



**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

INFORMATION FOR BEREAVED PARENTS OR RELATIVES WHEN A BABY DIES.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital



Bereavement Service Team
0151 478 7573/7578

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INTRODUCTION

We would like to express the sympathy of all the staff on the loss of your baby. At this time you may find it difficult to take in the many things that may be said to you. The loss of a baby, whether during pregnancy, labour, or after birth, is a time of great anxiety and distress for everybody involved.

When a baby dies, the parents we support speak of a grief that has no comparison, a particular sort of grief. The new life they created was unique to them, as is their grief, and therefore no one else can feel what they feel.

We are all different, and we react to death in different ways. Bereavement and grief are painful experiences and learning to live with loss is hard. You may find you want to be alone or that you need someone to be with you all the time.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Our experienced ward and support staff are here to help support you.

In the time following the death, you will be offered the opportunity of spending time with your baby. You may wish for your baby to stay with you while you are in hospital. Some parents wish to see and hold their baby straight away, and some choose not to. It is important to remember that you have a choice, and the staff caring for you will support you in your decision. If you choose not to, you can of course change your mind.

WHAT WE CAN DO

MEMORY BOXES

If you wish, the staff on the ward will assist you to create a lasting memory of your baby.

- **Photographs and mementoes**

We can take photographs of your baby for you. These are taken using a digital camera and of course you can use your own phone or devices. You will be given the memory card to take home from the digital camera. If you do not wish to have the photographs, the memory card will be kept in your hospital file, and should you wish them in the future they will be available.

If you wish to take your own images this can also be assisted, using either your own camera or professional photographer. If you wish to know more please ask your midwife.

Staff will also offer to take a lock of your baby's hair, prints of your baby's hands & feet. You may also like to have the identity label from your baby to keep.

Parents may also wish to keep the blankets/towels your baby was wrapped in whilst on the ward. This can be arranged for you if you ask a midwife.

- **Certificate of Birth before 24th week of pregnancy**

There is no legal requirement to provide certification for your pregnancy lost before 24 weeks gestation. We can give you a Certificate of Birth before 24th week of

pregnancy issued by the hospital, if you would like a certificate please inform a member of staff. Not all parents will want a certificate and we understand this.

- **Support from the Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Team.**

Should you wish to have their support, chaplains are trained to offer pastoral and spiritual support to people of all faith and none, and will be sensitive to your needs. You don't have to be religious to have pastoral care, and the support does not have to be religious.

Most chaplaincy is offered by ecumenical (all denominations) chaplains. However Roman Catholic Chaplains are always available. Should you have other specific requirement the ecumenical chaplain will be able to offer support and advice.

Please inform a member of staff if you would like us to make the necessary contact.

- **A blessing or naming ceremony for your baby**

When your baby is born your midwife or nurse, with your permission, can contact the hospital chaplain or your own religious leader. Even if you do not have a particular religious faith, you may find it helpful to talk to one of them and you may like a blessing for your baby. The blessing or naming ceremony (and if you wish naming) lasts only a few minutes and a personalised certificate of blessing is given – usually at the time of the blessing or posted on within a few days.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICE TEAM

You may have questions or want to return to the hospital to see your baby. If so please contact the Bereavement Services team on 0151 478 7573/7578 or the Bereavement Lead midwife on 07917974034.

If you wish, the Bereavement Lead midwife can arrange for you to meet and talk to the staff involved in taking over the care of your baby after leaving the ward. This could be to discuss what happens when your baby leaves the ward or visiting arrangements which can be arranged between 9am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, by contacting the mortuary team.

Our dedicated staff will endeavour to be on hand to offer help and give support to, you following a loss of baby or child. You will be offered the opportunity to transfer your son or daughter to the Hospital mortuary, where you will be able to spend time with them. You may wish to dress them, to cuddle them or simply just to sit quietly with them in the bereavement suite, this can all help with the grieving process and prepare parents for the transition from the Hospital ward to the Mortuary. You are welcome to return to visit your baby again - perhaps to bring along a teddy/toy or a photograph of yourselves or other siblings. Please ask us for further information or advice.

TAKING YOUR BABY HOME

Some parents may decide they would like to take their baby home. This is an individual decision and if you would like to discuss this further speak to the midwives looking after you. They can give you support and advice about how to keep your baby at home in the most appropriate environment. We are able to borrow you a cuddle cot to ensure this

There are a few things, which need to be considered when keeping your baby at home. Your baby's body will begin to deteriorate; therefore, the length of time at home needs to be discussed with the professional involved. However, it is ultimately your decision.

