

# Information to help you following the loss of your baby



For more information, please contact

## **Bereavement Services**

The York Hospital  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE  
Tel: 01904 725445

Scarborough Hospital  
Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL  
Tel: 01723 385178



The hospital staff wish to express their sincere sympathy to you at this time.

This booklet aims to provide some practical help and advice during the early days of your bereavement.

Please don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unclear about any matter, our Staff will always be pleased to help.

**During the current Covid-19 pandemic there have been some changes to the normal procedures within this booklet. The bereavement team will advise you of these especially with regards visiting and registration.**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction .....	5
Introduction to Bereavement Services .....	6
How to get to Bereavement Services.....	8-9
Bereavement Midwife Support.....	10
Taking time .....	11
Spiritual care .....	13
The Annual Remembrance Service .....	14
Baby Book of Remembrance.....	15
Creating memories .....	16
Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society Teardrop Stickers .....	20
Registration of birth/death .....	21
Post-mortem examination.....	27
Funerals .....	30
Further advice and support.....	35
Useful contacts.....	38
Contacting the hospital.....	38

# **Introduction**

We would like to express the sympathy of all the staff on the loss of your baby. At this time, you may find it difficult to take in the many things that may be said to you.

The loss of your baby, whether during pregnancy, labour, or after birth, is a time of great anxiety and distress for you, your partner, other children, your family and friends.

The aim of booklet is to give you important information and advice so you can make informed choices without feeling too overwhelmed by the decisions you have to make.

## **Grief**

Everybody reacts in different ways to losing a baby. Apart from differences in personality, there are a variety of circumstances, cultures and beliefs, which will influence the way you react to grief.

It is likely that you will feel numbed, angry and emotionally confused. Although difficult to understand, these emotions are quite normal. Grieving varies greatly from person to person and there are no set time limits dictating how long the pain will last.

# **Introduction to Bereavement Services**

Bereavement Services are available to offer practical support regarding the registration of your baby (if applicable) and the provision of funeral arrangements, if you wish.

Once you feel able to, we invite you to contact the Bereavement Officers within the department to discuss the next steps for you and your partner/family and the options that are available to you.

The Bereavement Officers will arrange a suitable time for you to visit the Bereavement Suite to start to discuss plans you may wish to make for your baby.

Alternatively, we are more than happy to have this conversation over the telephone, if you would find this more convenient.

Our offices are open Monday to Friday (excluding Bank holidays) 8.30am to 4.30pm. Our York contact telephone number is 01904 725445 and our Scarborough contact telephone number is 01723 385178.

We encourage you to ask questions, even if they seem trivial at the time. If the midwives or nurses cannot answer your questions, the Bereavement Officers or the chaplaincy department may be able to.

Help and support is always available at this very difficult time.

You may also find our website useful:  
[www.york.nhs.uk](http://www.york.nhs.uk)

Look for Bereavement Services in the A to Z of services under the “Services” heading from the homepage.

There is a special section called `The loss of a child` which may also be helpful.



