

Registration Service Appointments

Death Registration

During the 2023-24 period 3366 customer feedback requests were sent out. We received 982 (29%) responses.

Of the responses received :

57% of respondents visited the offices in Shrewsbury

16% of respondents visited the offices in Oswestry

14% of respondents visited the offices in Bridgnorth

7% of respondents visited the Ludlow Offices

4% of respondents visited Market Drayton Offices

2% of respondents visited our offices in Whitchurch

81% of those who replied to the feedback request had received information about death registration.

43% of these customers had visited the Councils website and

40% had received information from elsewhere, the majority of those who had not visited the council's website had received information direct from the registration service, other sources were the hospital bereavement office and undertakers.

90% of death informants had made their appointment by telephone.

59% of death informants said that they had been offered an appointment to register a death within 2 days of request

Of the remaining 394 informants who were seen more than 2 days after request – 71% said that this was their choice.

98% of death informants told us that they were seen within 10 minutes of their appointment time, - 83% were seen at their appointment time

Customer Satisfaction

99% of customers who had spoken to staff by telephone were satisfied with the courtesy that they received.

98% of customers were satisfied with the opening hours of the offices

99% of customers said that they were satisfied with the service received from the registrar

99.7% of customers said that they had been treated with courtesy and respect by the registrar

95% of customers were satisfied with the facilities of the offices they had visited

Although the service does everything in its power to provide excellence to all, sometimes things go wrong or cause unintended upset. These are the things which we can look at to see if there is anything we are able to do which would improve the service. We have reproduced below the issues which some customers had with the service which they received, accompanied by honest service responses.

Where there have been multiple similar comments, we have not reproduced each comment but have answered the issue.

| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
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| <i>Be more accurate when inputting data to Tell us Once</i> | <p>Although every effort is made to enter information accurately on rare occasions a mistake can be made when the registrars enter information into the Tell us Once system.</p> <p>This is incredibly upsetting for our customers we wish it were possible to promise to eradicate human error, but it is not possible. Sincere apologies to those impacted.</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <i>Parking – more parking/dedicated parking/more disabled parking</i> | Our confirmation emails provide all information about parking facilities. All our offices have parking nearby or immediately outside. |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <i>Offer accurate directions</i> | A link to google maps is included in both emails sent to our customers prior to the appointment, thjs can be used to provide directions |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <i>Better signage to offices</i> | This came up on several occasions, we will look at signage at our offices around the county and see if anything additional can be done. |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <i>The info given ahead of the meeting about parking was great but did not mention that the Pay & Display machines did not take credit cards - only cash or by ap.</i> | We have no idea of the payment methods accepted by the various carparks. However, I am sure that this information would be available on the internet. |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <i>Better waiting facilities – Ludlow and Oswestry – customers do not like the waiting area being so open. Shrewsbury there were a sizeable number of</i> | We agree with the comments raised but are not able as a service to rectify these issues without support from the corporate centre. Funds are low. However, we can confirm that the old seating in the waiting room |

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| <p><i>comments on the shabbiness, cleanliness, general appearance.</i></p> | <p>in Shrewsbury has been replaced. More good news is that the Oswestry Office will be relocating and will have improved facilities. Watch this space!</p> |
| <p>Issue Raised</p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>Shared waiting facilities with births and wedding guests</i></p> | <p>We understand the issue and try to stagger the number of opportunities for death informants to be mingled with any other informants.</p> <p>We try to move wedding guests into the ceremony rooms at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Unfortunately, our current facilities are not big enough for us to provide separate waiting facilities for Birth, Death, and Marriage customers.</p> <p>Please be assured that service staff would very much like the situation to be different and hope to be able to get better facilities at some time in the future.</p> |
| <p>Issue Raised</p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>The website was difficult to navigate on Shropshire Council site. Google info was different It was far too difficult and distressing to get clear simple information on the internet stating offices , locations, and opening times.</i></p> | <p>Address, opening hours, contact information are provided on the Shropshire Council website and in any confirmatory appointment booking information sent out to customers.</p> <p>Information contained elsewhere on other internet sites is not the responsibility of the council.</p> <p>Always check the council's website for information</p> |
| <p>Issue Raised</p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>opening times published on the internet and easy to find and weekend help line</i></p> | <p>Opening times are published on the Council website. Callers to registration offices are by appointment only. all relevant information is available on the councils website</p> |
| <p>Issue Raised</p> | <p>Service Response</p> |