ARRANGING A FUNERAL

There is no hurry to make arrangements unless there are special religious or cultural reasons. It is a very personal occasion.

Never be rushed into making any important decisions and never be afraid to ask for any special requests, which may be helpful to you and your family, or ask the Funeral Directors for any explanations if you do not understand. The cost of a funeral may vary, most funeral directors may provide their services free of charge for a child or baby funeral, please ask your Funeral Director about this. The Funeral Director will arrange to meet with you to discuss what you require and will organise this on your behalf.

HOSPITAL FUNERAL

If you feel you cannot, or do not wish to organise a funeral yourselves, the hospital will arrange a simple funeral for your baby. You can choose whether you want your baby buried or cremated.

What is a hospital funeral?

It is a basic funeral (either burial or cremation depending on your instruction) paid for by the hospital.

How much will it cost?

The basic hospital funeral will not cost you anything. You can if you wish add extras at your own expense but this is a private agreement between you and the Funeral Director. They will try to accommodate personal requests from the family but may not be able to fulfil all your requests.

Does this mean I cannot be involved in the arrangements?

If you choose to have a hospital funeral, the ward staff will forward your details to the Bereavement Services Team who will contact you to discuss the arrangements with you if you wish. They are there to help you plan your baby's funeral, and you can be involved as much or as little as you feel comfortable with.

Hospital Burial

The hospital appointed funeral director will arrange for your baby to be buried in an individual public baby grave

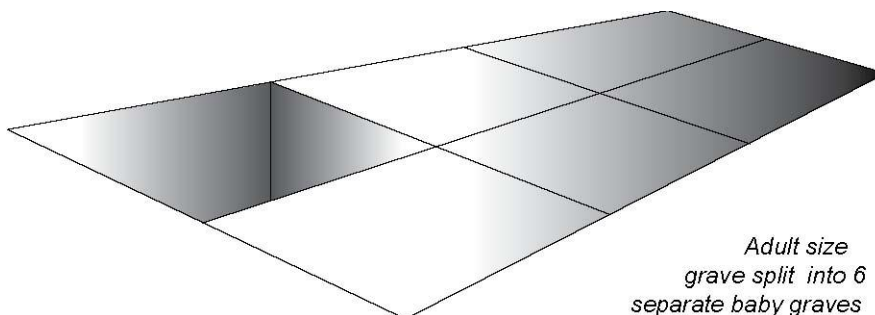
at Duke Street Cemetery.

If you wish to visit the cemeteries and view the grave before the burial please contact the relevant cemetery office.

The individual public baby graves are used for just one burial, although (size-depending) they may be used for multiple birth babies. The graves are 2ft wide by 3ft long and will be maintained as a grass lawn. You will not be permitted to install a memorial or leave any items on the grave.

If you choose burial, your baby may be buried in a plot with other babies in a special part of the cemetery, although only your baby's funeral will take place at that time. Your baby will have a small individual grave which is about a sixth of the size of an adult plot.

The graves are also not identified on the ground but you will be told the grave number to help you identify the location of the grave when you visit.



*Adult size
grave split into 6
separate baby graves*

As six babies' coffins may be buried individually in one adult size plot it may be some time before the plot is finished and grassed over. There can be no lasting memorial, i.e. headstones or other markers.

We understand that you may want to commemorate your baby and memorials are available at Duke Street Cemetery baby garden for babies buried at Duke Street Cemetery. And at west Lancashire Crematorium for babies buried at West Lancashire

When an adjacent grave is prepared for a baby burial your grave space may be used for temporary storage of the soil. The amount of disturbance to the surface of your grave will be dependent on the size of that baby's coffin; but at no time will your baby be disturbed.

If you want your baby to be buried elsewhere, you may wish to approach your local church and enquire about burial space, alternatively our Funeral Director will attempt to make arrangements if you do not wish to be involved. Options vary regarding local level practices at each cemetery you may wish to speak with the church or cemetery provider to enquire what is and is not allowed i.e. memorials on graves etc.

Can any other relatives be buried in the same grave as my baby?

No, a baby grave will only take one baby. If you want to be buried with your baby, you need a private adult grave. This can be arranged, but you will have to pay the extra costs involved.

