

# Baby Bereavement



## Introduction



We are very sorry that your baby has died and our thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time.

We have put together this guide, which we hope will help you to understand the registration process and answer any questions that you may have.

## Miscarriage, stillbirth & neonatal death - if and when to register your baby



### **If your baby was born before 24 weeks of pregnancy**

The grief that parents experience when a baby dies in early pregnancy can be much the same as when a baby is stillborn. But for legal purposes, when a baby is born, and shows no sign of life before 24 completed weeks of pregnancy, this is called a late foetal loss. This terminology can be upsetting, and we understand that it may feel as if it underestimates the significance of what has happened. Unfortunately, in these circumstances a baby cannot be formally registered at a register office.

However, the Princess Anne hospital will give parents a hospital certificate of birth to commemorate their baby or you can choose to download and print a certificate from the Sands website [www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk) and other organisations.

### **If your baby was stillborn after 24 completed weeks of pregnancy**

If your baby was born after 24 weeks and shows no sign of life, then this is called a stillbirth. You need to register your baby's stillbirth within 6 weeks in England and Wales. The hospital will assist you to book an appointment with the Registrar and will then give you a medical certificate of stillbirth, to hand to the Registrar.

### **If your baby was born alive at any stage of pregnancy and then died**

If your baby is born alive but then dies, you will need to go to a Register Office, and register the baby's birth and death. The hospital are able to contact the Register Office and organise an appointment for you to register both events at the same time. If the baby's death has been

reported to the Coroner, the process is slightly different. The hospital staff or the Coroner's Officer will advise you.

The midwife or doctor will give you a medical certificate of neonatal death to take to the Registrar to register the baby's death. The Registrar will keep the medical certificate and will give you a death certificate. The Registrar will also give you a form to permit burial or cremation. You should give this to the funeral director or, if the hospital is arranging the funeral, to the hospital. The funeral director or hospital will help you with making choices for the baby's funeral and guide you through the process.

You don't need a form from the hospital to register your baby's birth. The hospital will notify the Register Office automatically. In these circumstances, the Registrar will provide you with one full birth certificate. You can purchase additional certificates from the Registrar if you would like to.

## Questions you may have

### **Can I name my Baby?**

Many parents choose to name their baby. This gives the baby his or her own unique identity and can make it easier to talk about him or her. Some parents decide not to give their baby a name; some continue to use a nickname that they used during the pregnancy. You don't have to enter a first name for your baby in the register, but must decide on a surname. You cannot add a name or change the name you have given after you have registered.

When a baby is extremely premature or has died some time before the birth, it can be very hard for the staff to determine the baby's sex straight away. This is a difficult situation for everyone and especially for parents.

When it comes to choosing a name, you may prefer to wait until your baby's sex can be confirmed by a specialist or at a post mortem before you choose a name. If you decide not to have a post mortem, you could decide your baby's sex for yourself. Alternatively, you could choose a name that is suitable for a boy or a girl.



## Who can register a birth or a stillbirth?

### If you are married or in a civil partnership

Both parents can come to the Register Office together to register the birth if they wish to, but if the natural parents are married or in a civil partnership to each other, only one of them needs to attend. Whoever registers, both parents' details will be included in the register.

### If you are not married or in a civil partnership

If the birth mother goes to the Register Office alone, only her details will be recorded in the stillbirth or birth register. If the natural parents want both their names in the register, they must attend the Register Office together.

In the cases where the birth mother is too unwell to attend the Register Office, please contact the Registrar to discuss alternative options as soon as possible.

### Who can register a neonatal death?

As the parents, you may decide to attend the Register Office together. The death can be registered by one parent regardless of whether you are married or in a civil partnership or not. If neither parent is able to register the baby's death, then another relative, someone else who was present at the death, or a member of the hospital staff, can register the death instead. Please contact the Register Office for further advice before attending the appointment.

### Where can I register?

The registration should take place in the district where the birth, death or stillbirth occurred. This is because the records will be held in that district in the future. However, you can go to any register office in England or Wales to register the birth, death, or stillbirth, but you will need to remember that this may delay the funeral as the necessary paperwork will take longer.





