

Supporting your constituents through bereavement

Over 650,000 people died in the UK in 2021, and it is estimated that for every death, nine people are affected by bereavement, meaning thousands of people in your constituency are affected by bereavement every year.

Too many of these people are not getting the support they need.

[Sue Ryder research](#) found that 70% of people could not access the support they would have liked following a close bereavement. Additional Sue Ryder polling from 2021 found that 86% of people who have experienced a bereavement felt alone in their grief and 81% felt that someone didn't know what to do or say when they were grieving.

People often do not know what support they should be accessing. Not getting the right support can lead to longer term impacts on peoples' mental health and ability to cope with the bereavement. Helping people to get the right support at the right time can reduce the need for more costly interventions later and can help people feel ready to be back at work and cope with other responsibilities such as childcare.

We all have a part to play in creating a society that supports grieving people better.

There are many ways in which you can support your constituents with grief and a huge range of organisations and resources to help you to do this.

What should you say to bereaved people?

Sue Ryder's Grief Kind campaign is creating a national movement of kindness and helping more people get the confidence to support their loved ones through grief. We know that many are unsure what to say to someone who has been bereaved, so as part of this campaign we have put together some key tips to help you. For more advice visit sueyder.org/griefkind

What to say to:

- Thank them for telling you and speaking about their grief
- Express sympathy and say how sorry you are.
- Offer them space to talk.
- Ask them what has helped them get through tough times in the past.
- Recognise how hard it is for them.
- Tell them however they feel is OK, there is no "right" way to grieve.
- Ask if there is anything they need.
- Take your cue from them in terms of how much they want to talk about the bereavement.

Things to avoid saying:

- Don't make assumptions about how they feel.
- Avoid trying to fix things and saying things like "it was for the best", or "they're at peace now", the bereaved person might not feel the same way nor find it comforting.
- Don't tell them they will "heal", "move on" or "get over it."
- Avoid setting expectations around how long grief will last.
- Be careful talking about religious ideas, a bereaved person may not be religious or may feel their god(s) has taken their loved one, only mention religion if they do and if it feels appropriate.

If you would like to learn more, we have [created five short video tutorials](#) where our bereavement experts talk you through what grief is like and how you can support others who are grieving.

Signposting to bereavement support organisations

If someone needs urgent support you can find your **local urgent mental health helpline** here: nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline

Sue Ryder provides a range of bereavement services, including:

- A free Online Bereavement Counselling Service: sue Ryder.org/online-bereavement-counselling
- An Online Bereavement Community: community.sue Ryder.org
- A Grief Self Help Service, which has resources and information to help people to understand and cope with their bereavement and grief: selfhelp.sue Ryder.org
- In person drop-in sessions sue Ryder.org/grief-kind-spaces/

The Good Grief Trust has a comprehensive directory of organisations that provide support, these can be filtered by location: thegoodgrieftrust.org/find-support

AtaLoss.org has bereavement support information which can be translated into different languages (click select language which is in the middle at the top of the home page).

Cruse Bereavement Support has a helpline, call 080 8808 1677. Non-English speakers can call this number and say the language needed for a translation service.

Winston's Wish provides bereavement support to children and young people up to the age of 25. Call 08088 020 021, email ask@winstonswish.org , winstonswish.org

Childhood Bereavement Network provides guidance and support, visit childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

ACAS provides information related to bereavement support in the workplace, visit acas.org.uk

Different religions and cultures may approach death and grief differently, **Untangle Grief** has a guide for supporting bereaved people in different religions: untanglegrief.com/grieving-different-religions

Samaritans provide emotional and crisis support 24 hours a day, call 116 123.

Shout offers text-based support 24/7 to anyone in crisis, text SHOUT to 85258.

Signposting for practical support

Many struggle to sort out practical matters following a bereavement. Processes can be time-consuming and complicated, and it can be emotionally difficult to carry out tasks such as closing bank accounts.

This **GOV.UK** page provides a step-by-step guide on what to do after a death www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies

Citizens Advice Provides information on financial support and bereavement benefits. Visit citizensadvice.org.uk

Tell Us Once is a government service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go: www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once

Services such as the **Death Notification Service**, **Life Ledger** and **Settld** allow individuals to notify banks, building societies and other organisations of a person's death all at the same time.

The National Bereavement Service provides a free telephone helpline to families seeking practical support and guidance after losing a loved one. Their helpline is 0800 0246 121 www.thenbs.org

Down To Earth can offer free advice for anyone struggling with the cost of a funeral. Call 020 89835055 or email downtoearth@gsa.org.uk



**Because no one
should face death
or grief alone**