Hospital Cremation

An individual cremation can be organised at Southport Crematorium. Or West Lancashire crematorium.

Babies' skeletons are immature in development and do not always leave any cremated remains under 24 weeks gestation. Following cremation there will however be a small amount of ash residue from the coffin. These ashes are available for you to collect, alternatively they can be scattered at the crematorium. If you wish to be present to witness or scatter the ashes at the crematorium an appointment can be arranged by your funeral director; alternatively the ashes will be scattered for Southport Crematorium in the forget-me-not garden.

When will the funeral take place?

Usually the funeral will take place, within two weeks (periods can vary depending on families' needs). You will be informed of the exact date and time within a few days. If you have not heard anything after four days, it is important you contact the Bereavement Support Team on 0151 478 7573/7578 to make sure arrangements have been made.

Who will take the service?

Many parents choose one of the Hospital Chaplains, but you are free to have any Minister or Religious Leader, secular celebrant or the appropriate person of your choice. The hospital Funeral Director will still make these arrangements for you, on your behalf.

Who can attend the funeral?

You can invite who you want to be there. It is your personal occasion for your baby. It can be as private or as public as you wish. If you feel unable to attend the funeral, it will still take place in just the same way as if you did attend. Your baby will have an individual service. There is no problem if you change your mind, and decide you can attend.

Can we have flowers?

You and your family can buy flowers and bring them to the service if you wish.

Can I put up a headstone?

Yes, but personal headstones can only be used on a purchased private grave.

PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS

You may wish to arrange a private funeral service. This method is required if you intend to erect a headstone as you must own the grave to do so.

It is important to explain that if you choose this option but have not arranged it within 8 weeks, as a courtesy we will contact you to confirm that arrangements are in progress. If, after a further 4 weeks, we have still not heard from you, we will proceed to a hospital funeral.

Choosing a Funeral Director

The choice of Funeral Directors is important, as you should feel comfortable with them. You may already know which Funeral Director you will choose but, if you are unsure. Your midwife caring for you can provide some numbers of local Funeral directors. The spiritual Care service can also help.

You could ask family and friends as they may have recommendations or could investigate for you. They are often glad of something useful to be doing for you. If you have any difficulties the National Association of Funeral Directors will be able to advise you. Their Code of Practice is approved by the Office of Fair Trading. (See 'Further advice and support' in this booklet for contact details). You can ask any Funeral Director for an estimate of cost in advance of making any commitment to using their service. It is reasonable to ask for at least two firms to quote a cost for you to compare, as charges can vary considerably.

Most funeral directors offer “free basic” services for children’s funerals; however there may be some costs if you have special requirements.

If you are struggling to meet the costs, the Funeral Directors can usually arrange payment by instalments.

For losses over 24 week gestation and If you receive certain benefits or Tax Credits (Income Support, Council Tax Benefit or Disabled Persons Benefit) you can apply for funeral payment from the Social Fund. The form SF200

[Funeral Expenses Payment claim form - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

FURTHER ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Southport & Ormskirk Hospitals NHS Trust

Tel: 01695 656318

Southport & Ormskirk Hospitals NHS Trust

Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy service.

Tel: 01704 704639 On call and out of hours service available via the ward or hospital switchboard.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)

A self-help organisation for families whose baby has died.

Website: www.uk-sands.org

Website: www.sandsforum.org

Helpline: 0808 164 3332

Helpline@sands.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK

Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.

Website: www.childbereavementuk.org

Helpline: 0800 028 8840

Twins and Multiple Births Association Bereavement Support Group (TAMBA BSG)

Tel: 0800 138 0509 (helpline)

Website: www.tamba.org.uk/bs

Child Death Helpline

Telephone helpline for anyone affected by the death of a child.

York House, 37 Queens Square

London, WC1N 3BH

Helpline Freephone: 0800 282 986

Website: www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Winston's Wish

Help and support for bereaved children and young people up to the age of 18.

Website: www.winstonswish.org.uk

National Association of Funeral Directors

Can provide details of member funeral directors in your area.

618 Warwick Road, Solihull,

West Midlands, B91 1AA

Tel: 0121 711 1343

info@nafd.org.uk

Website: www.nafd.org.uk

The Money Advice Services

For impartial practical financial advice

Website: www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Tel: 08000113797

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

Ormskirk & District General Hospital
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Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN
Tel: (01704) 547471

FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

We would welcome your feedback about your experience
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

Thank you

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