York Bereavement Suite

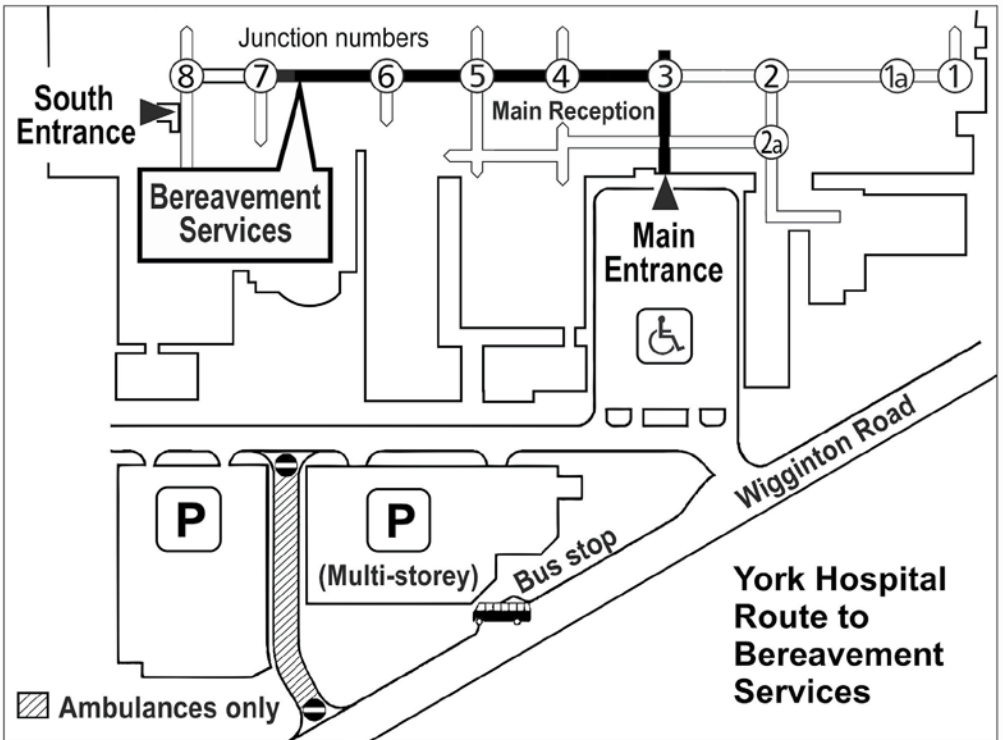


Scarborough Bereavement Room

# How to get to Bereavement Services

## York Hospital Plan

Parking is available in the multi-storey car park at the front of the hospital site. Parking spaces for disabled visitors are available at the main entrance of the hospital.

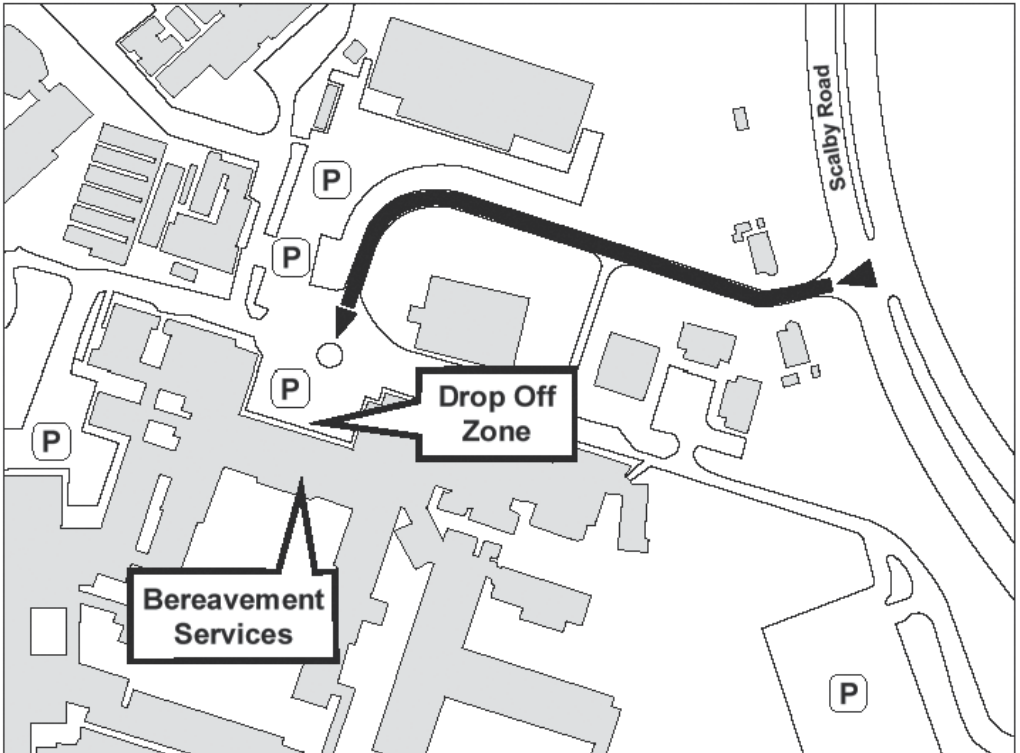




# How to get to Bereavement Services

## Scarborough Hospital Plan

Parking is available in the visitor's car park. Parking spaces for disabled visitors are available at the main entrance of the hospital. Please arrive at North Entrance and turn left. The bereavement room is on the left.



# **Bereavement Midwife Support**

The bereavement midwives are based within the bereavement services department.

