

## Parental information and advice following your bereavement on Special Care Unit

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

### The loss of your baby on the Special Care Unit

We would like to express our sympathy for the loss of your baby. At this time, you may find it difficult to take in the many things that may be said to you.

The aim of this booklet is to give you important information and advice so you can make informed choices, with the support of your nurse, friends and family.

### Bereavement services

Please contact the bereavement support office at North Devon District Hospital as soon as you are able to. They will give you practical help, advice and support, including help with organising your baby's funeral if you wish.

The office is open weekdays 9am – 4pm. Telephone: 01271 322404.

### Grief

Everybody reacts in different ways to losing a baby. Apart from differences in personality, there are a variety of circumstances, cultures and beliefs that will influence the way you grieve. Although difficult to understand, these emotions are normal. Taking time to think about what you want for your baby is important, so go at your own pace.

We encourage you to ask questions, no matter how big or small. If the nurses cannot answer your questions, the chaplaincy department may be able to.

### Spiritual care

People have different needs following the loss of a baby. The chaplaincy can provide support for people of all faiths. Other faiths can be contacted in the community if you do not have links with a local representative of your faith.

We can contact the chaplaincy for you if you wish to speak to somebody.

## Creating memories

The nurse caring for you and your baby will provide you with a memory box to fill with precious keepsakes.

## Naming or blessing your baby

Some people find it helpful to have a ceremony for naming or blessing their baby. If you would like us to arrange a naming and blessing service for your baby, the nurse will contact the chaplaincy department or another appropriate person for you.

## Leaving the hospital

Once your baby has left the Special Care Unit (SCU), we can make arrangements for him/her to be taken to the viewing suite where you and your family can see your baby again if you wish. Please discuss this with one of the nurses or the bereavement support staff.

## Taking your baby home

If you would like to take your baby home, please talk to us about this.

## Registration of birth/death

In England and Wales, all births and deaths have to be registered by the Registrar of Births and Deaths. Registration must be completed before a baby can be buried or cremated.

The mother or father may register their baby's birth and death alone when they are married to each other. Parents who are not married to each other have to see the registrar together if they want to have the father's name entered in the birth register.

The registrar will ask for:

- The mother's name, occupation, date and place of birth, and any other names that the mother might have used, including maiden name if applicable
- The father's name, occupation, date and place of birth, and any other names that the father may have used
- The date of your baby's delivery

## Post-mortem examination

Your doctor will speak to the coroner's office to 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 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 if it may help assess the risk of the same thing happening in a future pregnancy. If you choose to do this, you will be asked to sign a form to give consent to this and you will choose the extent of the examination.

Should your baby need a post-mortem, this would take place in St Michael's Hospital, Bristol.

You can read more about this in the leaflet 'Deciding about a post mortem examination: information for parents'. Please ask your nurse or bereavement support worker if you would like one of these.

The post mortem results usually take 3 months to come back. You will be contacted by the consultant's secretary and offered an appointment to come and discuss the results when they have been received.

## **Funerals**

It is a requirement that your baby is buried or cremated. Take your time and discuss the options with your partner and family before deciding what arrangements you wish to make. Your choices include:

- Arranging the funeral yourself
- Asking a funeral director to arrange the funeral
- Asking the bereavement support staff to make arrangements through a local funeral director for you. You will be able to decide on the type of funeral, date and time. The service can be a burial or a cremation. 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 with no service.

## **Maternity pay**

When a baby is born, even for a short time, both parents who are entitled to full maternity/paternity leave and pay will still get this.

## **Outreach nursing staff**

We have specialist community neonatal outreach nurses who work alongside SCU. They will support you and your family at home following your bereavement.

## **The annual remembrance service**

A remembrance service is held annually for families who have lost a baby. Candles are lit in memory of each baby. Please tell staff if you do not wish to receive an invitation to the service.

## **The Book of Remembrance**

The Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (Sands) Book of Remembrance is kept in the Chapel/Prayer Room. Please tell staff if you would like to have your baby's name included.

## Useful contacts

### **Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (Sands)**

A self-help organisation for families whose baby has died.

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

Helpline: 0808 1643332

Local contact: [northdevonsands@gmail.com](mailto:northdevonsands@gmail.com)

North Devon Sands Facebook page.

### **Twins and Multiple Births Association (TAMBA)**

For parents who have lost one or both twins or more from multiple birth.

Bereavement Support Group: [www.tamba.org.uk/bereavement](http://www.tamba.org.uk/bereavement)

### **Child Bereavement UK**

This charity provides support and information to all affected by the death of a baby or child.

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Helpline: 0800 0288840

### **Coroner's office**

Tel: 01271 335359

### **North Devon Registration Service**

For registering a birth and/or death. Offices in Barnstable and Bideford.

Tel: 0345 1551002

### **Lullaby Trust**

For information on sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and risks (formally FSID, The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths)

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

Bereavement support helpline: 0808 802 6868

Email: [info@lullabytrust.org.uk](mailto:info@lullabytrust.org.uk)

### **Childhood bereavement network.org.uk**

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

### **Child Death Helpline**

For anyone affected by the death of a child at any age.

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

Tel: 0800 282986.

Freephone for mobiles: 0808 800 6019

### **The Compassionate Friends**

Offers support for bereaved parents and their families.

Tel: 0345 1232304

Email: [helpline@tcf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk)

## **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 e-mail [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.communications@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.communications@nhs.net)