the deceased. Careful consideration should be given to the police force's involvement in funeral arrangements and police forces should be aware of the implications associated with a death in service. This guidance will help ensure that such policies are suitably robust and arrangements can be made with minimal disruption to the grieving process of the family and ongoing priorities of the force.

1.3 It is acknowledged that the 43 police forces have different structures in place and different services and resources available. Some arrangements for funeral services therefore may not be applicable to all police forces (or possible). It is important that police forces consider this guidance in relation to their existing police force policy to ensure the maintenance of nationally consistent processes.

2. Key points to consider

2.1 When developing a police force policy on funeral arrangements, the following points for consideration are of critical importance:

- When arranging a funeral service the police force should ensure that a designated, appropriate individual is identified to manage this process.[1] It should be noted that friends and/or family of the deceased may not be suitable for this role.
- There is no 'right' or 'wrong' funeral. The involvement of the police force in the arrangement of a funeral should only be at the behest of the relatives of the deceased and the role of the force in this process should accord with the wishes of the family. No arrangements should be made without their knowledge and consent.

[1] It is noted that the differences in welfare structures means that there is likely to be no generic job title to which this role will be assigned for all police forces. For this reason, references to job titles and rank have been kept to a minimum. However it is critical that individuals are clear as to the roles that they have been given and that they are of sufficient authority to successfully fulfill these roles.

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- The officiating person should also be consulted as to whether the following guidance, or request from the relatives of the deceased, is appropriate for each funeral. It is important that following this consultation nothing is changed without the consent of the family.
- Careful consideration of particular faith and cultural issues associated with funeral arrangements should be given. In the event of a death in service it is advisable to contact the police force's equality/ diversity department and any local support groups to ensure that appropriate faith and cultural aspects are observed and are in line with the wishes of the relatives of the deceased.

Funeral arrangements

3. Types of funeral

3.1 Families of the deceased may not be aware of any particular arrangements that are available to them. Police forces should be clear as to the support that they can offer. The following outlines categories of funeral arrangements which police forces may wish to use as a starting point for formulating local policy and when assisting the relatives of the deceased. **These may be varied accordingly to suit the circumstances and facilities available to police forces.** A checklist of relevant tasks is attached at Annex A.

Full service funeral

3.2 This is normally only held when the death occurs in the line of duty. The service will be arranged by the local police force and could potentially include police officers and members of police staff. Police involvement would normally include attendance of senior officers, a police choir (if applicable), the bearer party, street lining at the funeral venue and ushers. There could also be a printed Order of Service (the production of which will be the responsibility of the police force) and the service drape/ force flag is placed on the coffin. Consideration should also be given to requests for a eulogy from a senior officer or colleague.

Service funerals

3.3 This is normally held when a serving police officer dies in any circumstances on or off duty. It normally includes senior officers, the bearer party, a street lining party, a printed Order of Service and the service drape/ force flag is placed on the coffin.

Small service funerals

3.4 This is usually held when relatives request only a small involvement from the police force e.g. when a police officer or member of police staff has been retired for some time. Here police officers or members of police staff attend in uniform and the service drape/ force flag may be used.

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Private funerals

3.5 In the case of private funerals, there is little police force involvement. Relatives may simply request a representative group of police officers/ police staff – who will attend in plain clothes unless otherwise instructed.

4. Gathering information for the funeral

4.1 A family spokesperson may be appointed - if the family so wishes - to act as a direct liaison with the welfare section or an appointed individual (in many police forces this would be Welfare Liaison Officer or a Family Liaison Officer). It may also be necessary to arrange for a close colleague of the deceased to act as a go between which may make the process for arrangements less stressful.

4.2 There may be special requests for the funeral and it must be remembered that there is no standard right or wrong but only what is appropriate for each family. However, police forces should clearly communicate what services they are able to provide for funerals which may include:

- A Guard of Honour
- Bearers
- A force flag and/or force emblem on top of the coffin
- A requirement to wear police uniform (if dress uniform is available)
- Executive Officers (seated alongside the family at the front of the venue of the funeral service)
- Arrangements for flowers or other public donations
- Chaplain involvement
- Requirements for Orders of Service (printed by the police force)
- A wreath (which may be placed on top of the coffin together with a cap/helmet and decorations).