Parents sometimes have questions and benefit from talking to someone else about the death of their baby. Following your discharge from hospital the midwife will write to you and offer this service if you were cared for on the maternity unit. However, they will happily see anyone affected by the death of a baby including parents who have had their care transferred to a different hospital.

The midwife can also give you advice, information and can signpost you to find on-going support from a variety of voluntary organisations.

You can arrange to see/speak to the midwife at any stage following your bereavement as this service is always open to you no matter how long ago your baby died.

You may want to contact them during another pregnancy for extra support.

If you would like to access this service please e. mail [yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net) and leave a message. They will contact you on their next working day.

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# Taking time

Taking time to think about what you want for your baby is important - go at your own pace. Only the registration of a baby, who was born alive and died later, needs to be completed quickly (i.e. within five working days).

In the time following the death, you will be offered the opportunity of spending time with your baby. You may wish the baby to stay with you while you are in hospital. Some parents wish to see and hold their baby straight away, some choose not to. It is important to remember that you have a choice and the staff caring for you will support you in your decision.

Once your baby has left the Delivery Suite or the Neonatal Unit, arrangements can be made for your baby to be taken to a private room within the Mortuary for you and your family to see again if you wish. This can be arranged after you have left hospital by contacting the Mortuary department between 8am and 4pm Monday-Friday.

York Mortuary: 01904 726803

Scarborough  
Mortuary: 01723 342213



York Mortuary



Scarborough  
Mortuary

If you would like to view your baby at the weekend you will need to contact the hospital switchboard and ask for the mortuary technician on call at York or the porters at Scarborough.

York Hospital Switchboard	01904 631 313
Scarborough Hospital Switchboard	01723 368 111

You may also wish to take your baby home for a short time and this is something that you can discuss with the midwife looking after you. You can ask your midwife for the 'Taking Your Baby' leaflet if you would like more information on this. Sometimes parents choose to have their baby at home for the night before the funeral. Please discuss this with your funeral director if this is something you would like to do.

By law, if your baby was born alive or after the 24th week of pregnancy, he/she must be buried or cremated.

Take your time and discuss the options with your partner/family before deciding what arrangements you wish to make.

You may want to provide some special clothes for your baby to be dressed in, or a shawl to wrap him/her in. If you don't have any of your own, the midwife or nurse caring for you and your baby may be able to provide something suitable. A small toy, such as a teddy bear, can be left with your baby.

# Spiritual care

People have different needs following the loss of a baby.

The Hospital Chaplaincy Service is a multi-faith department whose role is to provide pastoral, spiritual and religious care for parents and their relatives.

Hospital staff can contact the chaplaincy for you if you wish to speak to somebody.

If you would like to have your babynamed or blessed the hospital chaplains are able to support you in this. A member of the hospital staff can arrange this for you.

The Chaplaincy Service can be contacted on:

York: 01904 725579

Scarborough: 01723 342500

# The Annual Remembrance Service

A remembrance service is held annually at the Chapel of Christ the Healer at York Hospital, which is located along the main corridor. It is always held on Mothering Sunday at 10.30am (so the actual date changes every year).

You can light a candle in memory of your baby and leave a message on the prayer tree as shown on the right. Parents receive a formal invite for the first year following their baby's death only but are welcome to attend any year or every year if they wish. Please tell staff if you do not wish to receive an invitation the service.



At Scarborough Hospital a Remembrance Service at St Luke's Church, Woodlands Drive usually takes place one the third Wednesday in June. You will be sent an invitation to the service in the first year of your loss. Thereafter, you can contact the Bereavement Officer at Scarborough for details of the date of the service.