## **What do I need to bring to the registration?**

It is not a requirement to bring ID for yourself to the appointment. However, there is a complex correction process with costs involved if any errors are made, so if you have documents such as your birth certificates, passports, driving licences and/ or marriage/civil partnership certificates (if applicable) to hand, this will help with the accuracy of the information to be recorded. Once the information has been entered onto the computer, the Registrar will print off the register page and ask you to check over the information very carefully.

We understand this is a very difficult time for you, but it is really important that the information recorded is correct. If you notice anything is wrong, please tell the Registrar so they can change it. If you sign the register page, and you notice that it is incorrect afterwards it is very difficult, and sometimes impossible to amend at a later date. The Registrar will also sign the register page and once they have done so, will produce and explain all the paperwork you will be walking away with.

## **What happens during the registration?**

The Registrar will invite you into a private office, and introduce themselves to you. Then they will take the medical certificate from you that the hospital gave to you. The Registrar will need to check it very carefully to ensure that the doctor or registered midwife has completed the forms correctly before the registration can take place.

## **What will the Registrar ask me?**

The Registrar will ask you questions about the date, and place of birth, stillbirth, and/or death, and ask you questions about yourselves – such as your names, any previous names, occupations, addresses, dates of birth and marriage or civil partnership (if applicable).

## **What documents will I receive from the Registrar?**

If you are registering a stillbirth, the Registrar will give you a certificate of registration of stillbirth. This is free of charge and confirms that the stillbirth has been registered. If you would like a full certificate of stillbirth, which is a certified copy of the complete entry in the register, the

Registrar will provide you with one certificate. You can purchase more if you wish to. You will also be given a form to permit burial or cremation, which you should give to the funeral director, crematorium or the hospital if they are arranging the funeral.

If you are registering the birth and death of a baby, the Registrar will give you a full birth and a death certificate, which provides all the details entered into the registers. You will also be given a green form, which allows the funeral to go ahead. This needs to be taken directly to the funeral directors or hospital.

Lastly, the Registrar will provide you with a Tell Us Once code: this is a unique code that notifies all government organisations as to what's happened, so you don't need to contact them individually. This will prevent any child benefit and national insurance information coming through to you at a later date, and will also help with any financial support that you need to apply for, particularly paternity or maternity leave for example.

### **How long will the appointment last for?**

The appointment will last approximately 30 – 45 minutes. Here at Southampton Register Office we will endeavour to make sure that you do not have to wait in a busy waiting area and will try to find a more private area for you. However, we cannot always guarantee this. We do have a small car park that you are welcome to use if there are spaces, and alternative paid parking is nearby.

### **How do I contact the Registrar?**

The hospital staff will offer to make the appointment with the Registrar on your behalf, or you can choose to do this yourself by telephoning the Register Office on 02380 915327.

Our telephone lines do get very busy, so if you cannot get through to us straight away, please email your name and contact number to us at [registrars@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:registrars@southampton.gov.uk) – marking your email “urgent appointment needed”. We will endeavour to telephone you straight back to make an appointment for you and answer any questions you may have.

## Where do I find information about a funeral for my baby?

Southampton's Bereavement Services can offer advice and support on funeral options available for babies and infants at Southampton Crematorium or at any of our Cemeteries.

There is a beautiful Garden of Remembrance dedicated to babies and infants at Southampton Crematorium called The Daisy Garden. It is a place where families can spend time to remember their own baby in a peaceful setting. Many parents take comfort from knowing that their babies are not alone.

You can choose from a wide range of memorials, urns and keepsakes especially designed for babies and infants. Families are always welcome to visit Bereavement Services to discuss anything from funeral options to memorials, where the friendly and approachable team will sensitively help you with your choices.

If you would like further information about The Daisy Garden or how the Bereavement Team can help you please contact:

✉ [bereavement.services@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:bereavement.services@southampton.gov.uk)

☎ 023 8076 6405

The hospital staff will also help you with your funeral arrangements and will be able to guide you as you think about the details that are important to you.



