

# Repatriation

A repatriation takes place when the body of a person who has died is transported from one country to another.

**Arranging a repatriation into or out of the UK for someone who has died can be complicated, however most funeral directors will be able to guide you through the process.**

Whether you are considering taking the body of a person who has died home to their country of origin or bringing someone back to the UK who died abroad, there are two key things to consider:

- **The wishes of the person who died and the wishes of the surviving family:** Did the person who died wish to be repatriated? What meaning would the repatriation hold to you and your family?
- **Cost:** The cost of a repatriation can be substantially more than the cost of a local funeral and there may be fewer options for raising money towards the cost.

## How does it work?

1. **Register the death and inform the relevant authorities:**
  - a. For a death in the UK, see our advice about [Practicalities After Death](#).
  - b. When someone dies abroad, see the government's resource on [What to do if someone dies abroad](#). Procedures will differ between countries.
2. If the person was on holiday, be sure to check if they had **travel insurance**. Insurance companies often have a preferred provider and agreed payment arrangements.
3. **Choose a funeral director or repatriation specialist:** If the person who died did not have travel insurance, or you need to choose your own service provider, get quotes from several different companies to compare their costs and services.

When you are advised of the cost, make sure it includes all services you require, as well as any disbursements or third-party fees, such as airline costs. If you are working to a budget, ask the

funeral director if they can help you to plan within your budget, or if they have flexible payment terms. Many companies ask for full payment before the flight, but may care for the person who has died for longer to allow time for money to be raised.

4. **Provide the relevant documents:** The funeral director, or repatriation company, will know the legal requirements and what paperwork is needed for the repatriation. These can differ between countries. You will need to provide the death certificate and the passport of the person who died, even if it has expired.
5. If you wish to travel as well, you will need to **make your own travel arrangements**. Some funeral directors can arrange for you to travel on the same flight as the person who has died, although this may not be the most affordable option.

### Third Party Fees

Third party fees are additional expenses that you must pay for along with the funeral director/repatriation specialist's fees. These may include:

- Embalming, if this is not included in the funeral director/repatriation specialist's fees. Embalming is required for repatriations.
- Airline Charges
- Embassy/Consular Fees
- Coroner's and other Statutory Certificates
- Translation of documents where applicable

### Questions to ask your funeral director or repatriation specialist:

- What can I expect to pay, and when is payment required? (i.e. do you need a deposit? When is the balance due? What happens if the money is not paid in time).
- What is included in the costs quoted and are any of the third-party charges that may be likely to change? (i.e. due to freight costs)
- Do you take care of all documentation necessary? What paperwork will you need from me?
- How will you care for the person who died before they travel? (i.e. washing and dressing the body of the person who has died).

- Does your fee include a suitable coffin that meets airline requirements? (airlines require that coffins used to repatriate are zinc-lined or hermetically sealed).
- If I'm working to a budget, how long will you look after the person who died while I raise the money? Will this lead to extra costs?

## Raising money toward the repatriation

There are various ways of raising money toward a repatriation. More detail on each of these options can be found in our ['Raising money towards funeral costs'](#) guide.

- **Money from the deceased person's estate:** Note: If the person was on holiday, check if they had travel insurance that may help with a repatriation.
- **Government support and the Department of Work and Pensions:** If you are under state pension age and your partner has died, you may also be eligible for the Bereavement Support Payment. Eligibility varies depending on whether you were married/civil partnered or living together as if you were:
  - [Bereavement Support Payment \(England, Wales and Scotland\)](#)
  - [Bereavement Support Payment \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

Government Funeral Payments are not able to help with the cost of a repatriation, but for some funerals held in the European Economic Area (EEA), you may be able to apply for government assistance if you claim a means-tested benefit. Find out if you are eligible using our [eligibility checker](#).

- **Grants from charities and benevolent funds:** Some charities will consider help towards the cost of a repatriation, whilst others won't. You may wish to check with the individual charity before taking the time to make an application. Explaining why the repatriation is meaningful for your family may help.
- **Crowdfunding**
- **Repayment plans and loans:** If you are considering a loan, ensure that it is done safely, using a lender registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, and avoid illegal money lenders (sometimes known as loan sharks).

## Support for funeral costs in the destination country

- **Government help for funeral costs in the EEA:** if you are planning to have a funeral in a country that is in the European Economic Area (EEA), and are receiving a means tested benefit, you may be eligible for government help with the funeral costs. This could then free up funds for the repatriation. See our resources for the [Social Fund's Funeral Expenses Payment](#) if you live in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland), or [Social Security Scotland's Funeral Support Payment](#) if you live in Scotland.
- **Check with the local government/embassy.** Is there funeral support available in the county where the funeral is taking place? See further tips on our website on [finances around funerals](#).

## Other Options

If you decide that a repatriation is not right for you, here are some other ideas to remember the person who died:

- 1) Have a cremation in the UK, then take the cremated remains (ashes) back to the person's country of origin. It's important to check airline rules regarding flying with cremated remains, you may have to take them as hand luggage. You should also check the law in the destination country about storage of and final resting places for cremated remains.
- 2) Livestream the funeral for people who cannot attend in person.
- 3) Hold a memorial service for the person who died with people who cannot attend the funeral.
- 4) Arrange a local funeral or direct cremation with a memorial service.

## Repatriation back to the UK

If someone has died abroad, and you are looking at bringing them back to the UK, see the government resources below:

- [What to do when someone dies abroad](#)
- [UK-based international funeral directors](#)

If you are returning the body of a loved one to the UK, you will need the following documentation to accompany them:

- A certified **English translation of the death certificate** (most funeral directors/repatriation services can arrange this).
- Permission to remove the body, issued by a coroner (or equivalent) in the country of death
- A **coroner statement** – if the death was unnatural or unexpected, a UK coroner will review these documents and decide if an inquest is necessary
- **Passport of the person who died**