



Your discharge from hospital following pregnancy loss over 16 weeks

Information for women, birthing people, 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.

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. A bereavement midwife will contact you 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 will help make this clearer.

Discharge home from hospital

1. Phone call or visit from community midwife the next day. They will offer support, postnatal care, and discuss further calls or visits.
2. Phone call from bereavement midwife a few days after your discharge from hospital.
3. Told of baby's transfer to and from London, if baby is having a post mortem and you wish to be told.
4. Further support calls / visits from the bereavement midwife, if you would like this option.
5. After your baby has returned from post mortem or within a few days if no post mortem, the bereavement support office will phone to discuss funeral arrangements and dates.
 - **If you have decided to have a hospital arranged funeral and wish to be involved in the arrangements.** The hospital chaplain and bereavement officer will call you to discuss the order of service and funeral details.

- **If you have decided to have a private burial or cremation, please call your funeral director.** They will arrange everything with you. This includes the collection of your baby to transport to the funeral directors or place of rest, when they have agreed transfer dates and times.

6. An appointment letter will be sent to you with details of your consultant follow-up appointment at six weeks.

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.

Contact details

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

- **Bereavement Support Office**

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234452
Email (ekhuftrsoqeqm@nhs.net)
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616887
Email (ekhuftrsowhh@nhs.net)

- **Bereavement Midwives**

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 07890 525890 or 07955 321050 or 07955 321032
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 07824 822811 or 07955 321032
- Email (ekhuftrbereavementmidwives@nhs.net)

- **Chaplain's Office**

- Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury
Telephone: 01227 864095
- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234273
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 633331 extension 723-8014

- **Labour wards**

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 292494
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616124

- **Postnatal wards**

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 234586
- William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Telephone: 01233 616628

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: Web 579

First published:
October 2021

Last reviewed:
June 2025

Next review date:
October 2028

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