

## Information for consent takers: Local practices and arrangements

- **Where are the information booklets for parents about post mortems kept?**  
**In the SANDS packs on Central Delivery Suite**  
**Spare copies are available from the Bereavement Support Office x2404**
- **Where are perinatal post mortems done?**  
**St Michael's Hospital, Bristol**
- **Name and contact details of the mortuary and of key members of staff:**
  - St Michael's Pathologists **Dr Andrew Bamber 0117 414 9890 andrew.bamber@nbt.nhs.uk**
  - St Michael's Mortuary manager **Amy Lee 0117 342 5428 amy.lee@nbt.nhs.uk**
  - NDDH Bereavement Midwives **Jo Morgan and Hannah Scrannage x2605**
  - NDDH Chaplain **Rev Julie Cartwright via switchboard**
  - NDHT HTA Designated Individual & Histopathology/Mortuary and Bereavement Manager  
**Lee Luscombe x3754**
  - NDHT Lead Bereavement Support Officer **Elisabeth Seymour x2404**
- **How long do parents usually have to wait until their baby's body is released? Baby will usually be away for between 1 and 2 weeks**

### **If perinatal post mortems are done in another hospital:**

- When would the baby be taken? **As soon as transport can be arranged, usually 1-2 days**
- When would the baby be returned? **When released by St. Michaels, usually within a few days**
- How would the baby be transported? **Up to 24/40: by medical courier. 24/40 and over: by Funeral Director**
- How is the transport arranged and who arranges it? **Mortuary and Bereavement Support staff**

- **If an urgent post mortem (the baby's body released within 24 or 48 hours) is a religious or cultural requirement for parents:**
  - What are the arrangements for this? **May be possible during the week but not at weekends as there is no out-of-hours Pathologist at St Michaels. Also the distance involved makes this more difficult but not impossible.**
  - Whom should the funeral director contact to collect the body out of hours? **On-call mortuary technician for St Michaels Hospital, via BRI switchboard.**
- **If parents don't want tissue blocks and slides to be kept as part of the medical record:**
  - What are the arrangements for hospital disposal? **St Michaels arrange respectful disposal.**
  - How long are blocks and slides usually kept before disposal? **Never destroyed.**
  - If parents want the blocks and slides returned to them, when and how will this be arranged? **When all testing has been completed, possibly 6-8 weeks. Would be sent back to NDDH by medical courier and collected from there by the family's funeral director**
- **If parents have any remaining concerns about the post mortem:**
  - Can they talk to the pathologist (or to an anatomical pathology technician) about the post mortem, either face-to-face or on the phone? **Yes 0117 414 9890**
- **If parents change their minds about what they have agreed to:**
  - What is the time frame for changing their minds? **As recorded on the consent form as a minimum. Parents can phone at any time up to the time the post mortem is started**
  - Whom should they contact, in and out of hours? **As on the consent form, the Bereavement Support Office number. If no reply they can leave a message.**
- **If parents initially refuse a post mortem but later change their minds, whom should they contact? **The Bereavement Support Office at NDDH as above.****
- **When is the appointment to discuss the final report likely to be? **As soon as the report is received by the NDDH consultant, their secretary will phone the parents and arrange for them to come in, usually around 2-3 months after the post mortem.****
  - Whom will they see? **The mother's consultant (and Paediatric consultant if neonatal death).**
  - Where will the meeting take place? **On Petter Ward.**
  - Can you reassure them that they will wait in a separate area from other parents and babies? **Yes**
  - Will they be given a summary of the findings or the complete report? **The full report will be discussed face to face at the appointment. A summary of the report will be sent to the GP which is copied to the parents. They can have a copy of the complete report if they would like one after they have discussed it at the consultant appointment.**
- **If parents want to see their baby after the post mortem:**
  - Where would this take place? **In the Bereavement Support Office Viewing Suite**
  - How do they arrange it? **Phone the Bereavement Support Office: 01271 322404**

**Funerals: Please ask the Bereavement Support staff to meet the parents and assist them with their choices. There are leaflets for parents available on all wards with details of funeral choices appropriate to the gestation.**

Does the hospital offer to arrange and pay for funerals following:

- A late miscarriage? **Yes**
- A stillbirth? **Yes**
- A neonatal death? **Yes**
- If burial is an option, are shared graves used? **No, individual burial only**
- Who is responsible for organising hospital funerals? **Bereavement Support Office**
- What are the arrangements for sensitive disposal of the remains of babies who were miscarried early? **Parents are offered hospital shared cremation; privately arranged individual cremation or burial; or they can take baby home to bury on private land.**
- Does the crematorium with which the hospital has a contract always produce ashes from the cremation of a single baby? **They cannot promise that ashes will be produced, but in practice they always do.**
- Does the crematorium provide individual ashes when several babies have been cremated together? **No**
- If individual ashes are not provided, where are the ashes scattered or buried? **In the North Devon Crematorium Childrens Garden of Remembrance at a recorded but unmarked place. Parents can visit the garden at any time.**

### **Retaining organs for further detailed examination or a second opinion**

**Organs are very rarely retained. If you think this may be necessary please discuss the case with the Paediatric Pathologist at St. Michaels.**

#### **Seeking specific consent**

*The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) has confirmed that additional specific consent is not required to keep an organ outside the body for examination to establish the cause of death if the organ will be returned to the baby's body before it is repaired and released from the mortuary. This is because it is part of the post mortem examination, for which consent has already been given. Parents only need to be asked specifically for consent to keep an organ if it is recommended that the organ is kept for further examination or a specialist opinion beyond the time when the body will be released.*

The HTA's statement on when it is necessary to seek consent to retain an organ covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It does not cover Scotland. At the time when this document was finalised, no decision had yet been made in Scotland about when it is necessary to seek authorisation to retain an organ.

For more about organ retention, see the Sands *Guide for consent takers* Section 7.

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