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| <p><i>Provision of hot and cold drinks for customers</i></p> | <p>Whilst it would be a lovely facility to have, there are no plans to introduce these.</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>Better Office Facilities- size of offices, decoration of offices, location of offices - inappropriate</i></p> | <p>We are very aware of the small size of the registrar's office in Oswestry, this was the only available space for us when we relocated several years ago.</p> <p>However, we will be relocating our Oswestry offices to improved facilities later in 2024.</p> <p>in Shrewsbury, the offices are dated and in need of decoration and are indeed entirely functional.</p> <p>We are presently unable to put this right but are hopeful of moving to better accommodation in the future.</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>These was some issue over my previously deceased mother's occupation when registering my father's. Apparently saying you worked in the ministry of defence is not allowed?</i></p> | <p>That is correct, we are required to record the occupation of the deceased and not the name of the employer, neither should we use the term civil servant as it is not a specific job, it is a role status.</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>It's a disgrace that ALL certificates have to be paid for - what ever happened to having the original free?</i></p> | <p>Sorry that you feel this way!</p> <p>There has never been a "free original certificate" the original is the entry in the register, everything produced from that is a copy and the fees are set by national government.</p> <p>Registration of deaths is free.</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p>I had a difficult and upsetting phone call with a member of staff. I had been told by the receptionist at the GP of my late</p> | <p>This is a truly dreadful situation.</p> |

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| <p>father that the GP had sent over the death certificate and that I should call the registrar office if I hadn't heard back within a couple of hours, to confirm an appointment. When I did this, I spoke to a very abrupt lady who kept interrupting me and saying 'you shouldn't have been told that'. It was an incredibly unhelpful, rude and upsetting phone call. Additionally, we were then told by the registrar's office that my father's GP had sent the certificate over saying that he hadn't been seen by a doctor since 2015, and therefore that the coroner would have to get involved. This was immensely upsetting and not factually correct (he'd seen a GP in April and had spent the last 2 weeks of his life in hospital). The GP told me this was an error on the part of the registrar's office; that the 2015 date referred to the specific doctor who signed the certificate and that it shouldn't hold things up. I don't know whose mistake it was or where communication broke down but giving us this information added yet more stress and upset to the situation for me and my family. In the end the coroner didn't have to be involved.</p> | <p>The information provided to the customer by the GP was incorrect and understandably it was extremely difficult to communicate that this was indeed the case.</p> <p>The GP surgery had not sent the document through and when they did it was completed incorrectly, as such to render this rendered it impossible to use for registration purposes. Because the signing doctor had not been in attendance on the gentleman for 9 years and not during his last illness, the law requires that the death must be referred to the coroner.</p> <p>Following the referral by the registrar to the Coroner, the Coroner was able to arrange for a fresh medical certificate to be issued by a GP who had treated the gentleman during his last illness and had seen him within 28 days of his death.</p> <p>We completely understand that this experience was distressing for the customer and are sorry that we were unable to convey the reality of the problem, in such a way that they understood, this was also hampered by the GP surgery who gave entirely incorrect information and caused the issue.</p> <p>Clearly the service is mortified to have been in any way adding to this customer's obvious distress.</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>The preliminary online questionnaire was not given to the appropriate registrar so that was a complete waste of time. Why do you not do the Tell Us All service anymore?</i></p> | <p>Sorry.</p> <p>We are unable to explain why the completed questionnaire had not been sent to the appropriate registrar prior to the appointment.</p> <p>We do still provide the Tell Us Once service</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>Sort out your card machine</i></p> | <p>For well over 12 months, registrars were not provided with working payment card machines by the council.</p> |

