

Pregnancy loss under 16 weeks gestation Information Leaflet – Care of pregnancy remains and memory making opportunities

The Honeysuckle Team are the dedicated baby bereavement team at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust. We are very sorry for your loss; please accept our sincere condolences at this very sad time.

If you require support or would like to speak to somebody, the Honeysuckle Team's office is currently open Monday – Friday 08:00 – 16:00, during these hours you can contact the team via telephone 0151 702 4151 or email honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk.

We have designed this leaflet to ensure that you and your family are fully aware of the choices available and the formalities involved at this difficult time.

Please note: Following pregnancy loss you may pass a recognisable baby or fetus, perhaps still in the pregnancy sac or you may pass large clots which contain your pregnancy. The nurse / midwife will offer you appropriate memory making opportunities, however your options with regards to the care of pregnancy remains remain the same.

Options for the care of pregnancy remains

When a baby is born under 24 weeks gestation and shows no signs of life, there is no legal requirement to have a funeral. The following section discusses the choices available to you.

Following pregnancy loss under 16 weeks gestation you will be asked to complete a consent form for care of pregnancy remains.

The term 'pregnancy remains' is used throughout the consent form for consistency in reference to cases of pregnancy loss up to and including 23 weeks and 6 days gestation. This consent form has been devised in accordance with Human Tissue Authority guidance.

There are 3 options that you can decide between to honour your baby, which are detailed below:

Communal Cremation

With your consent the Honeysuckle Team can organise a communal cremation. A communal cremation is when 12 babies are put into their own boxes and cremated together at Springwood crematorium. Later that day the ashes are scattered in a nearby baby garden of remembrance. Please note if you sign consent for communal cremation and wish to be provided with more information you must contact The Honeysuckle Team within 14 days of signing the consent form. Please be rest assured that your baby will be looked after and that the communal cremation is carried out in a dignified and respectful manner.

Arranging burial or cremation via a funeral director

It is possible to arrange an individual funeral for a pregnancy loss at any stage of pregnancy. Some families decide that they want to honour their baby's memory by arranging an individual burial or cremation.

As the hospital does not arrange individual funerals, you will need to approach and appoint a local funeral director. The Honeysuckle Team are able to provide you with advice and guidance. Most funeral directors in the local area do not charge any fees when making arrangements for a baby or child's funeral – please ask when you are speaking with the funeral director.

Please note if you sign consent to make arrangements with a funeral director you need to make your arrangements within 12 weeks of signing the consent form. If you have not contacted a funeral director or The Honeysuckle Team within this time a communal cremation will take place in accordance with Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust procedures.

Please ask the funeral director to contact The Honeysuckle Team on 0151 702 4151 to make arrangements for bringing your baby into their care.

Taking pregnancy remains/baby home from the hospital under 16 weeks gestation where baby has not shown signs of life

You can take your pregnancy remains/baby home with you and make your own arrangements.

Some families decide to take their baby's remains home from the hospital to bury in a planter with flowers or a plant in the garden; this is a personal choice and there are no regulations to prevent you doing whatever feels right for you.

There are certain requirements that need to be met. It is advisable to think carefully about what you will do with your pregnancy remains/baby and consider any associated restrictions which might exist, for example in relation to burial on a home property. For further guidance please visit <https://www.hta.gov.uk> the local Environmental Health Department. The [Environment Agency](#) is also a good source of advice on this matter.

The nurse / midwife caring for you will provide you with a letter about your miscarriage and your request to take home your pregnancy remains/ baby.

If you are undecided about what arrangements you wish to be carried out or wish to contact The Honeysuckle Team for support please do so during their office hours Monday - Friday 8am – 4pm on 0151 702 4151 / honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk

If you do not make a decision or fail to adhere to the decision consented to at the time of discharge, The Honeysuckle Team will attempt to contact you, if no contact is made within 8 weeks following discharge we will make arrangements for disposal by communal cremation in accordance with Human Tissue Authority (HTA) guidance.

This information has been developed using guidance from The Human Tissue Authority.

https://www.hta.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Guidance_on_the_disposal_of_pregnancy_re mains.pdf

Please note when a pregnancy loss occurs under 12 weeks gestation and histopathology testing has been requested, if no fetal tissue is identified, Royal Liverpool University Hospital can make arrangements for respectful disposal of the remaining tissue according to their standard procedure.

When fetal tissue is identified microscopically, its presence is commented on within the pathology report, but as this is embedded in a paraffin block and part of the diagnostic record, this is not returned unless a patient specifically asks to have the blocks and slides returned.