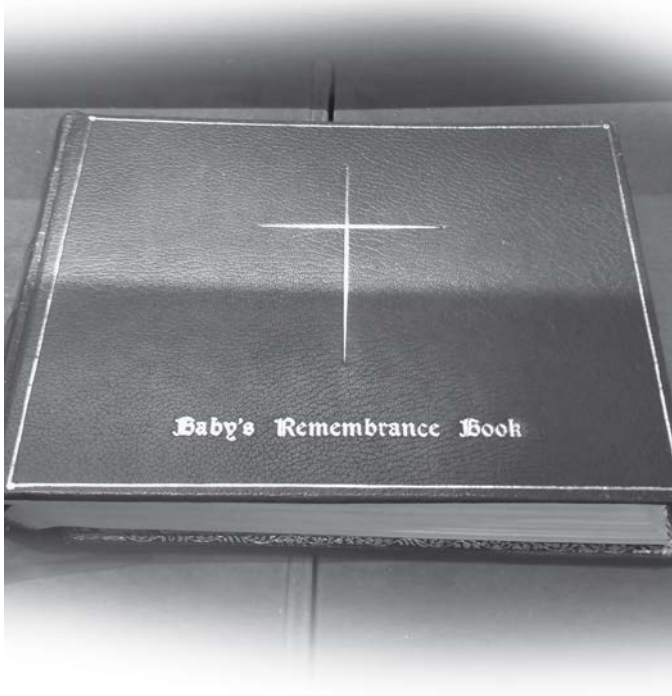


# Baby Book of Remembrance

This is kept in the Chapel where you are able to visit as often as you would like to view the entry made for your baby.

The Bereavement Officers will ask you if you would like to have your baby's name and date of birth included. This is entirely optional.

If you would like to write anything special to your baby then another book is provided for you to do so.



# Creating memories

The midwife caring for you in labour, or the nurse caring for your baby on the Neonatal Unit, will be aware of your distress and understand that you may feel you do not want physical memories relating to your baby, but it has been found that some parents are pleased to have these later.



These may include photographs, ink hand and footprints, identification bracelet and/or a lock of hair, which can be presented together in a special memento pack.

In addition to this you may be offered a special memento box which has other additional ideas for you to create further memories of your baby if you wish.

You can decline any or all mementos if you wish that are offered to you.



## Photographs

The midwife or nurse caring for you will suggest taking photographs of your baby if possible, although photographs are never taken without parental consent.

We will offer to take photographs for you, or you may wish to bring in your own camera to take additional photographs of your baby.

### Remember My Baby



Depending on your baby's gestation and the availability of the photographer it may possible for your midwife to contact a member of the 'Remember My Baby' team to come take some photographs of you and your baby.

'Remember My Baby' (RMB) is a non-profit registered charity created by professional photographers for the Benefit of bereaved parents across the UK.

Remember My Baby offers a free gift of baby remembrance photography to parents suffering the loss of a baby before, during or shortly after birth. By offering sensitive and beautiful remembrance photography they hope that the small gift that they can provide to families will bring some comfort in the days, months and many, many years to come. It can also help parents with the grief and healing process.

Photographs are one of the most tangible mementos that parents can have. These portraits will honour a tiny life that is always loved and cherished and never forgotten.

Please feel free to have a look at the 'Remember My Baby' book that is on the shelf in the SANDS room at York Hospital and in the Snowdrop Suite at Scarborough Hospital. In this book you can view examples of photographs that have been taken by photographers from the team across the UK.

You can contact Remember My Baby directly on free phone number 0808 189 2345 or visit their website <http://www.remembermybaby.org.uk/>.

## **Lock of hair**

If possible, a lock of hair can be obtained from your baby and this might give some comfort if placed in a locket or just kept in a special place.

If you do not wish to have your baby's haircut, please tell the midwife or nurse and your wishes will be respected.

## **Naming or blessing your baby**

Naming can be very important, even for very small babies. Choosing a name is one way of doing something positive for your baby. It helps to give focus and identity to thoughts and feelings about your baby.

It may not be possible to tell the sex of very tiny babies, but you may want to choose a name suitable for either sex.

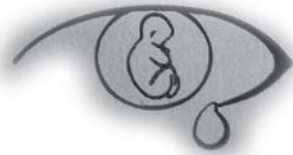
Some people find it helpful to have a brief ceremony for naming or blessing their baby.

You may like to ask someone to do this with you. The Chaplaincy can support you in this. If you would like us to arrange a naming or blessing service for your baby, the midwife or nurse will contact the Chaplaincy department or another appropriate person.

## **A Garden of Remembrance**

There may be a local Garden of Remembrance where you may like to plant a tree or shrub to remind you of your baby. You can choose a plant which flowers or blossoms around the time of your baby's anniversary.

## **Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society Teardrop Stickers**



This sticker is placed on the outside of the mother's maternity notes to identify that she has lost her baby. This ensures that everyone who comes into contact with the bereaved mother is aware of her loss and prevents insensitive questions being asked, especially in subsequent pregnancies.

