

Your discharge from hospital following pregnancy loss over 16 weeks

Information for women and their families

When you are discharged from hospital following the loss of your baby there is so much information to take on board and so many questions that you may have but may not want to ask just yet. To help you we have put together a list of the questions we are frequently asked by families explaining what happens next, as well as a flowchart that may help with any other questions you may have (see page 3).

If after reading this leaflet you still have questions or concerns, please speak to your midwife. The hospital and community staff are all here to support you, so please ask us for any help.

What happens after I am discharged home?

You will remain under the care of the maternity team for up to 28 days if you need them. The community midwife will give you a call the day after you are discharged to offer you a wellbeing visit and support with any questions or concerns you may have. You will then also be supported by your GP, the hospital's bereavement midwife, bereavement support officer, chaplain, and your chosen funeral directors. The flow chart on page 3 will help make this clearer.

Can I come back to the hospital to see my baby?

Of course. You can contact the bereavement midwife or Delivery Suite to make arrangements to come back to the hospital and see your baby. If baby is going for a post mortem, you may have to visit just before or just after the post mortem has taken place. If however, your baby has already been taken to the funeral directors, you will have to make arrangements with them to see your baby there.

Can I be told when my baby has been taken to London for their post mortem and when they return?

Yes. Ask the bereavement midwife or bereavement support officer, they will be able to tell you.



What are my options in regards to my baby's funerals?

There are several options available to you. The bereavement midwife, bereavement support officer, or our chaplains will support you in choosing the right option for your baby's funeral.

- **Privately arranged funeral service**

Arranging your baby's funeral yourself can be empowering and healing and give you the opportunity to create a more personal service for your baby. By arranging the funeral privately, you can choose burial or cremation with a funeral director of your choice, and at a cemetery or crematorium that is convenient for you. Most funeral directors provide services free of charge, however if you wish for bespoke arrangements (for example a horse and carriage) there may be additional costs and the funeral director will discuss these with you.

- **Hospital arranged individual burial or cremation service**

If you feel you cannot make the arrangements yourself, the Trust can make the arrangements for you. Our bereavement support officer and chaplain will work with you and arrange a service that meets your needs. Your baby's funeral will then be carried out by the funeral directors that are affiliated to the hospital. The Trust will cover all basic costs of a burial or cremation, the only items not included are a headstone or any decorative features, family cars, and flowers.

- **Individual burial.** If you would prefer a burial this can take place in any council owned cemetery of your choice in East Kent. The Trust will purchase the plot in your name, so should you wish to do so you can purchase your own memorial to place on the plot.

- **Individual cremation.** If you would prefer a cremation, this will take place at Barham Crematorium, Charing Crematorium, or Thanet Crematorium. You are welcome to attend the service which will be led by our hospital chaplain. Alternatively, we can make arrangements for a direct cremation with no service.

The crematorium will always try to make sure ashes from your baby's cremation are available. There is the option to have the ashes either scattered at the crematorium or returned to you. The ashes are usually available to collect two working days after the cremation; the bereavement support officer will discuss this with you.

