

When your baby dies



Special Care Baby Unit

On behalf of all our staff, we would like to express our deepest sympathy to you and your family following the death of your baby.

We hope this booklet will be helpful to you to at this most sad and difficult time.

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Can I spend time with my baby?

Following the death of your baby you and your family may wish to spend time with your baby. If you wish to bath, cuddle dress or sit with your baby please talk to the nursing staff, who can support you at this time. After your baby has died, and until arrangements have been made with a funeral director, your baby will remain at the hospital.

If you would like to spend some time with your baby once they have been taken to the Mortuary, please ask the nurses or the relatives' officer and it will be arranged for you.

If you would like your baby to be dressed in their own clothes or have a toy with them, please bring these with you. We have hand-made memory boxes for keepsakes in which you might like to keep mementos of your baby. We can, with your permission, take photographs, locks of hair, as well as hand and foot prints for you to keep. If you do not feel up to having these keepsakes straight away, we can keep them with your baby's notes until you are ready to have them.

What is the Hospital Chaplain's role?

Your baby's death may have been sudden and you may not have had time to consider Baptism or a blessing.

Our hospital chaplains are here to care for the spiritual, emotional and religious needs of people of all faiths and none. There is always a Chaplain on call.

Death often raises all sorts of questions and a chaplain can help you to work through these issues. Often people like the chaplain lead prayers after death. These can be said at the bedside or in another place. Please don't hesitate to ask for a chaplain. We can also contact other denominations and faith communities if you wish.

How can my family cope best with such tragic circumstances?

If you have other children, it will help them in the long term if you explain to them what has happened and make them feel as part of the grieving process as much as possible. They may wish to say goodbye to their brother or sister themselves. Although you may feel a little apprehensive about this, it is important that you allow them to do so. Reality is often less frightening than a child's imagination. Sharing your feelings with them can also be beneficial since it allows you to grieve together. We have special books for siblings that explains about the death of a baby, please ask a member of staff if you wish to use these.

At a later date when you have had time to look back over this period, you may find that you still have questions. You may find it helpful to come to the hospital and discuss any concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact your Consultant's secretary or a member of the nursing staff to arrange this. You will always be welcome on SCBU if you would like to come back to visit us.

Telephone SCBU on **01483 464834** or **01483 571122** ext **4701 / 6378**

How do I register my baby's death?

The death should be registered within five working days provided it has not been referred to the coroner.

Registration takes place in the area of which the death occurred.

The call centre number for making an appointment with the Registrar is: 0300 200 1002

Prior appointments must be made at all Registrars.

When you go to the Registrar's you will need to answer the following questions:

1. The date and place of death of your baby.
2. The baby's first name and surname
3. The baby's date and place of birth.

And to register the death you will need the following:-

1. Certificate showing the cause of death.
2. The parent's full names, home address and occupations.
3. Your baby's full names, date and place of birth and home address.
4. If you have not registered your baby's birth you will also need to do this.

What will I receive at the Registrars

At the registrars, you will receive the following:-

- 1. Death Certificate.** This is a certified copy of the entry made into the register by the Registrar. You will probably require more than one, and there is a charge for each certificate. There is a small charge made by the registrar for providing this certificate.
- 2. Green Form.** This needs to be given to your funeral director before the funeral can take place, (except for deaths where a coroner's post mortem has taken place, when this form is not required).
- 3. White Form (G13).** At the hospital you will have been given this form. When completed this has to be given to your Funeral Director who will present it at the Mortuary as authorisation from you to collect your baby.

How do I obtain the death certificate?

If your baby's death is not a Coroner's case, we will try to give you the death certificate before you leave the hospital. However, you may need to collect this from the Relatives Office.

Please contact the Relatives Officer after 10am on **01483 303361** (direct line) to make an appointment to collect the certificate and any of your baby's personal effects. There is an answer phone and a message can be left. An appointment may have to be made for the following day.

Please do not come to the hospital without an appointment as your paperwork may not be ready for you.

Appointments are usually made for the afternoon. Hospital appointments are made to coincide with the opening times of the Registrar.

The relative's office is closed at weekends and bank holidays. The Registrar of deaths and most funeral directors are not able to process paperwork until the next working day.

What is a Coroner's Case?

If your baby has died unexpectedly, it may be necessary to be referred to H M Coroner. The Coroner may require a full post mortem. Your baby's post mortem will usually take place at St George's Hospital.

