

## Information for parents following the loss of a newborn baby

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net).

We are sorry this reaches you at such a difficult time.

Your midwife will be supporting you with spending time with your baby and will answer any questions you have about the next few hours and days.

During your stay in hospital you may find it helpful to talk with the hospital chaplain. The chaplaincy is available for everyone and is not dependent on belonging to any faith group. If you would like a naming and blessing service for your baby, please ask and we will contact the chaplaincy staff for you.

### Post mortem

Your doctor will speak to the Coroner's office and decide if the Coroner needs to be informed of your baby's death. The Coroner can then direct the doctor to issue a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, or (very rarely) may order a post mortem examination.

If the Coroner does not want a post mortem, you can choose to have one if you and your doctor think it might provide useful information about why your baby died, or that it may help assess the risk of the same thing happening in a future pregnancy.

You would be asked to sign a form to give consent to this and you would have choices about the extent of the examination.

The post mortem would take place in a specialist centre in St Michael's Hospital, Bristol. Bereavement support staff would keep in contact with you to let you know when your baby was taken there, and when they returned.

You can read more in the '*Understanding why your baby died*' section of your Sands Bereavement Support Book.

### Registering your baby's death

If there is no Coroner's post mortem, your midwife or doctor will give you a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death before you go home.

You will need to make an appointment at the local registration office to register your baby's birth and death. You should telephone 0345 155 1002 to make an. There are registration offices in Barnstaple and Bideford. You will need to take the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death with you.

## Funeral arrangements

When you feel able to think about funeral arrangements, these are the choices you have:

- You can arrange the funeral yourself.
- You can ask a funeral director to do this for you.
- The bereavement support staff can make arrangements through a local funeral director for you. You will be able to decide on the type of funeral (burial or cremation), date and time. There would be no charge for the funeral.

You should be aware that because your baby was so small, we are not able to promise that there would be any ashes from your baby following a cremation. However, there are usually some ashes remaining and these can be returned to you, or be buried in the Crematorium Baby Garden of Remembrance.

Your funeral service can be taken by your own minister/faith leader if you have one, the hospital chaplain or a civil celebrant, or you can have a simple committal but no service.

Arrangements can be made for you to see your baby again, with family and friends if you wish, prior to the funeral, either at the hospital or at the funeral directors.

## Book of Remembrance

The Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS) Book of Remembrance is kept in the hospital chapel. If you would like an entry for your baby, your midwife can arrange this for you.

## After you go home

The bereavement support staff will need to know your wishes regarding your baby's funeral, and will be able to answer any questions. Please phone them as soon as you feel able on **01271 322404**.

### **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust  
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple  
Devon EX31 4JB  
Tel. 01271 322577  
[www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk)

© Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust  
This leaflet was designed by the Communications Department.  
Tel: 01271 313970 / email: [ndht.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.contactus@nhs.net)