

## **Bereavement Services**

# **Information and Advice for parents following the loss of your baby**

We are very sorry to hear about the loss of your baby. The staff at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust Women and Children's Services are committed to providing sensitive care and support in a way that is helpful to you

We hope that this booklet will help you through the next few days, weeks and months. A member of our Bereavement Support Team will also be able to give you the appropriate guidance regarding what practical arrangements you need to make.

We understand that each person's individual experience will be unique. We aim to offer care that provides for you and your family's needs.

We encourage you to ask any questions you may have about any part of your care and want you to feel able to express your own feelings too.

As well as intense physical feelings, grief triggers a number of emotional reactions which can be confusing, and at times, may be quite frightening. Anger, denial, guilt and blame are just a few of the different feelings associated with bereavement.

Although difficult to understand, these emotions are quite normal. Grieving varies greatly from person to person and there are no set time limits dictating how long different emotions will last.

There is also no "standard" way of grieving, as we all have our own way of dealing with life's experiences, particularly when it involves the loss of someone we love.

## Patient Information

### **Support Available for You & Your Family**

#### **Spiritual Care & Funeral Planning**

The Chaplaincy Team is comprised of faith leaders from a variety of major faith groups. A Chaplain is available to facilitate a blessing or prayers for you and your family if you wish.

Chaplains are also available to offer general pastoral/spiritual care to all families irrespective of religious belief. You may have questions around 'why' and meaning; Chaplains are able to facilitate a space for you to explore these questions and your feelings.

Whilst you may not wish to see a Chaplain for the above, each family will be contacted in person or by telephone by a Chaplain to discuss and arrange funeral plans, unless you have chosen to make private arrangements.

The Chaplain contacting you will be able to listen to your individual needs and offer you specialist advice regarding the type and content of funeral that is most appropriate for your family at this time. They will also ask you to sign a consent form once you have made a choice about your baby's funeral.

#### **Bereavement Support Specialist Midwives**

Families experiencing a loss at 16 weeks or above will be seen by the Bereavement Support Specialist Midwifery team, who provide sensitive care and support following the death of your baby, which is appropriate to you and your family's needs.

Bereavement Midwives have specialist roles and help to facilitate spaces to process emotions and grief, as well as create memories and offer guidance in this difficult time. They offer long-term support for families and can help to arrange this type of support for you if you live outside of the local Coventry/Rugby area once you have been discharged home.

## Patient Information

### **Bereavement Services**

The Bereavement Services Team is responsible for the administration part of your care whilst you are with us. They help facilitate the completion of relevant documentation such as burial and cremation forms, as well as registration of your baby (if required by law).

The Bereavement Services team are also responsible for liaising with Funeral Directors when a family has chosen to have their baby's funeral facilitated by the hospital. This team are responsible for contacting families when funeral arrangements have been made.

### **Funeral Consent Form**

A Chaplain, Bereavement Support Specialist Midwife or member of the Bereavement Services Team will help all families complete the hospital's Funeral Consent Form for Parents. This form will help guide you through the choices available to you and your family regarding laying your baby to rest.

### **Viewings**

Until you have made arrangements with a Funeral Director your baby will stay at the hospital. If you and other members of your family would like to visit your baby in the Chapel of Rest, this can be arranged by any of the listed support staff above.

You may like to bring with you any special clothes you want your baby to be dressed in, or you may like to bring in a toy to stay with your baby. The hospital has a selection of very small sized clothing for small and premature babies for you to choose from if you so wish.

The Chapel of Rest is open for viewings from Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm, appointments are for a maximum of 1 hour. Viewings are not routinely available on weekends or on public holidays.

## Patient Information

### **Post Mortem**

The Doctor or Midwife will talk to you about post mortem examination. This may be carried out in order to gain information about the possible cause of your baby's death.

Your signed consent is required and nothing will be done without your permission unless the post mortem has been authorised by the Coroner. Although it is an extremely difficult decision to make, the findings may enable doctors to find out whether or not the same problem is likely to affect any baby you may have in the future. The doctors will explain why they feel it is necessary. Please feel free to ask any questions you or your family may have. The post mortem procedure will take place at Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital. The Doctor/Midwife will advise you regarding this.

You may wish to see your baby again following the post mortem; this can be arranged for you, once your baby has returned from Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital.

If you are considering a post mortem, an information booklet will be given to you to read prior to your decision. It outlines the different options available to you regarding the post mortem examination.

### **When the Coroner is Involved**

If there are any uncertainties surrounding the cause of death, the Coroner may decide to authorise a post mortem to try to establish the cause. If this is the case the Coroner's Officer will contact you directly and explain clearly to you what happens and why.

### **Placental Histology**

Investigations such as post mortem, placental histology, blood tests and tests for infection may provide important information about the current pregnancy, as well as for any future pregnancies.

You will be advised of the results by your consultant, GP or Bereavement Support Specialist Midwife.

## Patient Information

### **Death Certificate & Registering the Death of Your Baby**

You will only need to register the death of your baby if your baby died on or after 24 weeks gestation, or if your baby showed signs of life after it was born.

