

# Guidance for bereaved parents wishing to take their baby home

**Reference Number:** ULHT-LFT-4046 v1

**Issued:** August 2025

**Review Date:** August 2027

We are so sorry for the loss of your baby.

This booklet aims to help guide you through the next steps that support you to take your baby home from hospital.

## Introduction

As this is an incredibly difficult and traumatic time for you, we acknowledge it may be challenging to take in all the information given by health professionals. We have therefore designed this booklet to help clarify some practical advice you will need.

## Transporting your baby home

You will be required to sign a form to confirm that you will be taking your baby home. You will be given a copy of this form. This will act as official documentation to prevent any misunderstandings for the rare occasion you could get stopped on the way home, or if you are involved in any road traffic accident during your journey.

It would be advisable to have a family member/friend to take you all home. It is likely to be an emotional journey and this could compromise your safety. It is advised that you do not use taxis, buses or any other form of public transport. Alternatively, you may wish to use the services of a funeral director to take your baby home; there may be a charge for this service.

Your baby can be taken home either in a car seat, can be placed in a Moses basket (we can provide one for you) or carried in your arms.

Parking your car as near to the maternity unit as possible would be advisable, staff will be able to suggest the best place for you and a member of staff will accompany you and your baby to your car.

## What to expect at home

The length of time that your baby is at home with you will depend on your individual circumstances. If you have requested a post-mortem, we would advise your baby to be at home for a shorter duration. This is to ensure the most accurate results from the examination.

Unfortunately, due to natural changes the appearance of your baby will start to change over time.

The changes may be:

- Discolouration of the skin, especially the lips
- Peeling of the skin
- Some loss of blood from the nose, mouth or skin
- Some stiffness to babies' body or limbs
- Coolness of the skin
- Baby beginning to emit an odour

To help slow down these changes it is important that you are aware of how to care for your baby in the home environment.

- Keep your baby in a cool room, with no heating on
- Try to keep all windows closed
- Ensure pets are kept out of the room
- Use a light blanket/sheet over baby
- If your baby is being returned to the hospital for a post-mortem or cremation, our funeral director will be in touch with you to discuss collection
- If you are planning to arrange your baby's funeral service we would encourage you to make contact with your funeral director as soon as possible

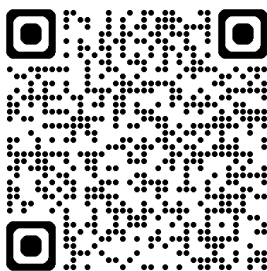
Your community midwife, maternity support worker, bereavement midwife or bereavement maternity support worker will provide home visits, to offer you support.

You may wish to take a Cuddle Cot home; this cot helps keep your baby cool, which slows down natural changes to your baby.

A member of the community team, bereavement midwife or bereavement maternity support worker will support you in setting up the Cuddle Cot at your home.

# How to care for your baby in a Flexmort CuddleCot™ at home

There is also an information leaflet within the Cuddle Cot storage box with a set of instructions detailing set up, dismantling and trouble shooting. We have also included a QR code with a helpful short video to support the written instructions should you require this.



<https://cuddlecot.com/manuals/#cuddleCotVideos>

If you require any assistance with the Cuddle Cot please contact your community midwife team, the bereavement midwife (07467 440509), or bereavement maternity support worker (07564 585504) in daytime hours.

Or out of hours:

Labour Ward Lincoln      01522 573317

Labour Ward Boston      01205 445424

## What happens next?

Whilst it is your decision on how long your baby stays at home, we recommend a period of 2 to 3 days. This will enable you to have time to make some precious memories with your baby, but also ensures that the baby does not change too much in a warmer home environment.

## If your baby is going to be having a post-mortem

It is recommended that your baby come home for a limited duration. We recommend 24 hours, in order to ensure your baby is transferred for their post-mortem as soon

as possible. This is because the chance of finding answers as to why your baby has passed away is more likely if a post-mortem is done sooner. The hospital authorised funeral director will be in touch with you to make arrangements for a suitable time for baby to be collected and returned to the hospital. (Collection at night, during a weekend or bank holiday cannot be facilitated). You will receive paperwork from the hospital at the point of discharge, which must be given to the funeral director. The funeral director will provide you with paperwork as confirmation that they have collected your baby.

