



To lose a child (or children) is the worst loss of all. Nothing can compare to the heartbreak of a bereaved parent, yet as a mother or father of a child whose death was unexpected or in particular circumstances, we not only have to navigate our grief, but we may also have to cope with an investigation.

Understanding the investigation

From the opening of the initial investigation until its conclusion can take some time. It is natural to feel apprehensive during this long waiting period.

Understanding the legal process is vital. The Procurator Fiscal publishes a useful information leaflet for relatives which you can download here:

[THE ROLE OF THE PROCURATOR FISCAL IN THE INVESTIGATION OF DEATHS](#)

Coping with the process

As parents, we may want to find out every detail around the tragic death of our child, but the details that are uncovered can be difficult to bear. We should not feel that we have to read every single piece of information, nor even the post-mortem report, if this is causing us unbearable pain.

The fact that our child's death requires an investigation usually means that his or her death was in difficult circumstances. Having a network of support can be vital during this time. TCF has a helpline you can call (see the number below). Some parents find that visiting a bereavement counsellor can be helpful. In times of crisis, Samaritans are always there to listen on 116 123. You may also like to read our TCF leaflet on *Prolonged and Intense Grief*.

Whilst our thoughts are on the investigation, it may be difficult to focus on the happier memories of our child's life. In time, these better memories will return to comfort us. An investigation only looks at the facts of our child's death; his or her life was so much more.

Going forward

Most parents find that the process of an investigation into the death of their child is incredibly painful. Much like the funeral, we may busy ourselves in preparation, but once it is over, there is a terrible silence; a realisation that our child is gone, never to return; that others move on from the conversation, but we never do. Yet the raw agony of grief that has been revived through the legal process eventually dissipates, and memories of happier times will return. We love our sons and daughters, and always will.

This page of advice 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:

- TCF UK Helpline (for local contacts and groups): **0345 123 2304** helpline@tcf.org.uk
- Website: www.tcf.org.uk
- General Enquiries and Admin: **0345 120 3785** info@tcf.org.uk