4.3 For some families the death may have come as an enormous shock and whilst they may be unclear about exactly what they want, often families have very clear ideas about what they **do not** want. It is equally important to respect these requests. These requests may translate into the following considerations:

- Is the service (or any part of it) to be private?
- If it is not private, what is the time, date and venue of service?
- Are there any faith and cultural considerations that should be respected/ taken into account?
- If police bearers have been requested, have any particular colleagues been requested?
- Where should messages of condolence be sent?
- Are flowers acceptable or have donations in lieu of flowers been requested?
- If flowers are chosen, where should these be delivered to? If donations are preferred, where should these be directed?
- If the production of an Order of Service has been requested of the police force, consider the time constraints and permissions that may be required from persons officiating at the service.

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- Are colleagues to attend in uniform?
- Has the family any objections to a Guard of Honour forming as the funeral procession enters and leaves (as is the usual practice)?
- Has the family requested a member of the Chief Officer Team to represent the force at the funeral and does this conform to particular faith and cultural customs?
- If any special request has been made by family for friends and colleagues to meet after service for refreshments, then details may need to be circulated.

4.4 The above information should be collated and passed onto the designated coordinator[2] for circulation.

5. General police arrangements

5.1 It is important to remember the two distinct roles being performed by police personnel at the service. These are:

- those mourning
- those on duty to facilitate the service.

5.2 Police personnel, who attend as mourners, may do so on a voluntary basis and may be in plain clothes or in uniform, to accord with the wishes of the relatives.

5.3 Requests for individual officers or groups to attend a funeral in uniform within or beyond the police force district may be dealt with by area commanders.[3]

5.4 Where required, those on duty at the service may be deployed for security, crowd control, press control and traffic duty, etc. as at any other event.

6. Venues and religious aspects

6.1 Relatives may wish to use a local venue or minister of religion (where appropriate) known to them or the deceased. In other cases, a suitable local venue which is appropriate to the deceased person's faith (if applicable) should be sought.

6.2 When discussing the form of service for the funeral, advice should be sought from the person who will perform the service, to ensure that the rites and ceremonies of that particular religion are complied with. Consideration should be given to services which end at a crematorium due to the time constraints at these venues. In such instances extra time provisions may need to be arranged with the crematorium.

[2] For information about the role of the coordinator/ co-ordinating officer, please refer to Section 5 of the Guidance on Handling a Death of a Serving Member of the Police Service.
[3] In order to make the guidance generic to different force structures the term 'area' refers to the force equivalent of an OCU or BCU.

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7. Circulating funeral arrangements

7.1 Following a death in service, consideration needs to be given to informing colleagues about funeral arrangements. Communication of these arrangements needs to be done force wide and include any other police force(s) the police officer or member of staff may have served with, including those that the deceased was seconded to.

7.2 It is advised that the circulation include details of:

- Full name and any name by which the officer or member of staff was popularly known
- Rank/ job Title.
- Station
- Date of death
- Age
- Career details
- Details of next of kin[4]
- Details of any dependants
- Address where messages of condolence may be sent
- Funeral details (if private then simply state this) - such as the time, date, venue, place where flowers/donations can be sent, police bearers, appropriate dress, whether there is to be a Guard of Honour, etc.
- Details of any transport being provided by HQ or area stations.

8. Transport arrangements for colleagues

8.1 In the event of the funeral being held at a distance from the deceased's place of work, consideration may be given regarding the possible need for transport for colleagues. It may occasionally be prudent to ask those colleagues who intend to use this transport to contact a nominated person to ensure adequate provision is made.

9. Pre-funeral arrangements briefing

9.1 It is advisable that all participants in any aspect of the service **should be fully briefed before the service takes place.** Rehearsals for the participants - e.g. readers of lessons or addressors, ushers, or Guard of Honour - should be considered to ensure they are comfortable with the role and familiar with the layout of the venue and the acoustics of the building.