Making memories

The Honeysuckle Team are passionate about promoting positive memories for families experiencing pregnancy loss.

This section discusses various ways in which you can make memories of your pregnancy and honour the memory of your baby. Your nurse / midwife will support your choices for memory making.

If your baby died before birth and had not completed 24 weeks of pregnancy (legally described as a miscarriage), their death cannot be officially registered.

Acknowledgment of life certificates are available for anyone who experiences a pregnancy loss under 24 weeks. These are provided in the memory boxes. If this is something you would like please ask the nurse / midwife caring for you who can provide this, alternatively should you wish to make your own you can download a template from SANDS website

www.sands.org.uk

Memory Box

Your nurse / midwife should offer you a memory box, if you have not been given one please ask the staff looking after you. The box is a special place for keepsakes to remember your baby and pregnancy. This could include a scan picture, where possible, photographs, hand and foot prints, or any cards that you might receive. For babies born very early it may not always be possible to take hand and foot prints but you may still like to have a box for other memories. A memory box can help you acknowledge your grief and talk about your pregnancy / baby with family and friends.

Blessing

A short blessing or naming ceremony can be arranged while you are in hospital. LWH has an on call chaplaincy team who can provide this service. Ask your nurse or midwife to make contact with the chaplaincy team. If the chaplaincy team are not available another staff member at the hospital can conduct a blessing on their behalf – your nurse or midwife will support you with this.

Memorial Book

There is a book of remembrance located in the chapel at LWH. If you would like your baby's name to be added to the book please email our hospital chaplain

Christine.dickinson@lwh.nh.uk with the following details of your baby: family name or

baby/babies name and the date that you delivered. Christine will then be able to place these into the book of remembrance.

Honeysuckle Garden

There is a garden dedicated to our honeysuckle families, this is located in the courtyard behind main reception of LWH. Within the garden there is a metal love lock tree. You or members of your family may wish to purchase a padlock with your baby's name or a small message inscribed to hang on the tree.

Naming Your Baby

Some parents decide to give their baby a name, as this gives them their own identity and can make it easy to talk about them. Some parents use a nickname they may have chosen during their pregnancy. It is often very hard to determine their gender and you might like to choose a name that fits either gender. You do not have to name your baby if this does not feel right for you.

Seeing and Holding Your Baby

Once your baby is delivered, you may begin to think about the choices you want to make, for example, you can think about whether you want to see and hold your baby. You might have already started thinking about these decisions in the time before you delivered. Your nurse or midwife will support you with this. If you are not sure about seeing your baby or anxious about how your baby will look you could ask your nurse or midwife to show you a photograph or ask them to describe your baby to you. If you would like to see your baby and this is not suggested please ask the staff caring for you.

Hand and Footprints

For babies born very early it may not always be possible to take hand and footprints. When possible your nurse or midwife will offer and if accepted will try to take ink prints of your baby's hands and feet. You may choose to incorporate the prints into images, tattoos and jewellery. You may want a few sets of these prints to give to family members who are not able to meet your baby.

Photographs

Your nurse or midwife will usually offer to take photos of your baby. You can also take your own photographs of your baby. Some parents like to have photographs of their baby's hands and feet, others may also wish to have a photo of them holding their baby.

Should you agree to photographs being taken but you do not wish to look at the photos, you can request for them to be given to you in a sealed envelope. You can then look at them at a later date if you wish, or you can give them to family members or friends. If you do not wish for photographs to be taken then please inform the nurse / midwife caring for you.

Dressing Your Baby

You may want to dress your baby, or you could ask your nurse or midwife to assist you with this. We have suitable clothing, wraps, blankets and angel pouches for all gestations and your nurse / midwife can support you with your choices.

If your baby's condition makes dressing them difficult, you may want to wrap them in a blanket or something similar.

On-going keepsakes

In addition to the keepsakes you collect from your pregnancy or soon after your baby is born, there may be other things that form valuable keepsakes in the future. Among these things could include poems, letters, emails, cards and jewellery.

Attending events

Attending remembrance events can be a meaningful way of honouring your baby's memory alongside other bereaved families and a helpful part of your grief journey. Sharing this time with other families might help you feel less isolated in your grief.

The Honeysuckle Team at Liverpool Women's Hospital holds two types of remembrance events every year for all our families, which are The Service of Remembrance and The Honeysuckle Family Picnic.

Baby Loss Awareness Week is held every year between 9-15th October and ends with an international wave of light at 7pm on 15th October for parents to remember their baby at the same time as others across the world. It is during this week we usually hold Liverpool Women's memorial service of Remembrance and Hope. For up to date information on this year's service please follow Liverpool Women's on social media or via their website.