When does a Post Mortem happen?

If there is no doubt of the cause of death, then a post mortem need not take place. However, the doctor may ask permission for a post mortem so that everyone can have the reassurance that all possible information about your baby's death has been obtained and to establish the precise cause of death. If this is the case, the doctor will discuss it with you, explain what is involved and if you are in agreement, ask you to sign a consent form. If your baby needs a post mortem you will not receive the Death Certificate before you leave hospital. The Coroner's Officer is responsible for issuing the certificate and will contact you directly.

How do I plan for my baby's funeral?

If the death has to be reported to the Coroner, this may affect the date that the funeral can be held, but provisional arrangements may still be made with the Funeral Director. In this case, please contact the Coroner's office or the relatives' office for further advice.

Most funerals are arranged by a Funeral Director. A list of Funeral Directors is available on request from the Relatives office or Coroners office. The relatives officer may also be able to advise on where to get help with funeral costs.

Once you have the decision it is worthwhile making tentative arrangements, which you can confirm later. Funeral arrangements can be made before the death has been registered. If the death has been referred to the Coroner, ask the Coroner's office or the Relatives' Officer for advice regarding funeral arrangements, in order to ascertain if there has to be a delay for any reason.

Book of Remembrance

Guildford Cathedral and the Royal Surrey County Hospital, as may your own church, have Books of Remembrance in which your baby's name can be written.

How is my family doctor informed?

Your GP will be notified by the nurse caring for your baby within one to two days. You may wish to seek the help and support of your own GP.

Other resources that maybe helpful for you:

SANDS (Stillbirth & Neonatal Death)

Supporting those affected by the death of a baby

- **Helpline:** 0207 436 5881
- **Email:** helpline@uk-sands.org

Surrey SANDS

- **Helpline:** 07817 410075
- **Email:** surrey.sands@btinternet.com
- **Website:** www.surrey.sands.org.uk

Farnborough SANDS 07792 239593

- **Email:** support@farnboroughsands.co.uk

The Lullaby Trust

Specialist support for bereaved families and anyone affect by sudden infant death

- **Helpline:** 0808 802 6868
- **Opening hours:**
Mon to Fri 10am–5pm, weekend and bank holidays 6pm–10pm
- **Email:** support@lullabytrust.org
- **Website:** www.lullabytrust.org.uk

BLISS

Support, including after bereavement, for the family of a premature baby

- **Adviceline:** 0500 618140 freephone
- **Family Support Helpline:** 0207436 5881
- **Email:** hello@bliss.org.uk
- **Website:** www.bliss.org.uk

Child Bereavement Trust UK

Support for bereaved parents and families.

- **Helpline:** 01494 568900
- **Website:** www.childbereavement.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends

Support and counselling for all bereaved parents and their families

- **Helpline:** 0845 123 2304
- **Website:** www.tcf.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

- **Helpline:** 0844 477 9400
- Epsom, Ewell & Mole valley branch 0802 393 7238
- Guildford & Waverley branch 01483 0565660
- South East Surrey 01737 772834
- Spelthorne, Chertsey 01932 571177
- **Email:** helpline@cruse.org.uk
- **Website:** www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

The Compassionate Friends

Supporting bereaved parents and their families after a child dies

- **Helpline:** 0345 123 2304 (10am–4pm / 7pm–10pm)
- **Website:** www.tcf.org.uk

Bereaved parents network – Care For The Family

Offers comfort and hope to those who have lost a child of any age in any circumstances through a telephone support network, events and regular email newsletter. There is also a weekend for bereaved adult siblings.

- **Telephone:** 0290810800
- **Email:** mail@cff.org.uk
- **Website:** www.careforthefamily.co.uk

Child Death Helpline (national charity)

Helpline for anyone affected by the death of a child from pre-birth to the death of an adult child, however long ago or whatever the circumstances. It is staffed by experienced and trained bereaved parent volunteers.

- 0800 282986 (**landline**) or 0808 8006019 (**mobile**)
- **Website:** <http://childdeathhelpline.org.uk>
- **Open:**
 - Mondays to Fridays 10am–1pm
 - Tuesdays and Wednesday 1pm–4pm
 - Every evening 7pm–10pm
- Interpreter service is available

Royal Surrey County Hospital

- **Telephone:** 01483 571122

Contact details

Special Care Baby Unit

Telephone: 01483 464834

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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