Within the next couple of days, your baby will then be transferred to Nottingham for the post-mortem. Once this has been carried out, your baby will be transferred back to the hospital and chosen funeral options can then be arranged.

## **If your baby is not having a post-mortem but the hospital is arranging a cremation for your baby**

The hospital authorised funeral director will be in touch with you to make arrangements for a suitable time for your baby to be collected and returned to the hospital. (Collection at night, during a weekend or bank holiday cannot be facilitated). You will receive paperwork from the hospital at the point of discharge, which must be given to the funeral director. The funeral director will provide you with paperwork as confirmation that they have collected your baby. The bereavement office will contact you to discuss cremation details (unless you have declined to know information).

## **If your baby is not having a post-mortem and you are making private funeral arrangements**

Once you have come to the decision that you are ready for your baby to be collected from your home, you can contact your chosen funeral director directly. Your funeral director will make arrangements for a suitable time for baby to be collected and taken to the funeral home.

## Changing your mind

We recognise that circumstances and feelings change and you may decide that having your baby at home is no longer the best thing for you as a family. If this happens, contact your community midwife team, bereavement midwife, bereavement maternity support worker or your funeral director. If your baby is going to have a post-mortem or hospital cremation, the hospital-approved funeral director will arrange to collect your baby as soon as possible. It is important you are aware they are not able to facilitate this at very short notice. However, they will try to minimise the wait time to reduce any distress you may be feeling.

## Birth registration

### **Babies born at less than 24 weeks gestation**

If your baby was not born alive, legally there is no requirement to register your baby's birth. You may choose to bury your baby at home or arrange a funeral director to help facilitate a cremation or burial.

### **Babies born over 24 weeks gestation**

The law requires that babies who are stillborn (born after 24 weeks gestation) have their birth legally registered prior to cremation or burial.

The hospital will ensure the required paperwork is sent to the registrar's office, who will then contact you to arrange an appointment for registration at your local registration office.

### **Babies born alive (regardless of gestation) who pass away soon after birth**

The law requires that babies who are born alive have their birth and death legally registered prior to cremation or burial.

The hospital will ensure the required paperwork is sent to the registrar's office, who will then contact you to arrange an appointment for registration at your local registration office.

## Under 24 weeks - burying your baby at home

If your baby was born under 24 weeks with no signs of life, you are legally entitled to bury your baby at home if you wish to do so.

Careful thought must be given when considering burial in a garden, it may be safer to utilise a plant pot so it can be easily transported if required.

However, if you wish to bury your baby in the garden, there are considerations that should be made:

- No danger caused to others
- No interference with any rights that other people may have over the land used
- No danger to water supplies or watercourses
- No chance of bodily fluids leaking into or onto adjoining land

**In addition, the following should be considered:**

- Your baby must be buried at a depth of at least 18 inches (45cm)
- Permission must be obtained from the landowner if you do not own the land

We advise you to refer to government websites and the Environment agencies for further information:



[www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials/protecting-groundwater-from-human-burials)



[www.scattering-ashes.co.uk](http://www.scattering-ashes.co.uk)

## At home

When you are at home with your baby, staff will respect your privacy as much as possible to enable you to spend as much uninterrupted time with your baby.

However, you may require a visit from a community midwife to check on your physical health. The community midwives will keep this time to a minimum, unless you wish otherwise.

Should you require any support whilst your baby is at home, please do not hesitate to contact your community midwives' team, bereavement midwife, bereavement maternity support worker or labour ward.

## Useful Organisations

Miscarriage Association

0303 003 6464 (helpline Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 4pm, Wednesday and Friday 9am to 8pm)

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

SANDS

0808 164 3332 (helpline Monday to Friday 10am to 3pm and 6pm to 9pm Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday)

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

Child Bereavement UK

0800 02 888 40 (helpline Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm)

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

Tommys:

0800 0147 800 (helpline Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

[www.tommys.org/baby-loss-support](http://www.tommys.org/baby-loss-support)



Twins Trust bereavement support group

On-line support

<https://twintrust.org/bereavement>

Petals - The baby Loss Counselling Charity

On-line support and referral

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

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has worked with AccessAble to create detailed Access Guides to facilities, wards and departments at our sites.

[www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust](http://www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust)

United Lincolnshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language or alternative format, please email the Patient Information team at [ulth.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:ulth.patient.information@nhs.net)