The sticker is not placed on your general medical notes, so when attending other departments the staff will be unaware of your maternity history.

## **Registration of birth/death**

In England and Wales all births, stillbirths and deaths have to be registered by the Registrar of Births and Deaths.

Registration must be completed before a baby can be buried or cremated if he/she was born alive and then died or was stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

There is no legal requirement to register your baby if he/she was not born alive before the 24th week of pregnancy.

### **Registering a stillbirth**

The midwife or doctor who attended the delivery of your baby will complete a Medical Certificate Of Stillbirth, which the midwife will give to you as soon as it is available.

You must take the certificate to the Registrar of Births and Deaths within 42 days of your baby's delivery. You will need to register your baby's death before funeral takes place as the registrar will issue you with a white form that your funeral director will need.

In York an appointment system is available at the Bereavement Suite at York Hospital or at the Registry office at 56 Bootham.

Bereavement Suite York: 01904 725445

Bootham Registry Office: 01904 654477

In Scarborough, depending on the registrar's' availability, it may be possible for your midwife/bereavement officer to arrange for one of the registrars to come to the ward to register your baby's death while you are still in hospital.

Alternatively, if this is not possible, an appointment will be made for you to attend the registry office at 69 Burniston Road.

The registrar will ask for:

1. The mother's name, occupation, date and place of birth and any other names that the mother might have used, including maiden name if applicable.
2. The father's name, occupation, date and place of birth.
3. The date of your baby's delivery.

The Registrar will enter your baby's name in a stillbirth register. You can have your baby's name(s) entered if you wish, as well the surname, so you may want to give some thought to names for your baby before registering.

The Registrar will give you a white certificate after registration ( a Certificate for Burial or Cremation). This is free of charge. It is needed before a funeral can take place and you should give it to either your funeral director or to the hospital if they are arranging the funeral on your behalf.

The mother or father may register their stillborn baby or baby's birth alone when they are married to each other.

Parents who are not married to each other have to see the Registrar together if they want to have the father's name entered in the birth or stillbirth register. If you wish, the Registrar will give you, free of charge, a special Stillbirth Certificate for you to keep. This too can show your baby's full name.

A full Stillbirth Certificate is also available to the parents at the time of registration, showing the parents' details as well as the baby's details, but a fee is charged for the full certificate.

## **Registering a neonatal death**

For babies who die after birth, even if they only live for a very short time, both birth and death must be registered. In order that you can register the death, the doctor who looked after your baby will give you a Medical Certificate of Death.

You must take this to the Registrar of Births and Deaths within five working days of your baby's death.

The birth/death may be declared at any register office, but can delay the funeral arrangements as the completed paperwork is then sent to the town of birth.

The Registrar will ask for:

1. The mother's name and occupation.
2. The father's name and occupation.
3. The date of your baby's delivery.
4. Your baby's name.
5. The date of your baby's death (shown on the Medical Certificate of Death).

When registering the death, the Registrar will record your baby's first name(s) as well as the surname, so you may want to give some thought to names for your baby before registering.



The Registrar will give you a green certificate after the registration (a Certificate for Burial or Cremation). This is free of charge. It is needed before a funeral can take place and you should give it either to your funeral director or to the hospital if they are arranging the funeral.

A white certificate is also issued free of charge to notify the Social Fund, part of the Department of Work and Pensions.

## **Registration in Coroner's cases**

In a few cases, the Coroner's office is informed of a baby's death because the doctor is unable to issue a death certificate.

The Registrar may also inform the coroner to seek advice if the cause of death entered on the certificate is not clear, but this happens rarely.

You will be informed at the hospital, by the doctor or midwife, if the coroner is to be involved. The coroner will issue a special certificate to enable registration and the funeral to take place.

## **Special registration for urgent burial**

Some parents, for religious or cultural reasons, may want to have their baby buried as quickly as possible. If the death occurs near a bank holiday or a weekend the local registrar will be able to issue a Certificate of Burial to allow this to go ahead, provided the death is not reported to the Coroner and the baby is not to be cremated.

Bereavement Services officers will give you more information.

## **Post-mortem examination**

It may be recommended that a post-mortem examination be carried out on your baby. This is an examination of the baby's body and internal organs in close detail, to try to understand more clearly what happened.

