

# When a child or baby dies

What happens next and where to get information and support

We are very sorry that you are facing this devastating time following the death of your baby or child. We are here to help and can recommend charities that provide support, information and advice.

## **Death certificate**

The medical team complete a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD). This is issued after the death has been reviewed by the independent Medical Examiner. They will call you to check you understand what is written on the certificate. They will then send the MCCD to Lambeth Register Office.

Sometimes a death needs to be referred to the Coroner for further investigation. The Coroner can issue an interim death certificate so you can make funeral arrangements.

## **Registering a death**

It is recommended that deaths are registered within 5 days. When this is not possible, the Register Office will allow extra time.

You will need to register your child's death at the Lambeth Register Office. This is because your child died at St Thomas' hospital which is in the Lambeth borough. If you haven't registered the birth, you can book a double appointment to do both.

You can also register the death at your local register office. Contact them to make a declaration. They will forward your certificates to the Lambeth Register Office.

We can help you to arrange appointments if it is urgent. This includes if your faith requires a burial within 24 to 48 hours.

At your appointment, you will be given a 'Certificate for Burial or Cremation' (green form). You need to give this to your funeral director to arrange a funeral.

## **Visiting your child**

Your child will stay in the hospital's mortuary until they move to your funeral director. The mortuary has a special area for babies and small children.

Contact St Thomas' Bereavement Centre, or the ward where your child was cared for, to arrange a visit. A nurse will go with you. They can meet somewhere in the hospital if you prefer not to go to the unit or ward where your child was cared for.

After your child has been moved to your funeral directors, you can visit them there.

## **Making funeral arrangements**

The Bereavement Centre can give you advice about arranging a funeral, with or without using a funeral director. They can also discuss your religious needs.

There is a fund called 'Children's Funeral Fund for England'. It can be used to pay for some of the funeral costs for a child under 18. Your funeral director can give you more information.

## **Expressing breast milk**

We have a leaflet called 'Suppressing lactation'. This includes information on how to manage the production of breast milk and what you can do with any milk you have stored.

## **Support for siblings**

Your key worker can offer advice about how to explain the loss of your child to your other children. Other resources and support services for siblings can be accessed through Child Bereavement UK and Winston's Wish.

## **Follow up and support**

We will do our best to notify all other health care professionals involved in your family's care about your child's death. Someone may contact you before we have spoken to them and we are sorry if this happens.

Our bereavement nurse specialists (key workers) will support you and can arrange for you to meet with the professionals involved in your child's care if you wish.

All deaths of children under 18 are reviewed through a standard process. More information about this is in the NHS 'When a child dies' booklet which we will give you.

Our Parent Counselling Service can support you with your grieving process. You can contact them when you feel ready, or ask us to refer you. You may prefer to get support where you live. Ask your GP for more information.

## Useful information

### **Lambeth Register Office**

**Phone:** 020 7926 9420

**Webpage:** [Register a death | Lambeth Council](#)

### **Bliss** (for babies born premature or sick)

**Webpage:** [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)

### **Child Bereavement UK**

**Webpage:** [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

### **Child Death Helpline**

**Webpage:** [www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk](http://www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk)

### **Children's Funeral Fund for England**

**Webpage:** [www.gov.uk/child-funeral-costs](http://www.gov.uk/child-funeral-costs)

### **Compassionate Friends**

**Webpage:** [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

### **Cruse Bereavement Support**

**Webpage:** [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

### **Sands** (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)

**Webpage:** [www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk)

### **SLOW** (Surviving the loss of your world)

**Webpage:** [www.slowgroup.co.uk](http://www.slowgroup.co.uk)

### **TAMBA** (twins and multiples birth association)

**Webpage:** [www.twinstrust.org](http://www.twinstrust.org)

### **The Good Grief Trust**

**Webpage:** [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)

### **Winstons Wish**

**Webpage:** <http://www.winstonswish.org>

## Contact us

For any questions or concerns:

**Bereavement nurse specialist** (key workers) **phone:** 020 7188 7853 or **email:** [EvelinaChildDeathReviewTeam@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:EvelinaChildDeathReviewTeam@gstt.nhs.uk)

### **Evelina London Parent Counselling Service**

**Email:**

[ParentCounsellingService@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:ParentCounsellingService@gstt.nhs.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7188 4538 and leave a message

### **St Thomas' Bereavement Centre**

**Phone:** 020 7188 3182, 020 7188 3182 or 020 7188 8965

Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm

**Webpage:** [Bereavement Centre](#)

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), **phone** 020 7188 8801 **email** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk). To make a complaint contact the resolution department **phone** 020 7188 3514 **email** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information in a different language or format, please contact the department your appointment is with.

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