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| | <p>This was difficult for customers and much more so for staff who found it embarrassing and stressful.</p> <p>We do now have working card machines, thankfully!</p> |
| Issue Raised | Service Response |
| <p><i>It would have been preferable if I hadn't had to be there until person at it was a 70 mile round trip. There were no appointments locally.</i></p> | <p>This comment was echoed in by several respondents who wanted to attend the Ludlow Office and were unable to do so due to the extended jury service of a member of staff.</p> <p>This took place at a time where our resources were under a great deal of pressure with ceremonies.</p> <p>We have been working hard to create additional resource within our team so that we are not struggling so much to cover offices when unplanned issues arise.</p> |
| Issue Raised | Service Response |
| <p><i>Have full time opening hours,births and deaths continue whether we have covid or not,a pathetic excuse I'm afraid.</i></p> | <p>This comment is unkind and unrepresentative. This service worked throughout the pandemic registering deaths and we have an excellent understanding of what happened during that period.</p> <p>This comment was made by someone who arrived without an appointment when the office was closed. They were then made an appointment and were able to be seen in Bridgnorth but were unsatisfied as they didn't know where the office was in Bridgnorth.</p> <p>Always make an appointment</p> |
| Issue Raised | Service Response |
| <p><i>Extend open hours</i></p> | <p>This comment was made about the Oswestry office which is already a full-time office</p> |

| Issue Raised | Service Response |
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| <p><i>I was asked to take documents that I actually didn't need and I got so upset at home because I couldn't find them. So that needn't have happened.</i></p> | <p>The General Register Office instruct local registrars to ask informants to bring along a range of documents, not for the use of the registrar but for reference by the informant.</p> <p>The reason for this is so that the informant can provide correct spellings, dates, and names to the registrar in order that the record is completed accurately.</p> <p>We apologise for any distress caused by the request.</p> |
| <p><i>I was ok, but older people registering deaths may find Tell Us Once complicated online and may need more help with it.</i></p> | <p>Tell us once can be completed either online or over the telephone once the registrars have recorded the death on the Department for Work and Pensions system</p> |
| <p><i>I wasn't aware that a death had to be registered within 5 days</i></p> | <p>Yes, it is a surprise to most people.</p> <p>It is also a surprise that it is not 5 working days either.</p> <p>The legislation was written in 1953 so could do with being updated. This should happen in September 2024.</p> |
| <p><i>I would have preferred to have visited a Registrar in Ludlow but Registrar was on jury service. Is there not another person who could stand in.</i></p> | <p>We do try to cover our offices when someone is absent, this is not always possible. In this case the registrars jury service ran over by 10 days which could not have been foreseen, there was not another member of staff who was available to cover.</p> |
| <p><i>Issue Raised</i></p> | <p><i>Service Response</i></p> |

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| <p><i>I didn't hear from either of the 2 pensions that were involved,so at first I rang the OAP pensions dept. and they had no notice of my husbands death and so I had to fill in more forms/Last week I discovered that my husbands normal NHS pension had been put into his account (joint)and on getting in touch this morning they also had no notice of my husbands death, and they are sending me yet another orm to fill in.I'm not very happy as all this was supposed to be sorted at the registry office when they did "just this once"</i></p> | <p>Cannot offer any explanation why this would be the case.</p> <p>The registrars submit the information, but it is for the DWP to act upon it.</p> |
| <p>Issue Raised</p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>It might be useful to book directly on line. We had to phone and wait for a reply and phone again and wait for a reply then make the appointment</i></p> | <p>Yes we agree, however we need the medical certificate to be able to register a death and this is something which is sent to us by the GP or the Hospital.</p> <p>Sometimes the documents do not arrive as quickly as we would like or arrive and are not filled in properly or should have been referred to the coroner.</p> <p>If someone attended an appointment for which there was no documentation which allowed the death to be registered, they would have a wasted journey, our service would have a wasted appointment which could have been available to someone else.</p> <p>We are hoping to resolve this issue later this year with a replacement appointment booking system which will cope with the changes to processes which have been imposed.</p> |
| <p>Issue Raised</p> | <p>Service Response</p> |
| <p><i>IT system was down at the time which required a hand written format. It system should be more robust</i></p> | <p>We agree.</p> <p>This is a national system and not something which can be addressed locally. However, we do have fail safe</p> |