## Where can I get further information and support?

### Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)

Sands is a national charity offering information and emotional support when a baby dies before, during, or shortly after birth. They support anyone affected by the death of a baby for as long as it's needed. At Sands there are people who understand what it's like, because many of them have been through this devastating experience themselves. You may not want anything from them right away. They are there to help whenever you feel you need it. That may be now or in a few weeks, months or even years.



As well as supporting partners, Sands also helps other members of the family and the many other people who may be touched by a baby's death, including friends, colleagues and health care staff. All are welcome to contact Sands for support and information.

Bereavement support helpline: ☎ **0808 164 3332**

✉ **helpline@sands.org.uk**

[www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk)

National online community: **sands.community/login**

The Southampton branch of Sands is an active group which runs friendly support group meetings monthly for those affected by the death of a baby. To contact a local befriender:

☎ **07970 981550**

✉ **sands.support@hotmail.co.uk**

[www.southamptonsands.org.uk](http://www.southamptonsands.org.uk)

**f** **Southampton Sands**



## ARC

Support for parents who experience a late miscarriage or loss after 24 weeks following a diagnosis of foetal anomaly (parents who decide to continue with the pregnancy and those who end the pregnancy)

Helpline ☎ **0845 077 2290** or mobile ☎ **0207 713 7486**

✉ [info@arc-uk.org](mailto:info@arc-uk.org)

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



## Bliss

The Special Care Baby Charity provide support, advice and information for families of babies in intensive care and special care, including in situations of loss and for future pregnancies.

Helpline ☎ **0800 801 0322**

✉ [hello@bliss.org.uk](mailto:hello@bliss.org.uk)

[www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)



## Child Bereavement UK

Supporting families when a baby or child dies and when a child is bereaved, including support in another pregnancy.

Freephone ☎ **0800 02 888 40**

✉ [support@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:support@childbereavementuk.org)

[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)



## Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse is there to support you after the death of someone close. Find out how get help for yourself or for a child by reading our articles, or contacting them or face-to-face services

☎ **0800 808 1677**

✉ [info@cruse.org.uk](mailto:info@cruse.org.uk)

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)



## The Lullaby Trust

Offers emotional support for families bereaved by the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or child.

Bereavement support helpline ☎ **0808 802 6868**

✉ [support@lullabytrust.org.uk](mailto:support@lullabytrust.org.uk)

[www.lullabytrust.org.uk/](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/)



## Simon Says

Supporting Hampshire children who have a significant person in their life who has died

☎ **Helpline 023 8064 7550**

✉ [info@simonsays.org.uk](mailto:info@simonsays.org.uk)

[www.simonsays.org.uk](http://www.simonsays.org.uk)



## Free, specialist baby loss counselling.

### The Firgrove Centre

Offering free support and information for an unintended pregnancy as well as pre and post abortion, post-adoption, miscarriage and baby loss counselling.

**107 Firgrove Road, Shirley, Southampton**

☎ **023 8078 3134**

[www.thefirgrovecentre.org.uk](http://www.thefirgrovecentre.org.uk)



### The Lilies in Eastleigh

The Lilies offer a service to anyone in Eastleigh or the surrounding area who is experiencing emotional difficulties following an miscarriage or baby loss.

☎ **023 8065 2464**

[www.pregnancychoicesdirectory.com/centres/eastleigh](http://www.pregnancychoicesdirectory.com/centres/eastleigh)



**This leaflet has been produced by  
Southampton Registration Services  
with the help of:**

**Sands**

**Princess Anne Hospital**

**Southampton Bereavement Services**

## **Southampton Registration Service**

Southampton Register Office  
6A Bugle Street  
Southampton  
SO14 2AJ

Monday, 9am – 4.30pm

Tuesday, 10am – 4.30pm

Wednesday, 9am – 4.30pm

Thursday, 9am – 4.30pm

Friday, 9am – 4pm

✉ [registrars@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:registrars@southampton.gov.uk)

☎ 023 8091 5327