

Bereavement support: Information for parents of babies who have died in hospital

Please accept our sincere sympathy to you, your family and friends in your bereavement. This leaflet will explain what happens next and where to get help and support in the coming weeks and months.

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Introduction

Bereavement is a time of grief and sorrow – this is a natural and normal part of your loss. It is also unfortunately a period during which a number of matters must be dealt with. All of this can prove bewildering and stressful and we hope this booklet will help and assist you during this difficult time.

It may help to see your baby after death. A member of staff on Buscot Ward can arrange this. The consultant on the unit at the time will be available to see you.

Your baby's named consultant will offer you an appointment about six weeks after your baby's death to answer any questions you may have.

An appointment with an obstetrician can be arranged.

You may find it helpful to write down your questions, as sometimes it is hard to remember everything you wanted to ask.

Your baby's belongings will be returned to you or you may decide to leave them with your baby.

What happens to my baby?

Your baby will be taken to the hospital mortuary, until released to the family or a funeral director of your choice. The mortuary is open 7am to 4pm Monday to Friday excluding Public Holidays. Outside of these hours please contact the duty mortuary technician via hospital switchboard (0118 322 5111).

The funeral director or family member collecting your baby from the mortuary will need to provide a copy of the green certificate (Form 9) which you will be given by the Registrar upon registering the death.

What happens next?

In most cases, the unit will give you a medical certificate stating the cause of death before you leave the hospital. However, sometimes you may be asked to come back to the unit at a later date to pick up the certificate. Staff will be happy to bring the certificate to you away from the clinical area if you prefer.

You can contact a funeral director immediately. You do not need to wait for the medical certificate to be issued.

Will a post mortem be carried out?

A coroner can request a post mortem examination. This is unusual.

The hospital can request that a post mortem examination is carried out, but only with your consent.

You can request that a post mortem be carried out.

Registering the death

Once you have the medical certificate you must register your baby's death at the Register Office.

The birth and death may be registered at the same time.

If you want to register your baby in the father's name and you are not married, then both of you will need to be present at the Register Office.

The death must be registered within five working days at the Register Office for the area in which the death occurred.

You will need to make a prior appointment, tell them you are coming to register both the birth and death if that is applicable.

If you are unable to get to the Register Office in this area, you can go to a Register Office in your hometown in England or Wales but they will not register the death. The details will be passed on to the Registrar for the area in which your baby died and the certificate will be sent to you by post a few days later. This may cause delays in arranging the funeral.



Reading Registration Service (Registration of births, marriages and deaths)

Civic Offices

Bridge Street

Reading RG1 2LU

Tel: **0118 937 3533** or visit **www.reading.gov.uk/deaths** to book appointment. Registrations by prior appointment only.

Opening hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Wed: 9.30am to 4.30pm

Please note that there is no parking at the Civic Offices. The nearest car parks are at the Oracle, Holy Brook or Broad Street Mall.

At the Register Office

What information to bring with you

The person who goes to the Register Office with the hospital certificate must, whenever possible, be able to give the following particulars:

- The date and place (ward name and hospital name) of death and the parents' usual address.
- The full names and surname (spelt correctly) of the baby.
- The date and place of birth (town or county) of your baby.
- The date of admission to hospital.

What the Registrar will give you

- A green certificate (Form 9), which you should give to your funeral director as soon as possible. There is no charge made for this. The mortuary will also need a copy of the green certificate (Form 9) in order to release your baby to an appointed undertaker or family member.
- A notification or registration of death form (BD8) for use in connection with Department of Work and Pensions benefits. This is also free.

Arranging the funeral

You can contact a funeral director as soon as it is convenient after the death. They will help you and advise you with the necessary arrangements.

Most funeral directors do not charge for the funeral of babies. You can find a list of local funeral directors in the Yellow Pages directory.

Unless you have already done so, the funeral director will notify your chosen religious cleric or lay representative and he or she may visit you to talk about the funeral service.

Burials may be in a churchyard, local authority or private cemetery. The same applies to cremated remains that may be buried or scattered in a garden of remembrance or a favourite place. Please remember that if you wish to use your own garden, you may someday want to move house (ask for the Trust leaflet entitled 'Burial on private land').

Who can help and support you?

Alongside your family and friends, your GP, health centre staff, social worker or religious community may offer support. At the end of this leaflet, there is a list of local and national organisations that may be able to give you practical and emotional help, advice and support at this difficult time.

The Chaplaincy

Our team of chaplains provide for different faith and belief groups, and are available to offer you support and guidance in your grief. You can ring the chaplains directly on 0118 322 7105, or you can ask a member of staff, the receptionists or the switchboard to page them.

Talk to us / PALS

If you have a comment about the service we provide – positive or negative – we really would like to hear it. Your feedback will help us to improve and develop our service. Please speak to a member of the nursing staff on the ward.

If you would prefer not to speak to the nursing team, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer you 'on the spot' support and advice, as well as practical information at a time when you may feel confused and anxious. PALS can be contacted on 0118 322 8338 or ask a member of staff, the receptionists or the switchboard to contact them. They can also be contacted via emailing PALS@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

If you still have questions regarding the care or death of your baby, PALS can help facilitate a meeting with the consultant responsible for their care.

Other Trust leaflets available

Please ask the ward staff if you would like a copy of any of the following:

- Caring for your child's body at home
- Burial on private land
- Bereavement Support
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Child Death Review Process

From April 2008, the government asked local authorities to set up a process to review all child deaths. The Chair of the Child Death Overview Panel for Berkshire has written a letter to tell parents about this process; a copy of that letter will be given to you.

Useful organisations

- **Child Bereavement Charity** Tel: 0800 028 8840 support@childbereavementuk.org
Information for bereaved children and families
- **Child-Death Helpline** Tel: 0800 282986/0808 800 6019 contact@childdeathhelpline.org
- **Lullaby Trust** Tel: 0808 802 6868 support@lullabytrust.org.uk
- **The Cot Death Society** contact@cotdeathsociety.org.uk
- **Cruse Bereavement Care** Tel: 0808 808 1677
Cruse is a support group for all bereaved people.
- **Daisy's Dream** Tel: 0118 934 2604 www.daisysdream.org.uk
Support service for bereaved children in the Berkshire area.
- **Stillbirth and Neonatal Death** Tel: 0808 164 3332 helpline@sands.org.uk
- **Winston's Wish** helpline: 08088 020021
Information and advice for bereaved children.

Other useful numbers

- **Citizens Advice Bureaux**
Reading RG1 2JB Tel: 0344 411 1306 / 0808 278 7819
Henley Tel 0808 278 7907
Tadley Tel 0344 411 1306
- **Reading Register Office** Tel : 0118 937 3533
- **The Samaritans** Tel: 116123 (free) www.samaritans.org
- **National Bereavement Helpline** Tel: 0800 0246121
- **Baby Loss Information and Support** tommys.org

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Notes / questions

Please use this space to keep notes or write down any questions you may want to ask later.

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Alison Buchanan, Buscot Ward, March 2021

Next review due: March 2023

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
London Road
Reading RG1 5AN
0118 322 5111 (Switchboard)
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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