It can be very difficult and distressing to think of such an examination, but sometimes a post-mortem is only way to provide information which may help you to understand what (if anything) was wrong with your baby.

## **Other reasons for post-mortem examination**

It may be that the doctors do know the cause of your baby's death and so cannot issue a Death Certificate, or more information is needed to confirm the cause of death.

In these circumstances the doctor is legally responsible and will have to report the death to the coroner for advice. If the coroner decides a post-mortem is necessary it can be done without your consent.

Post-mortem examination is helpful to confirm antenatal diagnosis such as abnormalities seen on scans, especially if you had your pregnancy terminated because abnormalities were detected in your pregnancy.

By doing a post-mortem examination, important information can be gained which can help you in the future if you wish to have another baby, or help other couples who have similar problems.

In these cases you do not have to agree to a post-mortem unless you feel you want to, and the post-mortem will not be carried out without your written consent.

More information will be given in writing as well as verbally for you to consider before giving your consent.

## **Where will the post-mortem be carried out?**

If this is a Coroner's post mortem then your baby will be taken to Newcastle for the post mortem which will be carried out by a paediatric pathologist. Your baby will be transported by a funeral director of the Coroner's choice and will usually be in Newcastle for at least seven days.

If you have given your written consent, the examination will be carried out at Leeds Hospital by a Pathologist who specialises in the examination of babies.

The examination will be carried out with care in a sensitive manner. In most cases you will be able to see and hold your baby again after the post-mortem.

## **How Long Will It Take?**

There is usually no delay in performing the examination, once written consent has been received by the pathologist, but it is only carried out on weekdays. Your baby usually will return to the care of the mortuary team at York or Scarborough within two weeks.

## **How Long Before The Results Are Available?**

Usually the full results will be available in 12-16 weeks, unless your baby is having a Coroner's post-mortem and then the results will take longer. This delay is due to the detailed examinations and investigations that are necessary.

However, post-mortems do not always provide a definite cause of death.

Feel free to discuss this with your midwife or bereavement officer if you would like to know more information regarding this.

# Funerals

Your baby's funeral can be a way of moving on a little, or perhaps marking the end of the first stage of grieving. For others in your family it can be a way of acknowledging your baby's death as well as their own grief. It is important that you take your time and choose what is right for you and your family.

Bereavement Services staff and the chaplaincy team will be available to offer you information, support and guidance that you will need to help make your choices. It is likely that you will meet with a bereavement officer while you are on the delivery ward to discuss what happens next. If this is not possible or is too soon for you, then you will be contacted or you can contact the bereavement officers by telephone once you have gone home.

By law, all live-born or stillborn babies that are born after 24 weeks of pregnancy must have a formal funeral. Babies born before 24 weeks of pregnancy can still have a funeral.

## **Your Options**

You will need to decide whether you want your baby to be buried or cremated and you can discuss these options with the bereavement officer who will be able to answer any questions you may have.

It is important that you are aware of all of your options and what is involved so that you can make the right decision for you and your baby.

The bereavement officer can help you to organise your baby's funeral, they will discuss your wishes for your baby and liaise with the funeral director on your behalf or should you wish you can make the arrangements privately with a funeral director of your choice.

## **Taking Your Baby Home**

There no legal reason why parents should not take their baby home to make their own arrangements for the funeral.

For your protection and to avoid misunderstanding there is some important paperwork which will be given to you to complete. If you would like to do this please have a look at the 'Taking Your Baby Home' leaflet.

If you want to have your baby buried you also have the option of burying him/her on private land without the help of a funeral director.

## **Cremation**

If you decide that you would like your baby to be cremated then this will take place at York Crematorium if your baby was born at York Hospital or at Woodlands Crematorium, Scarborough if baby was born at Scarborough Hospital.

Within the Crematorium there is a chapel in which you can have a short service for your baby, taken by the Hospital Chaplain or your own Minister. The Hospital Chaplain will also be happy to conduct a non-religious service if you would prefer this. It is also possible for you to attend the chapel at the Crematorium to privately say your goodbyes to your baby without a Chaplain present.

It is important that you are aware that due to your baby being small there is a small possibility that there will be no ashes following baby's cremation. The bereavement officer will discuss this with you and can answer any questions or address any concerns you have about this.