The death certificate will be issued as soon as possible after your baby's death.

Occasionally the death certificate cannot be issued immediately and it will need to be collected at a later date. Under these circumstances the staff looking after you will advise you about this. The Bereavement Support Specialist Midwife/ward staff will advise you of the options available regarding where you are able to register your baby's death.

If your baby was born alive, registration needs to take place within five days; the birth and the death may be registered at the same time.

If your baby was stillborn, a certificate of stillbirth is issued. Registration needs to take place within 42 days. This ensures that the relevant documents are processed prior to the funeral.

If you and your partner are not married, but you want your partner's details to appear on the death certificate, both parents are required to attend the registry office appointment together.

You are able to register the death of your baby at University Hospital or at the Coventry Register Office in the city centre. You must call the Coventry Register Office to make an appointment, or follow the web address below to make an appointment online.

## Patient Information

Coventry Register Office: 024 7683 3141

or

[www.coventry.gov.uk/registeradeath](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/registeradeath)

*Please be advised that drop-in appointments are not available at University Hospital.*

Coventry Register Office is situated at Cheylesmore Manor House, Manor House Drive, Coventry, CV1 2ND.

Please be aware that there is limited car parking available.

It is not advisable to make funeral arrangements until the registration has been completed and the appropriate registration documentation has been obtained.

The Registrar will issue you with a certificate for burial or cremation which you will need to give to the Bereavement Services Officer at the hospital or your chosen Funeral Director if you are making your own arrangements.

## Patient Information

### **The Funeral**

There are different funeral options available to you and your family. A Chaplain will meet you in person, or telephone you to discuss the options available as well as any concerns you may have regarding your baby's funeral.

You and your family are able to choose a funeral provided by the hospital, or to make your own private arrangements.

### **Hospital Funerals**

The hospital can arrange a burial or cremation for your baby. The Chaplain supporting you and your family will advise you regarding your options. For families within Coventry and Warwickshire, hospital funerals will be provided within the parent's local area.

There are a number of options for burial and cremation:

### **Communal Monthly Burial**

In the communal monthly burial, your baby will be buried in a communal grave that is shared with other babies. The funeral service is conducted by a Hospital Chaplain and there may be other families present. Families are able to bring flowers or a small keepsake with them to remain at the grave. Formal memorial stones or any permanent ground works are not permitted for babies buried in the communal grave.

## Patient Information

### **Individual Burial in the Communal Grave**

This is a funeral service that is individual to you and your family and your baby is laid to rest in the communal grave with other babies. A Hospital Chaplain will conduct the funeral service for your baby. Families are able to bring flowers or a small keepsake with them to remain at the grave. Formal memorial stones or any permanent ground works are not permitted for babies buried in the communal grave.

### **Individual Burial in a Private Grave**

This a funeral service that is individual to you, your family and your baby, where your baby is laid to rest in a private grave. A Hospital Chaplain will be available to conduct your baby's funeral if you require. You may also contact your own choice of minister or celebrant to conduct this service for you. Families are permitted to place permanent ground works, including memorial stones, etc. around their baby's grave after a necessary amount of time has passed according to regulations set by Coventry Bereavement Services, part of Coventry City Council.

### **Cremation**

A cremation service individual to you, your family and your baby can be provided, a short service is held at a local crematorium and a Hospital Chaplain will be available to conduct your baby's funeral if you require. You may also contact your own choice of minister or celebrant to conduct this service for you. Flowers are permitted. Ashes are usually available for collection from the crematorium within 2-3 days.

### **Private Funeral Arrangements**

If you decide to make arrangements yourself you will need to select a Funeral Director of your choice. They can help and advise you regarding your options and what is available locally. The Hospital Bereavement Services Team will help ensure that your chosen Funeral Director has the necessary paperwork to proceed with your private arrangements.

## Patient Information

### **Baby Book of Remembrance**

The hospital has a Baby Book of Remembrance, which is kept in the hospital chapel. If you would like to make an entry for your baby, the Chaplain or Bereavement Support Specialist Midwife will be able to give you the appropriate form.

A service of remembrance is held each year in the hospital chapel to remember babies who have died.

### **The Role of the Obstetrician/Paediatrician**

If you have been seen by a Consultant Obstetrician/Paediatrician, they will be informed that your baby has died and you will be invited to see him/her to discuss possible reasons for your baby's death.

The results of any post mortem, placental histology and other investigations will be discussed at this appointment. Occasionally the results may be delayed. Under these circumstances you will be given the option of rescheduling your appointment.

A member of our Bereavement Support Team will contact you prior to your follow-up appointment to offer you any support and assistance with formulating a list of questions you may wish to ask. They will also accompany you to the appointment if you so wish.

### **Further Advice and Support**

Further advice and support is available for you, your partner and your family if you wish. The University Hospital currently runs three support groups that are staffed by members of our Bereavement Support Team:

## Patient Information

### **Miscarriage and Early Loss Support Group**

This group is for parents and family members who have experienced the loss of a baby early in pregnancy or have experienced a miscarriage. This group is held in the University Hospital Faith Centre on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 10.00am -12:00midday.

