**Kent Specialist Bereavement Service Criteria**

The death of someone significant is likely to be difficult and distressing for children and young people regardless of their age, the timing or cause of death. With good support, most will be able to make sense of their loss and adjust to live with their grief, in their own individual way. A few however will require specialist support to help them manage the considerable overwhelming impact of the death.

The CHUMS Kent Specialist Bereavement Service is for children, young people and young adults:

* Registered with a Kent and Medway GP practice.
* The individual must be a resident in Kent and Medway, with a recognised Kent and Medway postcode.
* Aged 3 and a half, up until their 26th birthday.
* Who require specialist bereavement support to cope with their complex grief or traumatic bereavement.
* Where the death has caused trauma responses that interfere with their ability to grieve,
* where the death is having a significant lasting impact on their current functioning, emotional wellbeing or behaviour
* who require specialist bereavement support as a recent death has triggered behaviours and emotions from previous bereavements
* who have been bereaved by any cause of death including expected and unexpected/sudden deaths
* whether the death is recent or in the past -the important factor is the impact of the grief, not how long ago it occurred
* including those with special educational needs and disabilities

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| **Children, young people and young adults being referred are likely to be experiencing several of the following**: | |
| **Trauma Responses** | Intrusive thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks, difficult memories, disturbing images or sensations |
| Excessive avoidance in thinking or talking about the death or anything that reminds them of the death |
| Arousal- irritable, on edge, hypervigilant, heightened emotions  Disassociation or numbness |
| **Marked changes in emotional state** | Heightened anxiety  Low mood  Episodes of anger or frustration  Intense periods of distress |
| **Functional impairment** | Difficulties with relationships  Poor school attendance or reduced engagement in school  Sleep disturbance  Changes in eating habits |
| **Risk of** | Self-harm thoughts or actions  Suicidal thinking  Alcohol or substance misuse  Risky behaviours leading to exclusion or offending pathways |
| **Complications in adjusting to their grief due to** | Complex family circumstances  Previous mental health needs  Community challenges  Special educational needs or disabilities |
| **Difficulties experienced are likely to be:**  Severe, frequent, persistent, enduring, have a significant impact on the child or young person and not appearing to be getting any easier for them. | |