If you would like to be kept up to date about our events you can be added to our emailing list. Please email your details to honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk and we can ensure you are invited and advised of all future events.

Feedback

We believe it is important to hear patients' views on services and care they have received. You can make your voice heard by taking part in [The Maternity Bereavement Experience Measure \(MBEM\)](#). The MBEM feedback tool aims to enable patients who have sadly faced pregnancy loss or whose baby has died, the opportunity to feed back about the care they received. This feedback will be used to inform best practice and service improvements locally; all the answers you give will be treated anonymously.

Please email honeysuckle@lwh.nhs.uk if you would like to complete The MBEM feedback tool.

Support for you and your family

The Honeysuckle Team midwives run a monthly support group for parents and grandparents, with guest speakers, a library of books, craft table and refreshments provided.

The Honeysuckle Team are active on social media. We have our own Facebook page Honeysuckle a private closed Facebook page for families to join the private group, go onto our Facebook page and request to join Honeysuckle Community Page. If you request to join the private group please also send Honeysuckle Bond a direct message so the team can ensure you are added.

Joining social media groups can be a meaningful way of honouring your baby's memory alongside other bereaved families and a helpful part of your grief journey. Sharing time with other families might help you feel less isolated in your grief.

Should you wish to contact the team to discuss anything in this leaflet further, please contact us by telephone or email or if you are an inpatient and wish a face to face visit please discuss this with your nurse or midwife who will contact the team on your behalf.

There are lots of organisations that The Honeysuckle Team work with who can offer you and your family support.

Child Bereavement UK is particularly helpful if you have children in your family and are concerned with speaking to them about what has happened. They have devised leaflets available on their website for help in talking to children about bereavement.

Helpful Organisations

Liverpool Bereavement Services – provides counselling support in Liverpool for under 20 weeks gestation 07928 890 967 / 0151 475 9001 **Open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm**

Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC) – Offers information and support for parents making decisions around antenatal testing, including when a baby has a significant anomaly.

<https://www.arc-uk.org/>

Child Bereavement UK National organisation providing support to families when a baby or child has died and offers support for children faced with bereavement.

0800 028 8840 / <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Children of Jannah – Organisation providing support to Muslim families after the loss of a baby or child <https://childrenofjannah.com/how-we-can-help/>

The Compassionate Friends – Organisation of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents that offer support to other after the death of a child. www.tcf.org.uk

The Ectopic Pregnancy Trust – Provides support and information for people who have had or been affected by an ectopic pregnancy. 020 7733 2653 / <https://ectopic.org.uk/>

Fertility Network UK – Provides support to people dealing with infertility and/or who are facing involuntary childlessness. www.fertilitynetworkuk.org

Little Things and Co – Baby Bereavement Charity, this has lots of downloadable leaflets on various topics for all members of the family. <http://www.ltandco.org/>

The Miscarriage Association – National organisation offering support and information for individuals affected by pregnancy loss. 01924 200 799 / <https://www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk/>

Multiple Births Foundation (MBF) – Provides support and information for multiple birth families, including bereavement support. www.multiplebirths.org.uk

Muslim Bereavement Support Service – Provides support and information to Muslim families following a bereavement 020 3468 7333 / <http://mbss.org.uk/>

Samaritans – Offers confidential support, available 24 hours a day to people who need to talk. Telephone 116 123 / <https://www.samaritans.org/>

SANDs – Provides support and information for anyone affected by the death of a baby, before or after birth. 020 7436 5881 / <https://www.sands.org.uk/>

SPACE is a Liverpool-based network that offers peer support to women who have experienced miscarriage or infertility – either recently, or at any time in the past.

The network was started up by a small group of friends who met during their own miscarriage and fertility journeys, and felt inspired to create a local support space for other women facing similar struggles. The network is open to any woman in the Merseyside area who would like to connect with other women for peer support.

- **Small group support** - a monthly online drop-in evening (currently online) is held on the final Thursday of each month for women affected by these issues to connect informally for a cuppa and chat
- **1-2-1 peer support** – an option for women who would rather chat to someone else with a similar story in a one-to-one setting, over a phone call/online chat, or face to face for a coffee or walk
- **Website support** – online support including a private Facebook space, real stories from local women, and signposting to lots of other recommended resources and support such as helpful books, podcasts and other organisations.

To find out more or to access the **SPACE** network women can visit www.thereisspaceforyouhere.com

Or email the team directly at: thereisspaceforyouhere@gmail.com

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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