


Our Vision

To deliver excellent integrated  
services in partnership with  
our community

If you would like to give feedback on  
any of our services please contact:

**Email:** [user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**Telephone:** 028 9442 4655

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

 @NHSCTrust

[www.northerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net)



## Information following the loss of your baby after 24 weeks

### Information following the loss of your baby after 24 weeks

We would like to extend our sincere condolences for the loss of your baby and we understand that this is a very difficult and distressing time for you and your family.

This booklet will provide you with information about some of the decisions and arrangements that you and your family will now need to make after the loss of your baby.

Please feel free to ask questions and tell staff if you have any spiritual or cultural requirements.

## Arrangements

Often parents wish for their baby to remain with them while in hospital, some prefer their baby stays in the hospital mortuary to wait for a post-mortem examination or for the funeral to be arranged. We will support you whatever your decision.

Mothers can have their partner or another family member stay with them while they are in hospital.

The staff caring for you will take photographs of your baby with consent. Photos will be provided stored on a USB/Disc. If you prefer, staff can arrange for a professional photographer to take photographs free of charge.

If you wish, staff can also help you make some mementos of your baby which you can take home.

## Post-mortem

Staff will provide an information leaflet and talk to you about the option of a post-mortem examination and the consent process. The decision you make to either give consent or decline the offer of a post-mortem will be recorded on a special consent form which you will be asked to sign. In exceptional circumstances the Coroner may decide that a post mortem must take place.

The post-mortem examination will provide additional information which may help the doctor explain to you in more detail why your baby died. Unfortunately, in a small number of cases, a post-mortem examination does not provide the reason for a baby's death. If your baby is having a post-mortem, this will take place at the Alder Hey Children's Foundation Trust (Alder Hey) in Liverpool.

At the earliest opportunity arrangements will be made for your baby to be taken to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Mortuary who will arrange and manage the safe transfer to Alder Hey. If you have been discharged home when your baby returns from Alder Hey your Funeral Director or a family member will make arrangements with the mortuary department for your baby to be collected.

## Trust Review Process

The death of a baby is taken very seriously by the Maternity team in the Northern Trust. In all cases where a baby has died, a full review of the care received by you and your baby during pregnancy, birth and the post-natal period is undertaken by the appropriate professional team. Following completion of the review process you will be given the opportunity to either meet

## Funeral

Funeral arrangements are made by the family and staff can give you information and help. Most families find a Funeral Director can help support them with arrangements at this difficult time.

## Registration

If your baby is stillborn (born after 24 weeks gestation), you will need to register the stillbirth of the baby in the local council offices prior to the funeral taking place. If your baby was born alive and subsequently died, the birth and the death need to be registered at the local council offices before burial, or by five days following the baby's death, if this is sooner than the burial.

Staff can guide you as to where your local council office is located.

## Cremation

If you choose cremation, this is arranged by the family. We advise that you use the service of a Funeral Director in these circumstances as it can only be arranged by Belfast City Council.

## Follow up arrangements

Once you are discharged from hospital you will be offered the support of a community midwife to visit you at home.

A follow-up appointment will be arranged for you to be reviewed by your consultant. During this appointment the consultant will check your health and wellbeing. If the results from the post-mortem examination are available for this appointment the consultant will discuss these with you or if required arrange a further appointment.

## Further help and support

If you require further information on any of these issues please discuss them with the staff looking after you.

The learning from the review of every baby's death is important to help us improve services for women and their babies in the future.

As well as the support available from your doctor, midwife or social worker, you may wish to contact the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS). They offer support and information on stillbirth and neonatal death through local support groups, publications and a helpline.

## SANDS (NI)

22 Church Street  
Portadown  
BT62 3LQ  
Northern Ireland Helpline: 077 4099 3450  
Email: [support@sandsni.org](mailto:support@sandsni.org)  
[www.sandsni.org](http://www.sandsni.org)