[4] This should not include contact details in order to avoid unwanted intrusion into the grieving process.

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10. Media interest

10.1 There may be local and, in some cases, national media interest. Police forces are advised to consider how best to manage this interest and support the wishes of relatives and the person responsible for conducting the service. Where there is media interest, police forces are advised to consult with both the person conducting the service and relatives. For a larger service, police forces may consider provision for a designated pen for the press outside of the venue where the service is to take place to prevent unwarranted intrusion and interference. While rare, police forces and press offices should be mindful that it has been known for police funerals to have a degree of negative publicity from the press.

11. Provision of police bearers

11.1 Police forces should attempt to comply with any family wishes for any specific personnel to perform the role of bearer. However, police forces should also be aware that not everyone may be comfortable performing this role and should therefore not be under obligation to do so. It is therefore advisable that a senior officer coordinate the provision of bearers within the area or department. Bearers will require transport (and, where applicable, attire such as white gloves) and it is the responsibility of the officer in charge of the bearers to ensure these arrangements are made.

11.2 Most funeral directors are happy to advise and assist persons performing this role. Bearers may be naturally anxious performing the role and a rehearsal can provide important reassurance. If possible, a visit to the venue where the service is to take place prior to the ceremony and any rehearsal should be carried out. The officer in charge of the bearers should arrange this directly with the funeral director and person responsible for conducting the service at the venue.

11.3 The following may be of assistance to organisers receiving such a request for bearers:

- The normal number of officers required is six (plus one who takes command).
- Two reserve officers should also be selected, as they will normally be required to assist either at the hearse or inside the venue at which the service takes place.
- The rank of the officers used is of no importance as the family may request his/her closest colleagues, irrespective of rank.
- If the family do not express who should take part, then six constables, with one sergeant to take command, is normal practice.
- The officers or members of staff chosen should be of similar height, although a small variation in height is acceptable. They should all be fit and not suffer from heart or back problems.

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- Full uniform is to be worn, with the addition of white cotton gloves. No head gear is to be worn.

11.4 Police forces may wish to also consider allowing the members of the bearer party to use small shoulder pads (if available) to decrease discomfort whilst carrying the coffin.

11.5 Uniformed bearers may also, where appropriate, wear medals e.g. where this is requested by the deceased's relatives. Normally, medals are only worn if the deceased's decorations are displayed on the coffin.

11.6 Further information regarding the protocol of bearers is outlined in Annex B.

12. Provision of Order of Service

12.1 Where appropriate/ requested by the family, the delegated person (in many police forces this role will be performed by the chaplain and/or Welfare Officer) should liaise with the family and person responsible for conducting the service to produce a draft Order of Service for printing. This will also require liaison with printing services to ensure timely production. The production of the Order of Service will be the responsibility of the police force.

12.2 Once printed one copy must go to person officiating at the service and arrangements must be made to deliver the copies to the venue prior to the funeral service.

12.3 Two people should be identified to distribute these to everyone attending the service. These could be friends, colleagues or people identified by the place of worship.

13. Operational provisions

13.1 Once the venue, time and date for the service are confirmed it may be necessary to liaise with area operations managers in order that they can make any necessary arrangements for parking or traffic control.

13.2 If information about local parking arrangements needs to be circulated, the Coordinating Officer must be kept up to date.

14. Other arrangements on the day of the funeral

14.1 Service flags may be flown at local police stations or at the place at which the service is to take place (e.g. a church) at half-mast.

14.2 Relatives and next of kin will understandably need moral support on the day. In the absence of a member of the family, close colleagues can arrange for officers from the unit of the deceased to give support throughout the event. However,

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police forces should bear in mind that colleagues of the deceased must also be given time to come to terms with their loss and the grieving process. As such, whilst some officers and staff may wish to actively assist in supporting members of the deceased's family, it may not be appropriate in all circumstances.

15. Street lining and Guard of Honour

15.1 There can be a street lining of members of the extended policing family on approach to the place at which the service is to take place. The officers or members of staff nearest the ceremony location should be colleagues from the station or unit of the deceased. If there is insufficient room for all members of the Guard of Honour to stand outside the venue, only colleagues of the deceased should stand there.