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| | <p>manual systems in place so as not to inconvenience our customers.</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <p><i>MAKE SURE THE PERSON KNOWS ABOUT ANY DELAYS, AS WE FOUND THERE WAS A BACK LOG OF 2-4 WEEK JUST FOR THE DEATH CERTIFICATE, WHERE WE COULD HAVE GONE TO HOSPITAL AND HAD IT SOONER, VERY DISTRESSING</i></p> | <p>Cannot understand this issue so am unable to provide any useful comment.</p> <p>There has never been a 2-4 week delay in the provision of death appointments due to the lack of their availability.</p> <p>Any delays would be created by the issue of the medical certificate which has to be done by doctors and hospitals, or the coroner if they have been involved.</p> <p>Visiting a hospital would not have enabled a registration of a death to take place sooner as it is not the hospital who perform this duty.</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <p><i>More advice given as to how many deaths certificates to pay for. Wrongly believed that 4 may be needed, which cost £44, however only one was required because companies etc were mainly happy to accept emailed photographs.</i></p> | <p>It is not for the registrar to tell anyone how many certificates they need.</p> <p>It is true that many private companies have changed their requirements, but it is not for the registration service to be familiar with the arrangements of private organisations.</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <p><i>A young couple were waiting in the waiting room with me. I had purposely sat in a corner to avoid close contact, however, one of the adults appeared to have symptoms of a fever. I would like to see more ventilation.</i></p> | <p>We do our best, would have been happy to open a window if this had been brought to our attention</p> |

| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
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| <p><i>I am writing this review as the husband of the person who booked the appointment. We both attended the meeting with the Registrar. He completely ignored me throughout the process speaking directly to my wife (even though I was sat beside her) . He even got the county of the deceased birth wrong</i></p> | <p>Information for the death registration, must be taken directly, by the personal questioning of the informant.</p> <p>In this example the gentleman's wife was the informant which is why all questions were addressed to her.</p> <p>Relating to the registrar recording the wrong county of birth of the deceased.</p> <p>This is why informants are asked to check that all information has been recorded correctly and that spellings are correct before they sign the record to say that they have checked the information and agree that it is correct.</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <p><i>I didn't make an appointment because somebody of the citizens advice office phoned me to say I will get an invitation by post. Total</i></p> | <p>No idea why the citizens advice office would give such advice.</p> <p>We apologise on their behalf for the inconvenience you were put to.</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <p><i>Tried to contact tell us once , the death wasn't on their system. I then realised that the date of birth was wrong!! So had to go back to Registrar office had to pay a further £75 even though it was the registrar who had completed the death certificate she had made the mistake!!!</i></p> | <p>In this example the date of birth had been recorded incorrectly.</p> <p>Informants are asked to check through the details recorded in a death registration before they sign the legal record to say that they have checked the information and agree that it is correct.</p> |

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| | <p>Any errors should be picked up at that point and can easily be corrected.</p> <p>However, once the document has been signed there is a necessary legal process to correct the information. The General Register Office apply a statutory fee of £75 for this and evidence of the correct information must be supplied.</p> <p>We completely sympathise with the lady</p> |
| <i>Issue Raised</i> | Service Response |
| <p><i>My sister and I attended with our husbands but there was only 3 available chairs. I had said on the phone there would be 4 of us.</i></p> | <p>The registrar needs only one person to register a death.</p> <p>Whilst we understand that families often come in larger groups to support one another, there is simply not the room in our offices to accommodate more than 2 visitors comfortably.</p> <p>We try to be helpful, sometimes it is not possible.</p> |