Hospital Arranged Funeral for babies of less than 24 weeks gestation who have died before birth
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.

Hospital arranged funerals

The Hospital can offer a simple funeral for your baby.

A funeral can be an important way of saying goodbye to your baby. It can also help your family and friends to show you their support at this emotional time.

The Bereavement and Chaplaincy service are available to give you support. They can give you information about any part of this funeral service or other options available. They can come to see you while you are still on the ward.

You may feel that you need longer to make this decision. If so, the Chaplain can speak with you either over the telephone or arrange to meet with you at a later date.

They can talk through the content of the service, and make sure that your faith or cultural needs are considered. Please ask the midwife looking after you to contact the Chaplain if you would like to discuss this further.

You may decide that you simply want your baby’s body to be respectfully buried or cremated by the Hospital. You may not want further discussion or a formal service. If you would like to know afterwards what was said and how the service was carried out, you can call the Chaplain at any time.

Tel: 01865 857 921
(answerphone service available)

The funeral options available are different at the two Hospitals. Oxfordshire Cemeteries offer burial for babies who were delivered at the John Radcliffe Hospital and Banbury Crematorium offer cremation for babies delivered at the Horton General Hospital.
Questions you may want to ask

Can I talk with someone about the funeral if I am unsure of what decision to make?

At this very difficult time we can assure you that we are here to help and give you support in any way we can. We are available to come and talk with you whilst you are in Hospital and also over the telephone when you have returned home.

Does the funeral service have to be religious?

The Chaplains are experienced in taking informal services that are sensitive to your religious or non-religious preferences.

How else can I remember my baby?

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 available on Level 7 of the Women’s Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital. There is also a Book of Remembrance in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital and in the 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.
John Radcliffe Hospital
Arrangements

A burial service is held on the first Thursday of each month at 9.30am. In order to give you time to consider the funeral arrangements you wish to have, it will normally be held at least two weeks after your baby was delivered.

You are welcome to come to this service. Please let the Hospital Chaplains know within two weeks of your delivery if you would like to come.

Tel: **01865 857 921**
(answerphone service available)

The burial takes place in a shared grave near the SANDS (Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Society) memorial. This is in the lower part of Headington Cemetery, close to the John Radcliffe Hospital.

On the day of the funeral, your baby will be placed in a small white coffin and then carefully placed in the grave just before you arrive. A number of babies may also be buried at the same time, and several other parents may be present. Shortly after the service, the grave will be made secure. When the final funeral has taken place for this grave it will be turfed.

As the grave is shared, it is not possible to have a permanent grave marker or headstone but you can buy a plaque to be placed by the SANDS memorial star.
Horton General Hospital Arrangements

The cremation service is held at Banbury Crematorium. You are welcome to come to this service. In order to give you time to consider the funeral arrangements you wish to have, the cremation will normally be held at least two weeks after your baby was delivered.

Please let the Hospital Bereavement and Chaplaincy service know within two weeks of your delivery if you would like to come.

Tel: **01295 229 386**  
(answerphone service available)

On the day of the cremation, your baby will be placed in a small white coffin. A number of babies may be cremated at the same time, and several other parents may be present.

It is very unlikely that there will be any ashes after the cremation. If there are any cremated remains they will be placed in the Snowdrop Garden in the children’s section of the Crematorium, unless you choose otherwise.
If we do not hear from you before the date of the funeral or cremation, we will presume that you do not wish to be present. Please be assured that records are always kept and if you decide at a later time that you wish to find out the date and place of where your baby is buried or their ashes are placed, this will be possible.

Private funeral arrangements can also be made. If you would prefer to choose this option, a Funeral Director will be able to guide you through the process and answer any queries you might have.

For further information about Hospital arranged funerals, private funeral options and bereavement support please contact the Oxford University Hospitals Bereavement and Chaplaincy service.

Tel: **01865 857 921**  
(answersphone service available)

If you require information more urgently or outside normal office hours please call the John Radcliffe switchboard on **01865 741 166** and ask them to contact the on-call Chaplain.
This leaflet is to be given in conjunction with the form for pre 24 week funeral arrangements.

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

This leaflet has been produced by the Bereavement and Chaplaincy service and the Bereavement Midwives.
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www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

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