15.2 On the approach of the coffin, only those officers of the rank of inspector and above shall salute; all other officers should stand to attention.

15.3 If the procession of the cortege passes the police station of the deceased, a small Guard of Honour should be positioned outside. Only officers ranked inspectors and above should salute.

Following the funeral

16. Following the funeral and associated welfare matters

16.1 After the funeral, a list of cards and wreaths may be retained for the benefit of the family. Wreaths can be taken to the graveside by the undertaker at the request of the family.

16.2 The family may continue to need support after the funeral. Grieving is a painful and difficult process, which will be unique for each individual. There may be specialist services/support groups that could help families through this process and the Welfare Officers and Chaplains should assist families to access these services. Family Contact Persons should ensure that appropriate aftercare is in place before their role comes to an end. Specialist support associations may prove invaluable to ensuring that this support is in place. Family GPs can also be a good source of support.

16.3 At a practical level the Welfare Officers may assist with applications under the Police Pension Scheme (1987 or 2006) and welfare funds (if available). They can also offer other practical help, such as resolving financial issues.

16.4 Colleagues and friends at work may also require additional support. Line managers should liaise with the Welfare Officers, Chaplaincy and Occupational Health to ensure this support is in place.

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16.5 Senior management teams need to also remember that a death which has been witnessed by colleagues may necessitate additional support being put into place. As long as initial support has been instigated, as directed by primary task considerations immediately after the incident, officers will be aware of how to access additional support as necessary. However, line managers should continue to monitor and support their staff to identify and address any difficulties.

16.6 Welfare matters may be referred to Occupational Health Welfare Counsellors (if available) and the Superintendent's Association of England and Wales or the Police Federation of England and Wales in the case of police officers. In the case of police staff, the appropriate trade union should also be informed.

16.7 Welfare officers/ departments arranging funerals should remember that the registration of the deceased's death may only be carried out by certain categories of person and, as such, is a matter for the next of kin only.

16.8 As the level of aftercare will be different for each individual, consideration should be given as to how the police force maintains contact. It should be noted that in some instances relatives of the deceased may not want any further contact with the police force.

16.9 Where a next of kin or other relatives cannot be traced, the area commander should arrange for the funeral. Funding from the Police Benevolent Fund may be obtained in these circumstances.

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Annex A

Funeral arrangements checklist

Task	**Person Responsible And Contact No.**	**Arranged / Completed Confirmed by:**
Gather info regarding funeral arrangements		
Circulate funeral arrangements (unless private)		
Organise transport arrangements for colleagues		
Produce an Order of Service		
Special request(s) to process. For example: - Specific faith and/ or cultural issues to be respected. - Flag on coffin - Hat/ medals on coffin - Police bearers - Fund for public donations		
Operational provisions		
Aftercare		

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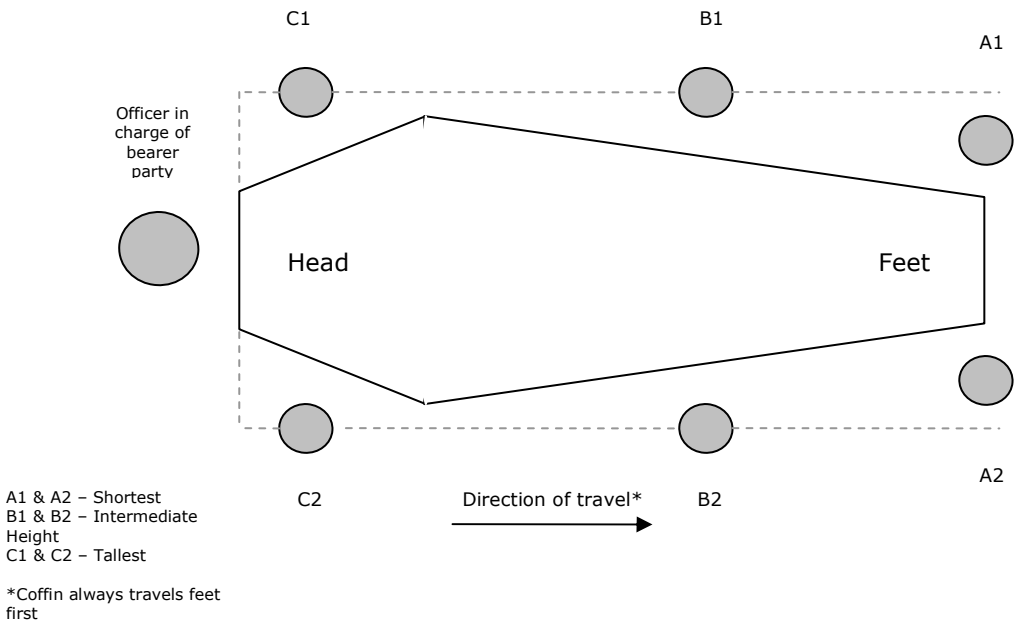
Annex B

