



## Fact Sheet on Deaths Abroad

Losing a child is probably the most painful event that can occur in any parent's life. The terrible shock of hearing the dreadful news of our child dying overseas brings confusion as well as emotional agony. We also face a range of practical problems. Some

decisions need to be made quite quickly (who to contact, whether to fly out). Other questions can wait awhile, including whether our child should have a UK funeral. If our child was an adult and had a partner, they will probably be responsible for much of what follows, although hopefully we can co-ordinate with them.

*(The following guidance is written for British nationals.)*

**Whether you are in the UK or not, if you are a British national, we recommend you contact the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in London as soon as possible on 020 7008 5000.**

This number operates 24/7, every day of the year.

When a child dies abroad, the FCDO can:

- Ask the police to inform the next of kin of the death
- Advise you how to register a death in another country
- Provide information on local procedures in the country where the person died
- Provide a list of local and international funeral directors, and if relevant, translators, interpreters and lawyers
- Help transfer money from friends and relatives in the UK for you to pay any necessary costs.
- Put you in touch with local or international funeral directors who can advise you on the options available and costs for burial, cremation or repatriation to the UK and the return of personal belongings
- Pass on the wishes of the next of kin about funeral arrangements and, where possible, try to make sure they are carried out

**If you are in the UK or deciding to travel out you should phone 020 7008 5000** where you will be assigned a caseworker to assist you. (If your loved one had been travelling on an Irish passport, the Irish embassy or consulate should be contacted.)

**If you already overseas**, you should contact the nearest British Consulate. Find it here: <https://bit.ly/Findembassy>  
If calling out of office hours, you will be put through to the 24/7 number in London.

**In the country where your child died**, the three main organisations you will be dealing with are:

1. the local British Consulate,
2. the local Funeral Director and
3. the local Registrar of deaths.

Every death must be **registered in the country where the person died**. The British Consul should be able to advise how to do this, and give you details of English-speaking funeral directors. If the death was not from natural causes, the local police and other officials are likely to become involved, depending on the legal system.

**Repatriation:** You will need a UK funeral director to help make arrangements. See: <https://bit.ly/UKfuneraldirectors>  
Bringing your child's body home can be expensive, so you will need to be sure you can meet the costs or that they are covered by an insurance policy. The FCDO will not pay burial, cremation or repatriation expenses.

The UK coroner will be informed if your child's body is repatriated back to the UK and this may lead to an inquest.

**As well as emotionally harrowing, managing the death of our child abroad can be complicated and physically exhausting; be prepared to accept help from any quarter, including offers by friends or family to fly out either with you or on your behalf.**

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This brief factsheet was produced by The Compassionate Friends (TCF), a nationwide organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering support after a child dies.

For more detailed information on this topic, we recommend you read the TCF leaflet **When our Child has Died Abroad**, available here: <https://bit.ly/FactualLeaflets>

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# OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES FOLLOWING DEATH ABROAD

Consider going out (travel insurance may cover the cost). Check entry requirements and travel guidance with the **UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)**

## IF YOU REMAIN IN THE UK

Contact the FCDO  
020 7008 5000

FCDO should put you in touch with the British consulate in the country where your child has died

## IF YOU TRAVEL OUT OR IF YOU ARE ALREADY IN THE COUNTRY WHERE YOUR CHILD HAS DIED

Contact the local British consulate\*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations>  
or the **Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** on: **0044 20 7008 5000**

The FCDO or consulate staff should put you in touch with a local funeral director. If there is a language barrier, the British consulate might help you find a translator.

The death has to be registered in the country where your child has died. To do this, you must give your child's

- full name
- date of birth
- passport number
- details of their next of kin

You (or your child's legal spouse if they had one) will need to decide whether to have a local funeral or bring their body back to the UK.  
*(There will be no inquest or further investigation by UK authorities unless their body is repatriated.)*

## IF YOU DECIDE TO BRING THEM BACK TO UK

You will need

- A UK funeral director to help make arrangements
- A certified English translation of the death certificate
- Authorisation to remove their body from the country
- The Coroner in England, Wales and N Ireland or Procurator Fiscal in Scotland will need to be informed

## IF YOU DECIDE ON A LOCAL FUNERAL

You will need authorisation from the country where your child has died.

To bring ashes back to the UK you will normally need

- the death certificate
- the certificate of cremation

\* "British Consulate" includes British Embassies and High Commissions

For more detailed information, including country specific advice, please see the online UK government page <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coping-with-death-abroad>

If your child was a victim of murder or manslaughter, help is available from <http://www.murdered-abroad.org.uk/>

TCF publishes a range of leaflets on a variety of topics. Find out more by contacting us:

Website and online forum: [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

TCF UK Helpline: 0345 123 2304