What should I do now?

Advice and support, following the loss of your baby
Our condolences

We are sorry to hear of the death of your baby. We hope that the following information will be helpful to you and give you support.

You may find yourself with lots of decisions to make at this time but you do not have to face them alone. Members of the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service can offer you support to help you through this difficult time.

This leaflet aims to explain the practical things which need to happen. Please do not hesitate to ask if you need further questions answered.

How to contact us when you get home

**Bereavement Services**
Tel: 01865 220 110
(9.00am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday)

**Chaplaincy Service**
Tel: 01865 857 921
(with an answerphone service)

If you have an urgent request or are calling outside of these hours, you can contact the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service through the John Radcliffe switchboard:
Tel: 01865 741 166

**Bereavement Specialist Midwife**
Tel: 01865 221 698
Mobile: 07770 967 383

An answerphone is available at all times if we are unable to take your call.
Holding or seeing your baby

After the delivery of your baby you will be offered the opportunity of holding them and taking all the time that you need to be with them. Many parents have found this time to be important, as it can never be repeated. However, we understand that some parents prefer not to hold or see their baby or are not sure what to expect. Please discuss your fears or concerns with the midwife looking after you so that we can provide you with the most helpful support and care.

Photographs and mementoes

Photographs can be taken of your baby, which can include you and other members of the family. If you would like photographs to be taken but do not wish to look at them or take them home, they can be kept on file for you. You can ask for them at any time, if you change your mind.

Blessing, naming ceremony and ways of saying goodbye to your baby

If you would like the opportunity to discuss a blessing, naming ceremony and ways of saying goodbye to your baby, please ask the midwife looking after you to contact the hospital Chaplain. Alternatively, if you have your own religious adviser, we can contact them on your behalf.
Book of Remembrance

You are welcome to make an entry in the Book of Remembrance. If you would like to do this, please ask your midwife for a form to record your words of remembrance.

A Book of Remembrance is kept on Level 7 of the Women’s Centre. There is also a Book of Remembrance in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital and in the Hospital Chapel at the Horton General Hospital.

Entries can be submitted at any time, even months or years later.

If you would like to see the Remembrance Book please ask a member of staff looking after you.

When you leave the Hospital

Your baby can be cared for by the Hospital until the funeral arrangements have been made. If you wish to see your baby again before the funeral, you can contact the Hospital or Funeral Director who will discuss viewing arrangements with you.

You may be anxious about leaving your baby in hospital or may feel that you want to take them home. Please speak with your midwife about any worries you have and the options that may be available.

Post mortem examination

If you have given written consent for a post mortem examination to be carried out, you can still contact a funeral director to start to make arrangements for your baby’s funeral. You and your Funeral Director will be advised when your baby’s body can be released to them.
Follow-up appointment

You will receive a Hospital follow-up appointment approximately eight weeks after the delivery of your baby. This appointment will give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the loss of your baby. It may help to make a list of questions you might have, before you come to the appointment. This will help us to give you as much information as possible.

Bereavement counselling

If you would like to speak to a Bereavement Specialist Midwife/Counsellor at the Hospital you can make an appointment by telephoning 01865 221 698 or 07770 967 383.

An answerphone is available at all times if we are unable to take your call.
Registration

The Bereavement and Chaplaincy service can assist you with this process.

If your baby died before 24 weeks’ gestation
There is no legal requirement to register your baby’s birth or death, however a commemorative certificate is available from the Registration Service for a small fee. They can be contacted on: 0845 129 5900

If your baby was stillborn after 24 weeks’ gestation
Soon after the delivery of your baby, you will be given a Medical Certificate of Stillbirth by your doctor or midwife. You will need to take this document to register the stillbirth of your baby. It may be possible for you to do this at the Hospital or you can make an appointment to go to the Oxfordshire Registration Office nearest to your home.

When you register the stillbirth of your baby you can also register their name. You will then be given a Certificate of Registration of Stillbirth, free of charge.

You can buy additional certificates if you wish, at the time of registration or at any time afterwards.

If you are not married to each other and wish to register your baby with their father’s surname, you will normally need to go to the Registration Office together.

The Registrar will also give you a white form to pass on to the Funeral Director of your choice. This will then allow the burial or cremation to take place.

If this has not already been arranged by the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service, you can make an appointment with the Registration Service by telephoning: 0845 129 5900

or sending an email to: registeroffice@oxfordshire.gov.uk
If your baby was born alive and then died
If you have not yet registered your baby’s birth, you will need to do so at the same time as registering their death.