Position of Bearer Party



B.1 The coffin should always travel feet first. As the head end always comes out of the hearse first so the bearers need to position themselves accordingly. The officer in charge of the bearer party will give all commands quietly and clearly. The commands are:

'Prepare to Lift': The bearers should place their hands under the coffin and/or remove the coffin from the hearse. Hearses are fitted with rollers to allow easy movement of the coffin in and out.

'Lift': the bearers should take the weight of the coffin and allow the undertaker to remove the trestles if necessary.

'Prepare to raise': The bearers must ensure that the weight of the coffin is equally distributed.

'Raise': on this command the bearers should raise the coffin to shoulder height.

'Turn': The bearers should turn to face the foot of the coffin and place the coffin on their shoulders. The outer hand should be placed on the side of the coffin to steady it, while the inner hand should be placed firmly on the outer shoulder of the bearer opposite.

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'Slow March': The bearers should move off on this command. The bearers must move off with the inside foot i.e. the one nearest the coffin, and the officer in charge of the bearer party should keep time by using the commands "inside/outside". However, funeral directors move off with the left foot and use the commands "left/right" and this is perfectly acceptable. Bearer parties should decide during rehearsals which is more appropriate.

'Halt': The bearers should release their grip on the opposite bearer.

'Turn inwards': Bearers should turn towards the coffin and take the weight onto both sides.

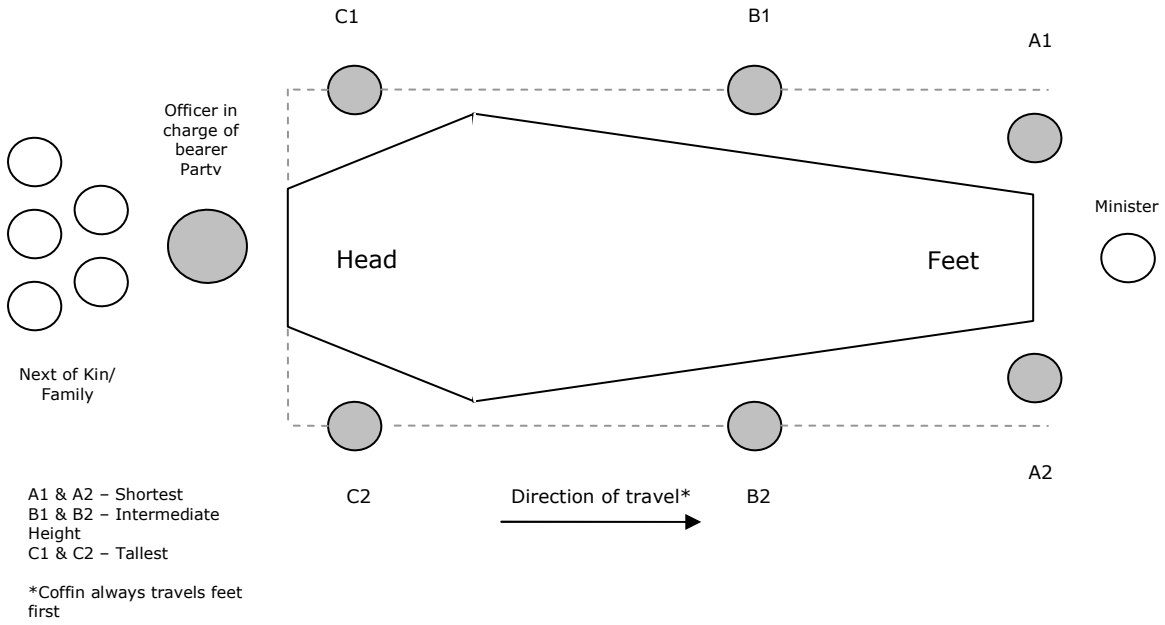
'Prepare to Lower': The bearers must ensure that the weight of the coffin is equally distributed.

