

When a child or baby dies

We are very sorry that you are facing this devastating time following the death of your baby or child. This leaflet explains what happens next and where you can get information and support.

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.

The medical examiner may call you to check you understand what is written on the certificate. The hospital will then send the MCCD to Kensington and Chelsea 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 Kensington and Chelsea Register Office. This is because your child died at Royal Brompton Hospital which is in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. If you have not registered the birth, you can book a double appointment to do both.

You can also register the death at your local register office. Contact your local register office to make a declaration. Staff there will forward your certificates to Kensington and Chelsea 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 the funeral director that you nominate. The mortuary has a special room where you may be able to see your child again.

Contact the ward where your child was cared for, to see if a visit can be arranged. If a viewing can be arranged, a nurse will go with you. The nurse can meet you 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 may be able to visit them there.

Making funeral arrangements

The bereavement team 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.

Follow up and support

We will do our best to notify all other healthcare 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 after the death and can signpost to counselling services. Your key worker 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. There is more information in the NHS 'When a child dies' booklet which we will give you.

Support for siblings

Your key worker can offer advice about how to explain the loss of your child to siblings (brothers and sisters). Other resources and support services for siblings can be accessed through Child Bereavement UK and Winston's Wish (see page 3).

Support and more information

Kensington and Chelsea Register Office

Phone 020 7361 3000

Web rbkc.gov.uk

Search for Registering a death | Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Bliss

Support for bereaved parents of babies born premature or sick

Web www.bliss.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK

Support for children and teenagers who have lost someone

Web www.childbereavementuk.org

Child Death Helpline

Helpline run by parents who have experienced loss

Web www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Children's Funeral Fund for England

Apply to the Children's Funeral Fund for England for help paying for some of the costs of a funeral

Web www.gov.uk/child-funeral-costs

Compassionate Friends

Support and friendship to bereaved families

Web www.tcf.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Support

Support for bereaved people

Web www.cruse.org.uk

Sands (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society)

Support for anyone experiencing the death of a new-born baby

Web www.sands.org.uk

SLOW (Surviving the loss of your world)

Support for anyone who has lost a child or sibling

Web www.slowgroup.co.uk

Twins Trust

Runs a bereavement service for families with twins or multiple births

Web www.twinstrust.org

The Good Grief Trust

Provides access to a choice of bereavement services around the UK

Web www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

Winston's Wish

Help for grieving children and their families

Web www.winstonswish.org

Contact us

For any questions or concerns contact your bereavement nurse specialist (key worker)

Email EvelinaChildDeathReviewTeam@gstt.nhs.uk

Phone 020 7188 7853 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm)

Was this leaflet useful?

If you have any comments about this information, we'd be happy to hear from you.

email healthcontent@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

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

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern about any service or department at Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals. Contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

- Royal Brompton Hospital **phone** 020 7349 7715
- Harefield Hospital **phone** 01895 826 572

Or **email** pals@rbht.nhs.uk

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day,

phone 111 **web** www.111.nhs.uk

Become a member of the Trust

Members contribute to Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it's up to you how you get involved. To find out more, **phone** 0800 731 0319 **email** members@gstt.nhs.uk or **web** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Adapted from GST leaflet number 5449/VER1

Last reviewed: May 2025

Next review due: May 2028

© 2025 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
A list of sources is available on request