You will be given a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death by the doctor responsible for your baby’s care. Please take this to the Registration Office to register your baby’s death within five working days. It may be possible for you to do this at the Hospital or you can make an appointment to go to the Oxfordshire Registration Office nearest to your home.

A small fee is charged for the certified copy of the birth and death certificates.

The Registrar will give you a green form to pass on to the Funeral Director of your choice. This will then allow the burial or cremation to take place.

If this has not already been arranged by the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service, you can make an appointment with the Registration Service by telephoning: 0845 129 5900

or by sending an email to: registeroffice@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Funeral services

Funerals do not need to be formal or religious. If you want to discuss alternative options and ideas, the members of the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service will be happy to give you support.

**Funerals for babies born under 24 weeks’ gestation**

There is a separate information booklet with advice that is available from the midwives caring for you.

**Funerals for babies born after 24 weeks’ gestation**

You can choose to have a burial in a churchyard, with the permission of the church, or in a council or private cemetery. There are costs associated with the preparation of the grave and the rights to place a headstone; these can be significant. Local Funeral Directors will be able to advise you on the exact costs.

Crematoriums do not normally charge for the cremation of babies and small children. However, when considering cremation, it is important to be aware that there is a possibility that there will be little or no cremated remains.

**How will my baby be dressed?**

Your baby can remain in the clothing provided by the Hospital or you can dress them in clothes of your own choice. Funeral Directors will advise you if certain clothing cannot be used for cremation.

**Can anything be put in the coffin with my baby?**

If your baby is to be buried, then most items can be placed inside the coffin with them.

If you have decided on cremation, cards, photographs or small soft toys may be placed with your baby (jewellery or glass cannot be cremated).
Do I need to use a Funeral Director?
A Funeral Director will be able to take care of all the arrangements for your baby’s funeral. They can help you to plan as little or as much as you are able to do. Most Funeral Directors do not charge for their services. They will encourage you to discuss your wishes and concerns with them before they take any formal instructions to proceed with the funeral arrangements.

A list of your local Funeral Directors is available from the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service, if required.

If you are receiving certain benefits, you may be eligible for help with funeral costs. Please ask the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service for help with this.

If you wish to make your own private funeral arrangements, please contact the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service for more information.

When can the funeral take place?
Funeral Directors will do their best to accommodate your preferred date and time for the funeral. If a post mortem examination is being performed it is advisable that you do not fix a date for the funeral until the Funeral Director has been advised that your baby’s body is ready for collection from the hospital.
Support groups

**Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)**
Helpline: 0207 436 5881  
(10.00am to 3:00pm, Monday to Friday)  
Email: support@uk-sands.org  
Website: www.uk-sands.org  
Address: 28 Portland Place, London, W1B 1LY

**Oxfordshire SANDS:**
Email: oxfordshiresands@org.uk

**Twins and Multiple Births Association, Bereavement Support Group (TAMBA)**
Helpline: 0800 138 0509  
Email: enquiries@tamba.org.uk  
Website: www.tamba.org.uk/bsg  
Address: 2 The Willows, Gardner Road, Guildford, GU1 4PG

**The Miscarriage Association**
Helpline: 01924 200 799  
(9.00pm to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday)  
Email: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk  
Website: www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

**Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC)**
Support and information for parents whose baby has died following abnormal antenatal test results.  
Helpline: 0845 077 2290 or 0207 713 7486 (from mobile)  
Website: www.arc-uk.org/
SeeSaw
SeeSaw provides grief support for bereaved children and young people throughout Oxfordshire.
Helpline: 01865 744 768
(10.00am to 3.00pm, Monday to Friday)
Email: info@seesaw.org.uk
Website: www.seesaw.org.uk
Address: Bush House, 2 Merewood Avenue, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8EF

Child Bereavement UK
Support for parents and children after a death within the family.
Helpline: 0800 02 888 40
Tel: 01494 568 900
Email: support@childbereavementuk.org
Website: www.childbereavementuk.org
Address: Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks, HP14 4BF

Cruse Bereavement Care
Helpline: Oxford 01865 245 398
Banbury 01295 266 350
National website: www.cruse.org.uk/
Email: helpline@crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Cruse:
Website: www.oxfordcruse.co.uk
Email: oxfordcruse@yahoo.co.uk
Address: Wesley Memorial Hall, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford, OX1 2DH
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01865 221 473 or email PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk