

Taking a baby/child from hospital when baby/child has died
Release of NVF, SB, NND and Children directly from the hospital
- Standard Operating Procedure

Reference No.: PAED/10:23/D2

Contents

Section		Page
1	Introduction	1
2	Purpose and Outcomes	1
3	Abbreviations	1
4	Key Responsibilities and Duties	1
5	When a baby/child may not be taken directly from the ward or mortuary	2
6	Going home	2
7	Documentation to be completed prior to discharge	2
8	Funeral Directors	2
9	Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness	3
10	References	3
	Appendix A - Information booklet for parents – contact details	4
	Appendix B - Letter for parents “Taking your baby/child home”	9
	Appendix C - Parent/Representative transfer of baby/child home form	10
	Appendix D - Parent/Representative transfer of baby home form from Gynaecology ward	11
	Documentation Control	12

1. Introduction

Following the death of their baby/child parents have many decisions to make, one they may wish to consider is taking their baby/child home, directly to funeral directors or to a place of worship. For parents, it is sometimes a more appropriate place to say goodbye.

2. Purpose and Outcome

To enable families to care for their deceased baby/child in a way which is sensitive and supportive to their needs and wishes. To ensure staff can provide care for families’ needs while complying with the legal and practical requirements. Parents should be advised about the correct environment for care of their baby to avoid any possible health and safety risks.

3. Abbreviations

RDH - Royal Derby Hospital
 QHB - Queen's Hospital Burton

4. Key Responsibilities and Duties

It is the responsibility of the midwife / nurse caring for the family to ensure parents are informed and prepared appropriately to take their baby/child from hospital. There should be

effective communication between staff at the hospital and primary care (midwife/GP) to ensure parents are supported.

5. When a baby may not be taken directly from the ward or mortuary

- Legal requirement that when the death has been reported to HM Coroner.
- Local guidance, if a post mortem examination is to be performed.

6. Going home

It should be brought to the parent's attention that these babies will be extremely fragile and need careful handling especially those of lower gestational age.

Staff should advise parents that the condition of their baby/child's body will deteriorate while at home and consideration must be given to the environment and length of time a baby/child's body will be at home. (See Appendix A)

Staff should ensure baby has been washed (if appropriate) and dressed according to parent's wishes.

Parents should be offered the choice of carrying their baby out in their arms wrapped in a blanket or use a Moses basket. A member of staff must escort the parents to their car with the baby and ensure the baby is transported appropriately. It may be more appropriate for older children to be transferred home by an undertaker of the family's choice. In this case, the undertaker will collect the child from the mortuary.

7. Documentation to be completed prior to discharge

The law requires that the bodies of babies who are stillborn or neonatal deaths are buried or cremated, although it is not a legal requirement for non-registerable fetus'.

If families wish to arrange a burial on their own property, the assistance and guidance from the hospital chaplain or funeral director should be sought.

The relevant checklist and paperwork must be complete and distributed as per policy.

Ensure when parents are leaving the hospital, they have the following form:

- Letter of confirmation, to be held by parents, re taking their deceased baby/child home. (See appendix B)

Ensure the mortuary are contacted and sent the following form to notify parents have taken deceased baby/child from ward:

- Parental /Representative transfer of baby home form (See appendix C)

8. Funeral Directors

When parents wish for the funeral directors to transport baby from the hospital to home, and/or from home to the funeral directors when they are ready, they need to contact them directly to make the necessary arrangements. Transport service may incur a charge that will be invoiced and paid for by the parents.

If parents are making their own arrangements for the funeral they will need to liaise with a funeral director of their choice.

Hospital Chaplain - RDH
Hospital Chaplain - QHB

01332 789500 Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm
Ext 5666 Out of hours via switchboard 01283 511511

Bereavement Midwife: RDH 01332 789791

Bereavement Midwife: QHB 01283 511511 Ext 4383
Bleep 264

Paediatric/neonatal bereavement nurse: 01332 787412, 07385 954540, 07385 516925
RDH & QHB

Royal Derby Hospital Mortuary 01332 785013 Mon – Fri 8.30am – 4.30pm
Via RDH switchboard 01332 340131 evenings & weekends

Queen's Hospital Mortuary Extension 3270 Via QHB switchboard 01283 511511
evenings and weekends

9. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

Monitoring requirement	Audit of parent / representative 'Transfer of baby home' forms Audit checklist for receipt of patient information booklet 'Taking your baby home following their death'
Monitoring method	Retrospective case note review
Report prepared by	Bereavement Midwife
Monitoring report sent to:	Maternity Development Committee
Frequency of report	3 yearly

10. References

- Best Practice Guidance for families who wish to take their baby home after death
The Child Bereavement Charity www.childbereavement.org.uk
- Schott J, Henley A, Kohner N. 2007
Pregnancy Loss and the death of a baby:
Guidelines for professionals 3rd edition Sands

TAKING YOUR BABY/CHILD HOME WHEN BABY/CHILD HAS DIED

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

We are sorry that your baby/child has died and would like to offer our support as you face the many decisions you will have to make.

One of the decisions you may consider is whether to take your baby home.

Taking your baby home

Some parents decide to take their baby/child home for a short while allowing time together, privately and quietly, with family and friends.

Once the necessary documentation is completed, you can take your baby home directly from the ward. For practical reasons older children will need to be collected by an undertaker from the hospital mortuary

If there is to be a post mortem examination you will be UNABLE to take your baby home until after this has been completed. You may want to seek advice after the post mortem about your baby's condition before arranging to take baby home.

How do I take my baby/child home?

You can take your baby/child directly from the hospital ward or from the hospital mortuary

From the ward:

You can take your baby home in your car. You can carry your baby to the car in your arms or in a Moses basket.

If you would like the Funeral directors to transport baby/child to your home you will need to contact them to make arrangements. Please make sure that when you contact them you also discuss transport of baby/child from your home to the Funeral directors at a later time. You will need a letter from the ward staff acknowledging that you are taking your baby/child home.

From the mortuary:

You will need to have some photographic identification and a suitable method to carry your baby safely. You will need a letter from the ward staff advising the mortuary staff of your wishes to take your baby home.

Some babies born earlier in the pregnancy may be very fragile, you may want to seek advice about your baby's condition before arranging to take your baby home.

You may wish to use the services of a funeral director, especially for older children, to transport your baby/child home but there will be a charge for this service.

If you want to take your baby/child home after the post mortem you need to contact the Bereavement Midwife, bereavement nurse, funeral director or the Chaplain who will advise you accordingly, as natural post mortem changes may be more evident.

Funeral Directors

If the Royal Derby Hospital (RDH) are helping you to arrange the funeral staff will provide you with their contact details.

When you are ready for your baby to be taken from home to the Chapel of Rest at the funeral directors you can contact the funeral directors directly to make the necessary arrangements.

The funeral directors will be able to collect the baby in working hours between 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

If you intend to make your own arrangements for baby's funeral you will need to liaise with the funeral director of your choice.

Will I need to sign any forms?

You will be asked to sign a form, which states you are taking your baby home.

If the RDH is arranging the funeral you will need to complete a funeral arrangements form and an authorisation form for the RDH to help you organise the funeral. The hospital chaplains can guide you on this, as they will be helping you with the funeral.

You will be asked to sign a form to authorise you or a representative when transferring baby from the hospital.

You may wish to make all funeral arrangements yourself, if so, you will need to contact a funeral director of your choice.

Caring for your baby/child at home

The room that your baby/child is in needs to be kept cool. Avoid any risk of insects entering the room as they may contaminate baby.

You can dress your baby/child and place light covers over them if you wish.

You may want your baby/child to be at home for a short period of time or a little longer. It is your choice.

You should be aware that your baby will have natural changes after death, which will occur over several hours. The longer the baby/child is exposed to the air and heat the greater the possibility of change occurring.

Staff will be able to advise you on the appearance of your baby/child following a post mortem as in some cases the natural changes can be more evident.

Burial outside a cemetery

Burial normally occurs in a purpose designed cemetery. The hospital chaplain or funeral director will be able to advise you on legal requirements if you were considering alternative options for burial.

Useful Contacts

RDH Bereavement Midwife: 01332 789791
07769164103

QHB Bereavement Midwife 01283 511511 Ext 4383 Bleep 264

Paediatric/neonatal bereavement nurse: 01332 787412, 07385 954540, 07385 516925
RDH & QHB

RDH Hospital Chaplain 01332 789500
Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm

QHB Hospital Chaplain 01283 511511 ext 5666, out of hours via switchboard

Bereavement Services 01332 785557
Royal Derby Hospital Mon – Fri 8.30am – 4.30pm

Queen's Hospital 01283 593001

Royal Derby Hospital Mortuary 01332 785013
Mon – Fri 8.30am – 4.30pm
Evenings & weekends via switchboard on 01332 340131

Queen's Hospital Mortuary 01283 511511 ext 3270
Out of hours via switchboard

Ward 209 01332 788209

Labour Ward 01332 785141

Registrars Office (Derby) Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5pm
01332 788328 Royal Derby Hospital
(To make an appointment) 01332 256526 Royal Oak House,
Market Place, Derby

Emergency Registration (Derby) 07812 301758
(9am-5pm Sat, Sun and Bank Holidays)

Registrars Office (Staffordshire) 0300 1118001
Emergency Registration (Staffs) 07815 827793 99am-5pm Sat, Sun and Bank Holidays)

Stillbirth and Neonatal 02074365881 National SANDs
Death Charity www.uk-sands.org
www.derbysands.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK 01494 568900 Information and support
www.childbereavementuk.org

Miscarriage Association
National Helpline

01924200799
info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk
www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Talk it Over. Pregnancy Loss
Support & Confidential Service

07876470588
talkitover@hotmail.co.uk
www.talkitoverderby.com

Letter for Parents

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that

of

whose baby/child died on _____

have taken their baby/child from

Date _____

They will be:

Registering their child/baby's death

- Liaising with a funeral director re transfer of baby/child to the Chapel of Rest
- Making their own funeral arrangements.

Name of authorising member of staff _____

Position _____

Signature _____

Date _____

In case of concern, or if confirmation is needed, please contact:

| (PLEASE FILE A COPY IN THE MOTHER/CHILD'S NOTES)

Parent / Representative Transfer of Baby/child Home Form

Being the Parent/Representative of:		
Mothers Name:	Hospital Number:	
Baby/Child Name:	Hospital/NHS Number: (if appropriate)	
Name of Parent/Representative		
Address of Parent/Representative		
I certify that I have received the baby and do undertake to arrange and ensure that the baby/child is buried/cremated in a suitable place.		
Signature (Parent/Representative)	Print Name	Date
Signature (Midwife/Nurse)	Print Name	Date
N.B. The baby must not be released in the following circumstances:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is a coroner's case • A post mortem is requested 		
Checklist for Midwifery/Nursing staff (tick when completed)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete documentation for Bereavement Services <input type="checkbox"/> Letter for parents "Taking your baby Home" given <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Parent / Representative "Transfer of baby Home Form" filed in mother's notes <input type="checkbox"/> Inform the mortuary by phone and send copy of this form <input type="checkbox"/> Inform Community Midwife <input type="checkbox"/> Inform GP <input type="checkbox"/> Inform Bereavement midwife/bereavement nurse		

Parent / Representative Transfer of Baby Home Form
from Gynaecology Ward

Being the Parent/Representative of:		
Mothers Name:	Hospital Number:	
Baby's Name:		
Name of Parent / Representative:		
Address of Parent / Representative:		
I certify that I have received the baby and do undertake to arrange and ensure that the baby is buried/cremated in a suitable place.		
Signature (Parent/Representative)	Print Name	Date
Signature (Midwife/Nurse)	Print Name	Date
N.B. The baby must not be released in the following circumstances:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is a coroner's case • A post mortem is requested 		
Checklist for Midwifery/Nursing staff (tick when completed)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete documentation for Bereavement Services <input type="checkbox"/> Letter for parents "Taking Your Baby Home" given <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Parent / Representative "Transfer of Baby Home Form" filed in mother's notes <input type="checkbox"/> Inform the mortuary by phone and send copy of this form <input type="checkbox"/> Inform Community Midwife if appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Inform GP if appropriate		

Documentation Control

Reference Number: PAED/10:23/D2	Version: 5		Status: FINAL	
Version / Amendment	Version	Date	Author	Reason
	1	Oct 2001	Rev Stephen Turnbull	New
	2	Oct 2011	S.Rucklidge – Lead Specialist Bereavement Support Midwife	Update
	3	August 2015	S.Rucklidge – Lead Specialist Bereavement Support Midwife	Update
	4	Jan 2019	Angela Thompson - Lead Specialist Bereavement Support Midwife	Review
	5	July 2023	Angela Thompson Abi Glenn Sam Hewitt Lead Specialist Bereavement Support Midwives Kate Jackson Caroline Dodd Paediatric and Neonatal Bereavement Nurse Specialist	Update
Intended Recipients: All staff with responsibility for caring for pregnant women				
Training and Dissemination: Cascaded through lead sisters/midwives/doctors; Published on Intranet; NHS mail circulation list; Article in BU newsletter				
To be read in conjunction with:				
Consultation with:	Midwifery Staff			
Business Unit Sign off:	03/10/2023: Maternity Guidelines Group: Miss S Rajendran – Chair 06/10/2023: Maternity Governance Group - Mr R Deveraj			
Notification Overview sent to TIER 3 Divisional Quality Governance Operations & Performance: 17/10/2023				
Implementation date:	31/10/2023			
Review Date:	October 2026			
Key Contact:	Joanna Harrison-Engwell			