'Lower': The bearers should gently lower the coffin onto the trestles or into the hearse.

B.2 Short, unhurried, regular steps should be taken when carrying the coffin. The bearer party should be seated at the rear or side of the venue where the funeral is to be held so as to come to the coffin when required without crossing in front of the minister of religion (or equivalent).

B.3 When returning to the coffin after the service the bearer party should take up the same positions prior to lifting the coffin. At the end of the service, before the deceased is carried out, the coffin needs to be turned around so that the feet end is carried out first.

The order of the funeral procession into and out of the funeral venue is as follows:



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B.4 The above provides a broad outline of the role of the Bearers. However it should be recognised that this process may not be appropriate for some services. It is unlikely that the family would request a bearer party were it to transgress faith or cultural aspects of the ceremony.

B.5 The family should be made aware of the role of the bearer party, and they and presiding minister should be consulted as to whether the above guidance is appropriate. It is important that following this consultation nothing is changed without the consent of the family.

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Annex C

Police Diversity Support Groups/ Support Contact Numbers

Relatives of the deceased should be directed in the first instance to the support services provided by the police forces themselves. Information on the extent of such services can be obtained directly from the police welfare departments. In addition, these departments will be able direct the family to relevant police charities who may be able to additionally assist with welfare needs/ hardship.

The National Association of Chaplains to the Police

Website: www.police-chaplains.org.uk

Chaplains provide a range of confidential support services to members of the police service.

Care of Police Survivors (COPS) 0870 744 2586

Website: http://www.ukcops.org/

Registered UK charity dedicated to helping the families of police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty, rebuild their lives.

National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO) 01924 362166

Website: www.narpo.org

A member organisation representing retired police officers of all ranks and police widows from police forces throughout England and Wales. They offer a range of services to members including those relating to welfare.

Samaritans 08457 90 90 90

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

A confidential emotional support for anyone in crisis.

Depression Alliance Cymru 0845 123 2320

A UK charity offering information to people with depression.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy 0870 443 5252

Website: www.bacp.co.uk

Access to a list of qualified counsellors available in your area.

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National Association of Widows 0845 838 2261

Website: www.nawidows.org.uk/

Charity for widows, run by widows.

Road Peace 0845 4500 355

Website: www.roadpeace.org

A specialist charity who support road traffic victims and their families. They provide practical and emotional support and information.

The Child Bereavement Trust 0845 357 1000

Website www.childbereavement.org.uk

Information for young people who have lost someone close to them.

Support Line 020 8554 9004

Website www.supportline.org.uk

Provides confidential emotional support to children, young people and adults on any issue, referring you to sources of help in your area.

Winston's Wish 01242 515157 / 0845 20 30 40 5

Website www.winstonswish.org.uk

Support for bereaved children, parents and carers.

Childhood Bereavement Network 020 7843 6309 - Wrexham branch 01978 316 800

Website www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/

National Resource for bereaved children and young people, their parents and care givers.

The Compassionate Friends 08451 23 23 04

Website www.tcf.org.uk

Offers bereaved parents and their families understanding and support after the death of a child.

The Child Death Helpline 0800 282 986

Website www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

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Offers help and support to anyone affected by the death of a child. The helpline is staffed by parent volunteers who are supported by a professional team.

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