## **Burials**

If you would like to bury your baby then the bereavement officer can help to support you in making the decision as where you would like this to take place.

If your baby was born at York Hospital then the main cemetery is Fulford cemetery. You will have the option of burying your baby in the communal baby grave or purchasing a private plot for your baby.

There are other small cemeteries around the York area that you may wish to consider when choosing where you would like your baby to be buried. You can discuss this with the bereavement officer who can make enquiries for you.

If your baby was born at Scarborough Hospital then your baby will be buried in a private plot in the Cemetery at Woodlands Crematorium.

## **Your feedback on our service is important to us**

We are very sorry for the loss of your baby, and appreciate that this is a difficult time for you.

Following your time under maternity services we would like to offer you an opportunity to give us feedback about your experiences of care.

In order to do this a national questionnaire has been developed with the assistance from bereaved parents to capture your feedback on the service you received. When you receive a letter from the bereavement midwife, they will include the questionnaire in a sealed envelope. This can be opened when you feel ready to offer your feedback and can be returned back to the bereavement service department at any opportunity. It will include a stamped address envelope so there will be no cost to you.

This questionnaire will be anonymous unless you would like discuss your feedback in person or like an acknowledgement and feedback from your comments. By actively gathering feedback from you, this will help services to work together with bereaved parents and families to improve patient experience and care of other parents and their families in the future.

You can of course offer us feedback at any time by your own chosen method.

## **Further advice and support**

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

A self-help organisation for families whose baby has died.

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

Helpline: 080 164 332

### **Miscarriage Association**

A national organisation set up by parents who have been through the pain of miscarriage.

[www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk](http://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk)

Helpline: 01924 200 799

### **Twins and Births Association (TAMBA)**

Bereavement Support Group

For parents who have lost one or both twins or more from multiple birth.

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

Helpline: 01252 332 344

### **Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC)**

An organisation that offers support and advice to women and their families before and after elected termination.

[www.arc-uk.org](http://www.arc-uk.org)

Helpline: 0207 631 0285

## **BLISS the premature baby charity**

Support, advice and information for families of babies in intensive care and special care, including bereaved families.

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

## **Edward's Trust Sunrise**

Supports children and families through serious illness and bereavement.

[www.edwardstrust.org.uk](http://www.edwardstrust.org.uk)

Tel: 0121 454 1705

## **Cruse Bereavement Care**

An organisation to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss.

[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

Helpline: 0870 1671677

For young people 12-18 years 0800 808 1677

## **The Child Bereavement Charity**

The charity provides support and information to all affected by the death of a baby or child.

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

Helpline: 0800 02 88840 or 01494 568900

Email: [support@childbreavementuk.org](mailto:support@childbreavementuk.org)

## **British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)**

Help and advice finding an accredited counsellor in your area.

Tel: 01455 883300

## **Department of work-pensions**

Provides benefits and services for a wide range of people.

Tel: 0800 055 6688

## **Benefits Advice**

If you are receiving benefits and need financial support for your baby's funeral please ask for an SF200 form from your funeral director or local job centre.

## Useful contacts

York Register Office  
56 Bootham  
York  
YO30 7DA  
01904 654477

Scarborough Registry Office  
North Cliff House  
69 Burniston Road  
Scarborough  
YO12 6PH

## Contacting the hospital

York Hospital Switchboard: 01904 631313  
Scarborough Hospital Switchboard: 01723 368111

York Chaplaincy Services: 01904 725579  
Scarborough Chaplaincy Services: 01723 342500

York Bereavement Services: 01904 725445  
Scarborough Bereavement Services: 01723 385178

### Midwife support

Email: [yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.bereavement.midwives@nhs.net)

York Delivery ward: 01904 726004  
Scarborough Delivery ward: 01723 342124

York Mortuary: 01904 726803  
Scarborough Mortuary: 01723 342213

Patient Advice and Liaison Service  
(PALS): 01904 726262

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Bereavement Services, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 725445 or email [bereavement.services@york.nhs.uk](mailto:bereavement.services@york.nhs.uk).

## **Teaching, Training and Research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供，電  
或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

Telephone: 01904 725566

Email: [access@york.nhs.uk](mailto:access@york.nhs.uk)

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Date first issued	November 2014
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