### **The Hope Group**

This group is for parents and family members who are pregnant following a previous loss. This group is held in the University Hospital Faith Centre on the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 10.30 am -12:00midday.

### **Parenting After Loss Support Group**

This group is for parents who would like to share support with other parents who have had a previous baby loss. This group is held in the University Hospital Faith Centre on the 4th Tuesday of every month from 10.00am - 11:30am.

### **Other Support Available to You**

As well as those already mentioned, there are many other Health Care Professionals available to provide support and advice, including your GP, Community Midwife and your Health Visitor. In addition to these individuals, there are a number of health and support organisations involved in bereavement care that may be helpful.

### **S.A.N.D.S. (Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Society)**

020 7436 5881 (national helpline) [www.uk-sands.org](http://www.uk-sands.org)

07896 500 237 (Coventry & District group)

## Patient Information

### **Twins Trust (for twins or multiple births) - Bereavement Support Information**

<https://twinstrust.org/bereavement.html>

### **A.R.C. (Antenatal Results and Choices)**

0845 077 2290 / [www.arc-uk.org](http://www.arc-uk.org)

### **Child Bereavement UK**

0800 0288 840 / [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

### **Miscarriage Association**

01924 200799 / [www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

### **Child Bereavement UK**

01908 550 895 / [mksupport@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:mksupport@childbereavementuk.org)

### **Sophia support group, Nuneaton**

[sophiagroup16@gmail.com](mailto:sophiagroup16@gmail.com)

[www.facebook.com/SophiaPLS](http://www.facebook.com/SophiaPLS)

## Patient Information

### **Counselling**

There are community and charitable organisations that are available who provide support through qualified counselling services. You do not need a health care professional's referral to access these services.

#### **The Laura Centre**

0116 2544341 / [www.thelauracentrecandw.org.uk](http://www.thelauracentrecandw.org.uk)

#### **The Lighthouse Centre**

024 7644 0095 / [www.lighthousechristiancare.co.uk](http://www.lighthousechristiancare.co.uk)

#### **The Acorn Centre**

024 7638 1878 / [www.acorncentrewarks.org.uk](http://www.acorncentrewarks.org.uk)

### **Useful Telephone Numbers**

University Hospital (main switchboard) - 024 7696 4000

Bereavement Support Specialist Midwives - 024 7696 7310

Chaplaincy Team - 024 7696 7515

University Hospital Bereavement Office - 024 7696 5835

Coventry Register Office - 024 7683 3141

Coventry Bereavement Services - 024 7678 5493



## Patient Information

### Example of Funeral Consent Form for Parents

This is to confirm that (name(s) of parent(s)) .....

**(Have)/(Have not yet) (please delete as appropriate) decided to have a funeral for their baby .....**

Arranged by UHCW NHS Trust

Family will make their own private arrangements

**If not yet decided , parents will contact the member of staff named below by [date] ..... to inform of their decision.**

Where UHCW NHS Trust is to make the funeral arrangements, all available options have been fully explained and the parents have decided on:

#### **Shared burial service in a shared grave at Lentons Lane Cemetery in Coventry or Clover Leaf baby garden in Rugby**

It has been explained that your baby will be buried in a shared plot with other babies and that other families may attend the funeral service at the same time. This will be a broadly Christian service of burial.

Flowers, teddies etc. can be put on the grave at the time of the funeral and in future.

Permanent memorials including name plaques cannot be put on the grave. When the grave is full a stone is put on the grave with dates of burials that have taken place.

#### **Individual burial service in a shared grave at Lentons Lane Cemetery in Coventry or Clover Leaf baby garden in Rugby**

It has been explained that your baby will be buried in a shared plot with other babies. This will be a broadly Christian service of burial unless a different faith chaplain has been requested. Families may have their own minister/faith leader take the funeral if preferred.

Flowers, teddies etc. can be put on the grave at the time of the funeral and in future.

Permanent memorials including name plaques cannot be put on the grave. When the grave is full a stone is put on the grave with dates of burials that have taken place.

#### **An individual service and burial in a private grave.**

This will be a broadly Christian service of burial unless a different faith chaplain has been requested. Families may have their own minister/faith leader take the funeral if preferred. The grave is owned by and is the responsibility of the family.

# Patient Information

## Cremation

Ashes are normally available following cremation but UHCW NHS Trust is not able to guarantee this.

## Own private arrangements

Parents have been offered information about additional options available to them (for example music, reading, etc.) include details below.

**Parents will attend the funeral**

**Parents may attend the funeral**

**Parents will not attend the funeral and:**

Have been informed of the details

Have declined information about the funeral

Parents are aware that the funeral will be held on (date) ..... at  
(time)..... at (location) .....

Parent(s) name(s) (please print):

...../.....

Signature(s) ...../.....

Date .....

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Name of staff member taking consent (please print):

.....

Job title .....

Phone number .....

Signature .....