



## FAQs on Deaths Abroad

Losing a child is probably the most painful event that can occur in anyone's life. The terrible shock of hearing the dreadful news of our son and daughter dying overseas brings confusion as well as emotional agony; we also face a range of practical and bureaucratic 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 your child was an adult and was married or had a civil partner, they will be responsible for much of what follows, although hopefully you can co-ordinate with them.

*(The following guidance is written primarily for UK passport holders whose [presumably adult] child died abroad whilst you were not with them.)*

**If you are in the UK and will not be travelling out** to the country where the death occurred, you should contact the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) as soon as possible on **020 7008 1500**.

FCO staff in London should:

- keep in touch with you and with British Consular staff abroad until burial or cremation overseas, or until your child has been brought back to the UK.
- tell you the costs of local burial, local cremation and transportation of the body and personal belongings back to the UK
- provide a list of local and international funeral directors. If an English-speaking firm is unavailable, staff can help with the arrangements
- help transfer money from yourself and others in the UK to pay any necessary costs

**If you decide to travel out**, you should contact the nearest British Consulate\* when you arrive. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London **004420 7008 1500** will be able to give you details of the nearest Consulate. (If your loved one had been travelling on an Irish passport, the Irish embassy or consulate should be contacted.)

The three main organisations you will be dealing with upon reaching the country 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 you on how to do this, and give you details of English-speaking funeral directors. If the death was violent or unnatural, a Coroner and the local police are very likely to become involved.

### Repatriation

Bringing your child's body home can be expensive, so you'll need to be sure you can meet the costs or that they're covered by an insurance policy. The FCO will not pay burial, cremation or repatriation expenses. If you are on a low income, you may be able to get help with returning your child from some European countries <https://www.gov.uk/funeral-payments/overview>

Please note that if your child's death was the result of homicide, the UK coroner and authorities will only hold an inquest and other investigations provided his or her body has been repatriated.

As well as emotionally harrowing, managing the death of our child abroad can be complicated and physically very demanding; 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 Fact Sheet was produced by **The Compassionate Friends**, a nationwide organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering support after a child dies.

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

- General Enquiries (for local contacts and groups): **0345 120 3785**
- Website and online forum: [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk) ■ TCF UK Helpline: **0345 123 2304**

# A brief guide to the process following death abroad

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



For more detailed information, download the UK government *Death Overseas* guidebook:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584030/Death\\_Overseas\\_web\\_130117.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584030/Death_Overseas_web_130117.pdf)

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