- **Monthly communal cremation**

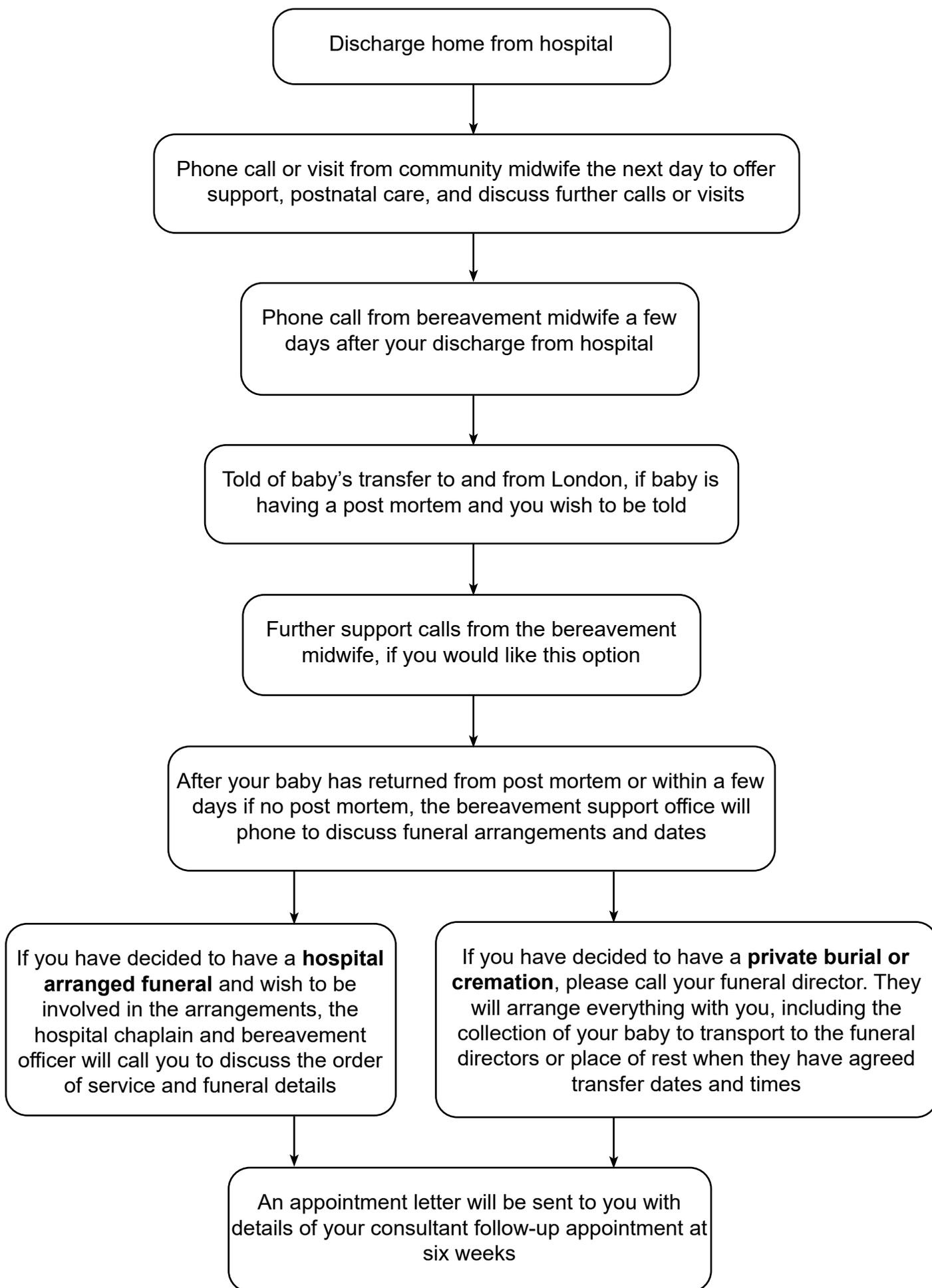
For babies born before 24 weeks gestation, there is the option for your baby to be included in our hospital's monthly collective service. This involves individual losses, each personally identified, being cremated together at 9:30am at Thanet Crematorium on the last Thursday of the month following the loss. It is your personal choice whether or not you attend this ceremony and you will be supported by the bereavement midwife, bereavement support officer, or our chaplains in whatever you decide to do.

If you would like to attend the service, we recommend you contact the Chaplain's Office to find out in which month your loss will be included. If you have agreed to a post mortem examination and have chosen communal cremation for your baby, you are advised to contact the hospital chaplains approximately three weeks after your loss, as occasionally the investigations may still be awaiting completion and your baby may need to be included in a later ceremony. More information about this simple, confidential, and respectful service is available from the hospital chaplains.

Can I change my mind about the funeral?

Yes, it is possible to change your mind regarding the decision you made in hospital. Please call the bereavement midwife or bereavement support officer to discuss this as soon as you can.

After discharge flow chart



Contact details

If after reading this leaflet you have any other questions, please contact us using the details below.

- **Bereavement Support Office**

- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford

Telephone: 01233 61 68 87

Email: ekhufft.rsowhh@nhs.net

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate

Telephone: 01843 23 44 52

Email: ekhufft.rsoqeqm@nhs.net

- **Bereavement Midwives**

Telephone: 07890 52 58 90 or 07824 82 28 11

Email: ekhufft.bereavementmidwives@nhs.net

- **Chaplain's Office**

- William Harvey Hospital

Telephone: 01233 63 33 31 ext 723-8014

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital

Telephone: 01843 23 42 73

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital

Telephone: 01227 86 40 95

- **Labour ward**

- William Harvey Hospital

Telephone: 01233 61 61 24

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital

Telephone: 01843 29 24 94

- **Postnatal ward**

- William Harvey Hospital

Telephone: 01233 61 66 28

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital

Telephone: 01843 23 45 86

This leaflet has been produced with and for women and their families

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation