

End-of-Life Symbol

A universally recognised symbol that indicates the end of life. It's inspired by ancient Irish history and is not associated with any one religion or denomination.

The three-stranded white spiral represents the interconnected cycle of life: birth, life and death. The white outer circle represents continuity, infinity and completion. Purple is the background colour as it's associated with nobility, solemnity and spirituality.

How to use the Symbol

Acute hospitals, residential care centres and nursing homes are using the Symbol to indicate that a person is dying or has died.

Many have a Symbol and an explanation of what it means in their entrance hall and public areas.

In publicly displaying the Symbol, hospitals and residential care centres are acknowledging that the delivery of quality end-of-life care is an important part of the work they do.

Ideally, the Symbol should be displayed in a frame or perspex stand. It should be displayed at the entrance to the ward where the death has occurred and also at the nursing station. It may also be used on the doors of single rooms.

The Symbol should not be pinned to curtains around a bed on a multi-bed ward.

Printed laminated Symbols are acceptable if they are of good quality. Black and white, poor quality pixelated printouts, folded or creased paper are not appropriate ways of displaying the Symbol.



Colour codes for the purple are:
RGB: 130 107 175 CMYK: C26 M39 Y0 K31
Hex: #826baf

Download a pdf file of the Symbol from:
<https://bit.ly/3jMqohp>

Acrylic Desktop Symbols available from:
The Copper House Gallery, Dublin
(01) 478 4088
hello@thecopperhouse.ie
www.thecopperhousegallery.com

Door Signs available from:
Flynn Signs & Display, Dublin
(01) 872 7699
print@flynns.ie
www.flynns.ie

Family Handover Bag



The Family Handover Bag was developed to enhance care after death, in particular, the return of the deceased person's possessions to their family. Items such as clothes and personal belongings can have huge sentimental value.

It's important that staff appreciate this and handle and record these possessions with care and return them to the family in a dignified and respectful manner. It's not acceptable to return these items in a plastic bag which is otherwise used for rubbish or dirty laundry.

The use of the Handover Bag is an important part of the bereavement care you provide and an opportunity to display excellent care after death.

A smaller version of the Family Handover Bag is also available. This might be suitable for paediatric settings.



When using, please:

- fold the clothing and put it in a separate plastic bag inside the Family Handover Bag.
- place any soiled clothing in a separate laundry bag inside the Family Handover Bag.
- do not place perishable food items in the Family Handover Bag.

There may be additional infection prevention and control advice to give to families if the deceased person had confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Please refer to [HPSC.ie](https://www.hpsc.ie) for the most up-to-date information on handling the deceased person's belongings.

Family Handover Bags, including the smaller version, available from:

Cotab, Cork
(021) 451 0488
sales@cotab.ie
www.cotab.ie

End-of-Life Keepsake Pouch



The Keepsake Pouch is for the return of small personal items.

These may include:

- jewellery, watch, etc.
- religious items (prayer beads, medals, etc).

These items should be placed in the Keepsake Pouch and the strings securely fastened. The Pouch should be handed to the family member with an explanation of what it contains.

Keepsake Pouches available from:
NCD Medical Ltd, Dublin
(01) 883 4299
info@prestigedirect.ie

End-of-Life Ward Locker



A bespoke piece of hand-crafted furniture to support the delivery of spiritual care at the end of life in hospitals, residential care centres and nursing homes. The Locker has the End-of-Life Symbol etched on the top which, along with its unique shape, distinguishes it from standard hospital furniture.

The Locker was designed to house various religious and spiritual items that may be needed to support people at the end of life. It can be used at the time of dying and death to display symbols that have religious, cultural or sentimental value to the person.

The Locker should be used sensitively; some people may not wish to have the Locker used and that wish should be respected. It's best not to make assumptions. In some cases, it may be appropriate to ask the person directly. In other cases, it will be necessary to consult with the family.

Staff members should advise the person, resident or family of the resources available in the Locker. They should also know they are free to use the items and prayers within it with their loved one. While every effort will be made to house articles appropriate to each of the religions/faiths, it may not be possible to supply everything that patients or families would wish to have available. Families should be advised they can use their own items in conjunction with the Locker contents, if they wish. It should also have a folder within it, housing prayers and reflections that staff and/or families can access before or following death.

Some mortuaries and funeral homes may also like to house the Locker which may make a useful addition to this space and allow family members to access items and prayers that may bring them comfort.

Ideally, one member of staff from each ward or area will take responsibility for maintaining the Locker – ensuring none of its contents are removed or damaged and that items that need to be replaced are restocked immediately so the Locker is always ready for use. Items that have become soiled or damaged should be removed immediately so as not to cause offence and should be replaced as soon as possible.

Lockers available from:
Aaron Nicholson, Coolaney, Sligo
aaronnicholson83@hotmail.com
(086) 310 4881

Gerry Gaule, Celtic Commemorations, Kilkenny
gerry@celticcommemorations.com
(086) 257 7143



End-of-Life Candle

The Candle has an image of the End-of-Life Symbol.



The text on the candle reads:

*Those we love don't go away,
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard but always near,
Still loved, still missed and very dear.*

It's available in 2 sizes, small (10mm x 60mm) and large (150mm x 60mm) supplied in boxes of 20.

Candles available from:
Duffy & Scott Candlemakers Ltd., Tullamore
(057) 935 1089
trish@duffyscott.com
www.duffyscott.com

Irish Hospice Foundation

We run a series of programmes to support staff to deliver compassionate end-of-life and bereavement care including Hospice Friendly Hospitals and Compassionate End of Life (CEOL). We also have a series of useful resources including our Toolkit for Compassionate End-of-Life Care.



To die and grieve well wherever the place

info@hospicefoundation.ie
(01) 679 3188

www.hospicefoundation.ie
Registered Charity 20013554

End-of-Life Bed Drape



The lilac Bed Drape can be used to dress the bed of a person who has died. It should be placed on the bed by the staff once Last Offices procedures have been performed.

End-of-Life Trolley Drape

The purple Drape with the End-of-Life Symbol is used to place over the trolley which transports the deceased person from the place of death to the mortuary or funeral home. Using the Drape promotes a sense of dignity, respect, and ceremony for this important care practice. The Drape can also be used in the mortuary or funeral home for viewing the deceased person.

Bed and Trolley Drapes available from:
NCD Medical Ltd., Dublin
(01) 883 4299
info@prestigedirect.ie
www.prestigedirect.ie

